

Social Justice Watch 1105

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[Amid pandemic, the long decline of in-person voting on Election Day is likely to accelerate this year](#)

[In past elections, U.S. trailed most developed countries in voter turnout](#)

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Lilah Sturges
@lilah_sturges



Jesus: I am the son of God and also I am God and we are the same thing but different people and also there is a ghost who is me and is God but different too.

Christians: yes, good

Me: I was assigned male at birth but I'm actually a woman

Christians: impossible

<https://www.facebook.com/feministnews.us/photos/a.110963062584254/1358006>



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Last Thursday the Polish Constitutional Tribunal decided to invalidate the access

to abortion on the grounds of “severe and irreversible fatal defect or incurable illness that threatens the fetus’ life”, which constituted around 98% of performed abortions (in 2019).

Protestors gathered in Maastricht to express their disagreement with the instrumentalisation of the rights of women - and of everyone concerned - in the political struggle, that is happening now in Poland.

An explanation of some of the symbols used on the protestors’ placards:

A red lightning bolt has become the main symbol of the protests. It is part of the logo of Women’s Strike (Strajk Kobiet), a grassroots women’s rights initiative and the main organiser of the current demonstrations.

<https://www.facebook.com/newsmaastricht/posts/3435889433163612>



His Royal Gorgeousness
@BeautifulxAngry

Young men today grew up expecting to enjoy the benefits of patriarchy at the peak of their lives. But the women they were hoping to subjugate are fighting back.

It's why they're so anti-feminist. They feel they must enjoy life at the expense of women just like their fathers did.
@FUCK__PATRIARCHY



His Royal Gorgeousness

@BeautifulxAngry

Imagine growing up with the impression that no matter how mediocre you are, you'll still end up with a submissive wife you can control and dominate... Only to find out that women are aggressively pushing back & rejecting the idea of submission and even marriage all together.

@FUCK__PATRIARCHY



His Royal Gorgeousness
@BeautifulxAngry

The idea of equality which is gradually becoming a reality is quite different from the misogynistic status quo they were groomed in as boys and expected to thrive in as men.

Well you either put your ego aside and unlearn or die mad about it,
because this change is here to stay.
@FUCK__PATRIARCHY

<https://www.facebook.com/transarmy/photos/a.101087104719810/205737337581>

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[@Chinesetrooper](#) [@BadChinaTake](#) [link](#) [source](#)

Lausan

We can't let China apologists stop us from supporting Black Lives Matter - Lausan

The attack on Sunrise Movement's collaboration with a Hong Kong activist forwarding the claim that the entire Hong Kong movement is aligned with Trump and Republicans stems from a racist logic that strips Hong Kong protesters of their political agency.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/10/30/a-voter-data-resource-detailed-demographic-tables-about-verified-voters-in-2016-2018/>

Pew Research Center

A voter data resource: Detailed demographic tables about verified voters in 2016, 2018

Data tables from interviews we conducted with verified voters after the 2016 and 2018 elections may help answer some election 2020 questions.

[telegra.ph/Amid-pandemic-the-long-decline-of-in-person-voting-on-Election-Day-is-likely-to-accelerate-this-year-11-03](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/11/03/amid-pandemic-long-decline-in-person-voting-election-day-is-likely-accelerate-year-11-03/)

Telegraph

Amid pandemic, the long decline of in-person voting on Election Day is likely to accelerate this year

As of Monday night, more than 100 million Americans had cast their ballots in the 2020 general election – by mailing them in, dropping them off or going to a designated early-voting location. That record number, already about three-quarters of the total ballots...

I spent 6 months working on this piece, trying to figure out what it means to become an American citizen in 2020, as the country unravels.

The surprise? I wrote myself into grit and optimism.

