

Voting Mode v.s. Political Party

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Introduction

The 2022 Ram Poll is an election survey of undergraduate Pennsylvania residence students attending 10 universities in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE). In 2020 during the presidential race, the world went through a pandemic where people were afraid to leave their homes and go out and vote. To combat this, mail-in ballots were allowed in many states. Is there a significant difference between a student's political party and if they will vote in person or through the mail in 2022? In October 2019, Pennsylvania passed Act 77 which allowed anyone to vote by mail in Pennsylvania without needing an excuse. Voting by mail caused a lot of controversy between the Democratic and Republican Parties. Trump and many other Republicans claimed that mail-in ballots increased voter fraud and undermine the integrity of elections. Democrats claimed that with the pandemic, people needed mail-in ballots, or they wouldn't vote which they claimed was voter suppression. According to The Hill, in 2020, Democrats and Trump administration officials clashed about expanding mail-in voting. Fox News reported in 2020 that some states allow mail-in ballots to be mailed up to the election day and questioned how these ballots could be counted on time. A poll from USA Today/Suffolk University in 2020 found that 56% of Republicans planned to vote in person, compared to 26% among Democrats. This is just one example of the divide between the parties and voting mode. The Ram Poll allows us to know if this divide between parties and voting mode affects college students as well.

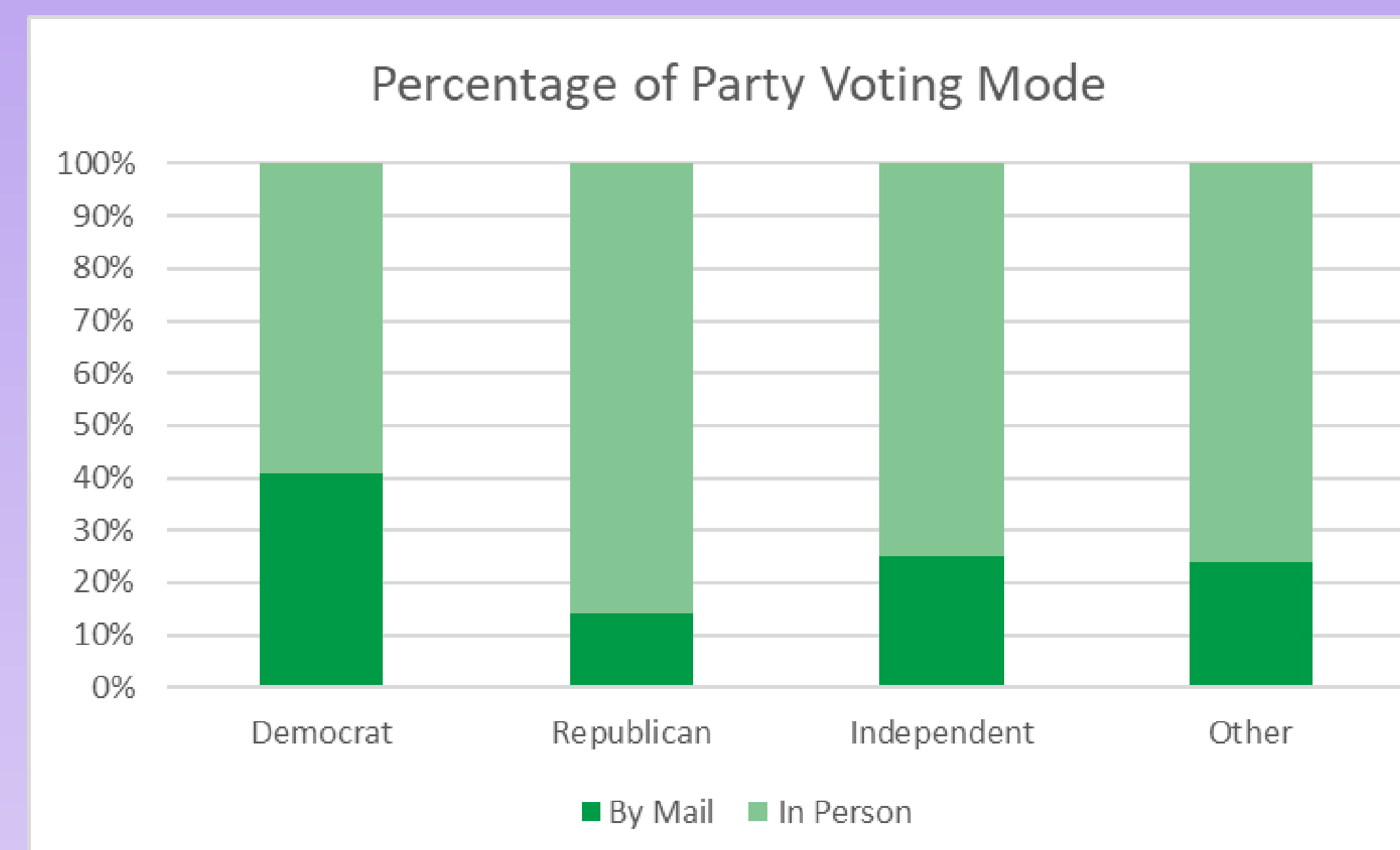
Methodology

We used data from our 2022 Ram Poll election survey of undergraduate Pennsylvania residence students attending 13 campuses in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. The poll was conducted from October 13-19 of 2022. Of the 948 responses recorded, only 822 were registered to vote. Our target population was undergraduate students who are permanent Pennsylvania residents above the age of 18. To see if there is a difference between party and voting mode in 2022, questions 3 and 6 of the 2022 Ram Poll were used. Question 3 asked, "Are you currently registered as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or something else?". And the respondents clicked a bubble next to their answer. Question 6 asked, "If you intend to vote, how will you vote?" and the options were in person: I will visit a polling place on election day, by mail: I will mail (or have already mailed) in my ballot or I will submit my mail ballot in person at an election center. I used a crosstabulation to generate a table of the responses and a chi-square test to assess them.

Results

The total sample size for 2022 was 948. We excluded the people that did not answer the question or were not registered to vote, making our sample size 822. The overall percentage of students that would vote by mail is 30% with 41% of Democrats, 14% of Republicans, 25% of Independents, and 24% of others.

A chi-square test was conducted between Party (Democrat, Republican, Independent, Other) and Voting Mode (In person, by mail). All expected cell frequencies were greater than five. There was a statistically significant difference between party and voting mode, ($\chi^2(3, N = 822) = 17.647, p < 0.001$).



METHOD OF VOTING	DEMOCRATIC	REPUBLICAN	INDEPENDENT	OTHER	OVERALL
BY MAIL	41%	14%	25%	24%	30%
IN PERSON	59%	86%	75%	76%	70%

$\chi^2(3, N = 822) = 17.647, p < 0.001$

Conclusion

Because we rejected the null hypothesis that there is no association between political party and voting mode, we conclude that there is an association. This is what I expected due to the polarization of this country, the pandemic, and arguments between the Democratic and Republican parties with one claiming fraud and the other claiming voter suppression. Knowing that this affects even college students is something political candidates should keep in mind when running campaigns in the future.



References

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