It's time to change the American story. [link source](#)

Twitter

The Atlantic

"Instead of identifying with an old notion of the American dream, new citizens like me can advance a truer story," @azhang852 writes:

<https://t.co/YBF39ck2wv>

[telegra.ph/In-past-elections-US-trailed-most-developed-countries-in-voter-turnout-11-04](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/11/04/in-past-elections-us-trailed-most-developed-countries-voter-turnout-11-04/)

Telegraph

In past elections, U.S. trailed most developed countries in voter turnout

If early voting trends are any indication, a record number of Americans could vote in the 2020 presidential election. As of this writing, more than 100 million early votes have been cast by mail or in person – more than two-thirds of the total number of votes...

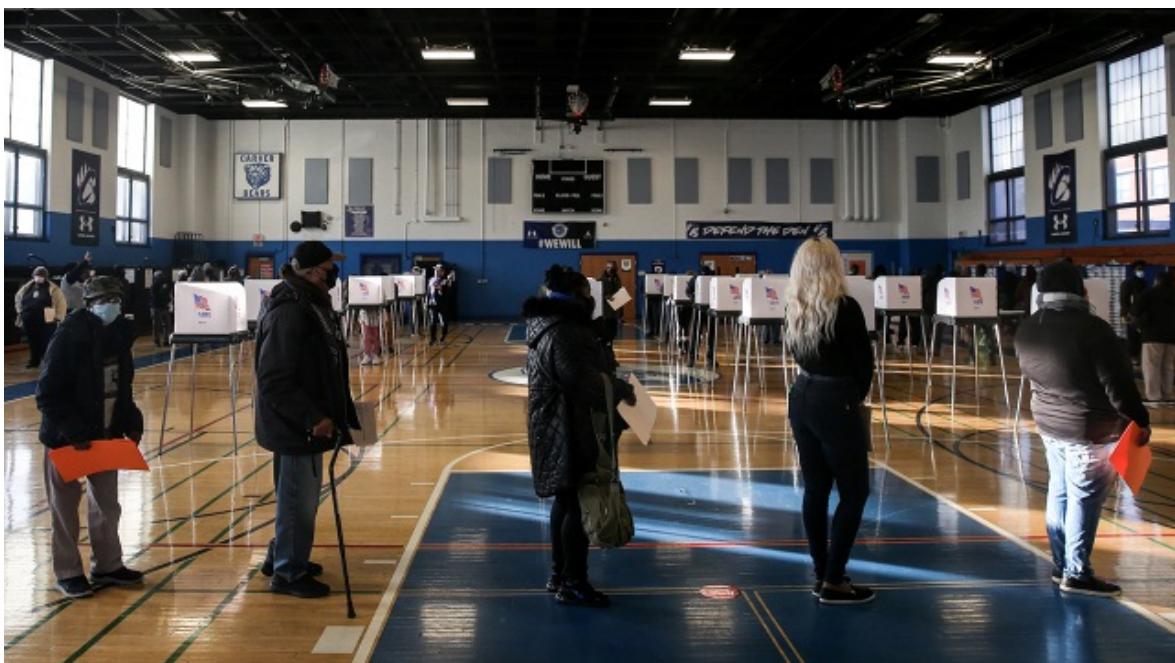
This is why [@NLG_Portland](#) switched to helmets. And why we want you to be in a helmet. The police are brutal and don't care about the harm of head injuries.

[@NLGnews](#) [link source](#)

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Amid pandemic, the long decline of in-person voting on Election Day is likely to accelerate this year

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Residents line up to cast their votes at Carver Vocational-Technical High School in Baltimore on Nov. 3, 2020. (J. Countess/Getty Images)

As of Monday night, more than 100 million Americans had cast their ballots in the 2020 general election – by mailing them in, dropping them off or going to a designated early-voting location. That record number, already about three-quarters of the *total* ballots cast in 2016, all but guarantees that, for the first time, fewer than half of all votes will be cast on Election Day itself.

Much of that is due to the COVID-19 pandemic and how states have responded to it. Most states, fearful that long lines of voters could turn Election Day into a major “superspreader” event, have made it easier to vote elsewhere and at other times by expanding mail balloting and early in-person voting.

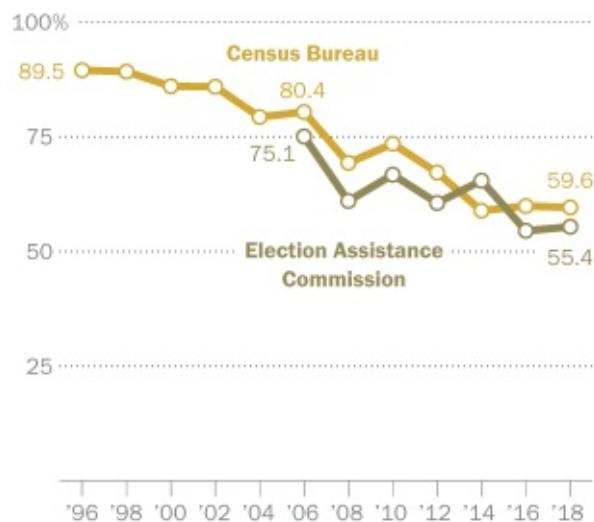
But votes cast on Election Day have grown steadily less significant over the past several election cycles as a share of total votes cast, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of two datasets.

Among its many impacts, the coronavirus pandemic has upended the tradition of going to the polls on Election Day. But even before this year, more Americans have chosen the options of voting early and using mail or absentee ballots.

To explore this trend, we analyzed the U.S. Census Bureau's biennial supplement to the Current Population Survey on voting and registration, which includes data on overall self-reported turnout and method of voting by age, sex, race, Hispanic origin and other demographic categories. We also used data available in the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) Comprehensive Report, a biennial analysis of state-by-state data that covers various topics related to the administration of federal elections. Data on this fall's early vote came from the United States Elections Project, headed by University of Florida political science professor Michael McDonald.

The decline of voting in person on Election Day: Two surveys, one trend

% of total votes in U.S. cast in physical polling places on Election Day, according to ...



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Voting and Registration Supplement to Current Population Survey (various years); U.S. Election Assistance Commission, Election Administration and Voting Survey (various years).

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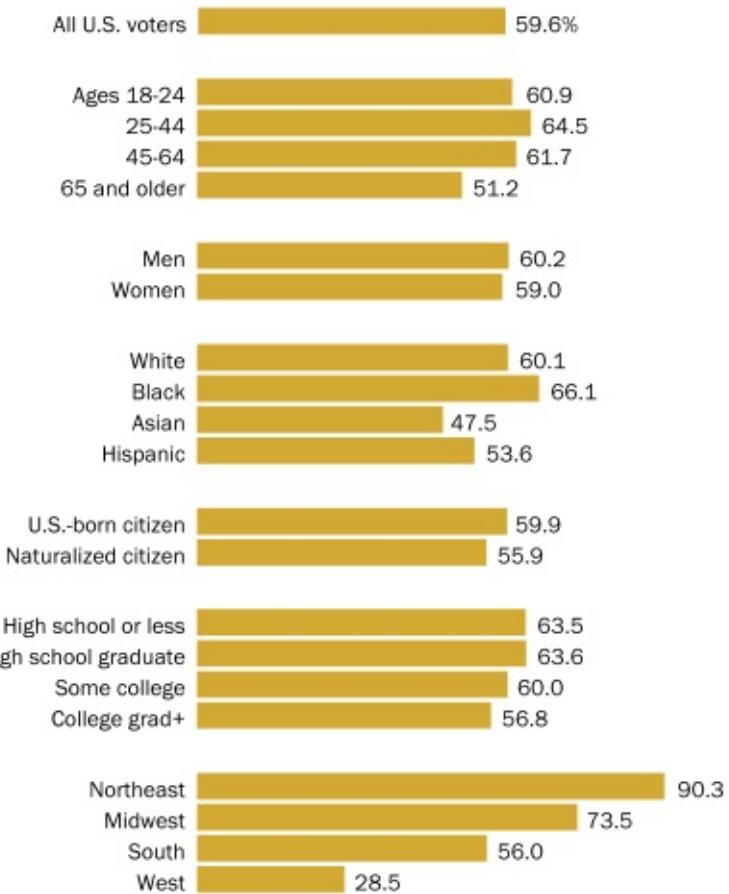
In 1996, 89.5% of voters reported voting in person on Election Day, according to the Census Bureau's post-election surveys. As recently as 2006, that share was 80.4%. But then the in-person Election Day portion of the vote began to skid, falling to below 60% each election cycle since 2014.

The trend also is evident in the biennial Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS), conducted by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, a federal agency charged with helping states meet federal election rules. The survey, which gathers voting, registration and election-administration data from state and local officials, found that the share of votes cast at physical polling places on Election Day fell from 75.1% in 2006 to 55.4% in 2018.

Another way of tracking the erosion of Election Day voting: In 2010, votes cast on Election Day accounted for a majority of all votes in 42 states and the District of Columbia, according to that year's EAVS. In 2018, that was true in just 34 states and D.C.

U.S. voters who are most, and least, likely to line up at the polls on Election Day

% of voters in each group who said they voted in person on Election Day 2018



Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are non-Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Voting and Registration Supplement to Current Population Survey, November 2018 – Table 14.

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Historically, and perhaps counterintuitively, older voters have been the least likely to vote in person on Election Day, according to Census Bureau estimates. In 2018, for instance, 51.2% of voters ages 65 and older said they had cast their ballot in person, compared with 59.6% of all reported voters. The likeliest group to have queued up outside a school, firehouse or other polling place was 25- to 44-year-olds, 64.5% of whom cast their ballots in person on Election Day.

The main alternatives to casting a ballot in person on Election Day are voting in

person during a designated early-voting period and voting by absentee or mail ballot (which typically can be either mailed back or dropped off at a secure location). Early in-person voting was relatively uncommon until fairly recently. In 1992, only three states had formal early-voting periods, but the number rose steadily throughout the 1990s and 2000s. By 2016, 22 states offered early voting.

Until this year, early in-person voting has tended to be most common in the South and West. In 2018, for instance, two-thirds of all Texas votes were cast in person before Election Day. But this year, under pandemic pressure, more states have jumped on board, with 41 states and the District of Columbia offering some form of organized early voting.

Mail voting, also called absentee voting, has been a feature of U.S. elections since the Civil War, and every state offers some form of it. Once limited to those who physically could not go to their precinct polling place on Election Day, mail voting accounted for roughly a quarter of all votes cast in the 2018 federal elections, the Census Bureau has found.

In five states – Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Utah and Washington – mail ballots are now the default method of voting for all elections. Four other states (California, Nevada, New Jersey and Vermont) and the District of Columbia have joined them for this year’s election, sending ballots to all registered voters. Many other states have changed their laws this year to expand access to mail voting. The result so far is that voters have returned more than 65 million mail ballots, nearly twice as many as were cast in all of 2016.

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In past elections, U.S. trailed most developed countries in voter turnout

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Tellers in Seoul, South Korea, count ballots from the May 2017 presidential election. (Jean Chung/Getty Images)

If early voting trends are any indication, a record number of Americans could vote in the 2020 presidential election. As of this writing, more than 100 million early votes have been cast by mail or in person – more than two-thirds of the total number of votes cast in 2016.

We won't have anything like a definitive assessment of 2020 turnout rates for some time after Nov. 3. But in the 2016 presidential election, nearly 56% of the U.S. voting-age population cast a ballot. That represented a slight uptick from 2012 but was lower than in the record year of 2008, when turnout topped 58% of the voting-age population.

So how does voter turnout in the United States compare with turnout in other countries? That depends very much on which country you're looking at and which measuring stick you use.

Political scientists often define turnout as votes cast divided by the number of *eligible* voters. But because eligible-voter estimates are not readily available for many countries, we're basing our cross-national turnout comparisons on estimates of voting-age population (or VAP), which are more readily available, as well as on registered voters. (Read "How we did this" for details.)

Comparing U.S. national election turnout rates with rates in other countries can yield different results, depending on how turnout is calculated. Political scientists often define turnout as votes cast divided by the estimated number of *eligible* voters. But eligible-voter estimates are difficult or impossible to find for many nations. So to compare turnout calculations internationally, we're using two different denominators: total registered voters and estimated voting-age populations, or VAP, because they're readily available for most countries.

We calculated turnout rates for the most recent national election in each country, except in cases where that election was for a largely ceremonial position or for European Parliament members (turnout is often substantially lower in such elections). Voting-age population turnout is derived from estimates of each country's VAP by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Registered-voter turnout is derived from each country's reported registration data. Because of methodological differences, in some countries IDEA's VAP estimates are lower than the reported number of registered voters.

In addition to information from IDEA, data is also drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, and individual nations' statistical and election authorities.

Overall, 245.5 million Americans were ages 18 and older in November 2016, about 157.6 million of whom reported being registered to vote, according to Census Bureau estimates. Just over 137.5 million people told the census they voted that year, somewhat higher than the actual number of votes tallied – nearly 136.8 million, according to figures compiled by the Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives (which include more than 170,000 blank, spoiled or otherwise null ballots). That sort of overstatement has long been noted by researchers; the comparisons and charts in this analysis use the House Clerk's figure, along with data from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance and individual nations' statistical and elections authorities.

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The 55.7% VAP turnout in 2016 puts the U.S. behind most of its peers in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, most of whose members are highly developed democratic states. Looking at the most recent nationwide election in each OECD nation, the U.S. places 30th out of 35 nations for which data is available.

By international standards, 2016 U.S. voter turnout was low

Country	% of voting age population	% of registered voters	Iceland (2017)	NA
Japan (2017)	81.20%	NA	53.65%	Turkey (2018)*
Sweden (2018)	82.08%	86.24%	88.97%	Australia (2019)*
Australia (2019)*	87.18%	91.89%	77.94%	Belgium (2019)*
South Korea (2017)	88.38%	77.23%	77.92%	Israel (2020)
Netherlands (2017)	71.52%	77.90%	77.31%	Denmark (2019)
Hungary (2018)	71.65%	84.60%	81.93%	76.38%
Germany (2017)	68.73%	Finland (2019)	69.11%	78.22%
Mexico (2018)*	74.56%	Denmark (2019)	76.15%	70.59%
Slovakia (2020)	74.56%	84.60%	63.43%	78.22%
Italy (2018)	65.39%	84.60%	65.28%	70.59%
Greece (2019)*	65.81%	73.05%	73.05%	77.94%
New Zealand (2020)	64.40%	Austria (2019)	57.78%	77.94%
Canada (2019)	75.59%	73.05%	63.53%	77.94%
Portugal (2019)	68.35%	73.05%	62.42%	77.94%
Spain (2019)	61.13%	67.04%	67.04%	77.94%
Lithuania (2019)	48.60%	United Kingdom (2019)	60.29%	77.94%
Czech Republic (2017)	66.23%	62.32%	62.42%	77.94%
Colombia (2018)	59.28%	67.86%	67.04%	77.94%
Ireland (2020)	53.38%	United States (2016)	56.65%	77.94%
Estonia (2019)	53.88%	55.72%	62.71%	77.94%
Slovenia (2018)	57.28%	86.80%	50.72%	77.94%
Latvia (2018)	54.58%	54.56%	54.56%	77.94%
Chile (2017)	52.64%	53.55%	52.20%	77.94%
Luxembourg (2018)*	49.02%	54.56%	49.02%	77.94%
Switzerland (2019)*	48.16%	89.66%	36.06%	77.94%
			45.12%	

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The highest turnout rates among OECD nations were in Turkey (89% of voting-age population), Sweden (82.1%), Australia (80.8%), Belgium (77.9%) and South Korea (77.9%). Switzerland consistently has the lowest turnout in the OECD: In 2019 federal elections, barely 36% of the Swiss voting-age population voted.

One factor behind the consistently high turnout rates in Australia and Belgium may be that they are among the 21 nations around the world, including six in the OECD, with some form of compulsory voting. One canton in Switzerland has compulsory voting as well.

While compulsory-voting laws aren't always strictly enforced, their presence or absence can have dramatic effects on turnout. In Chile, for example, turnout plunged after the country moved from compulsory to voluntary voting in 2012 and began automatically putting all eligible citizens on the voter rolls. Even though essentially all voting-age citizens were registered to vote in Chile's 2013 elections, turnout in the presidential race plunged to 42%, versus 87% in 2010 when the compulsory-voting law was still in place. (Turnout rebounded slightly in the 2017 presidential election, to 49% of registered voters.)

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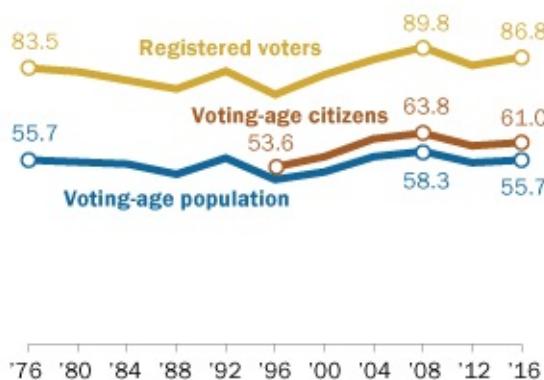
Chile's situation points to yet another complicating factor when comparing turnout rates across countries: the distinction between who's *eligible* to vote and who's actually *registered* to do so. In many countries, the national government takes the lead in getting people's names on the rolls – whether by registering them automatically once they become eligible (as in, for example, Sweden or Germany) or by aggressively seeking out and registering eligible voters (as in the UK and Australia). As a result, turnout looks pretty similar regardless of whether you're looking at voting-age population or registered voters.

In the U.S., by contrast, registration is decentralized and mainly an individual responsibility. And registered voters represent a much smaller share of potential voters in the U.S. than in many other countries. Only about 64% of the U.S. voting-age population (and 70% of voting-age *citizens*) was registered in 2016, according to the Census Bureau. The U.S. rate is much lower than many other OECD countries: For example, the share of the voting-age population that is registered to vote is 92% in the UK (2019), 93% in Canada (2019), 94% in

Sweden (2018) and 99% in Slovakia (2020). Luxembourg also has a low rate (54%), although it represents something of a special case because nearly half of the tiny country’s population is foreign born.

Turnout in U.S. presidential elections

Votes cast as a share of ...



Source: Census Bureau (population estimates), House Clerk's office and Pew Research Center (vote totals).

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As a consequence, turnout comparisons based only on registered voters may not be very meaningful. For instance, U.S. turnout in 2016 was 86.8% of registered voters, fifth-highest among OECD countries and second-highest among those without compulsory voting. But registered voters in the U.S. are much more of a self-selected group, already more likely to vote because they took the trouble to register themselves.

There are even more ways to calculate turnout. Michael McDonald, a political scientist at the University of Florida who runs the United States Election Project, estimates turnout as a share of the “voting-*eligible* population” by subtracting noncitizens and ineligible felons from the voting-age population and adding eligible overseas voters. Using those calculations, U.S. turnout improves somewhat, to 60.1% of the 2016 voting-eligible population. However, McDonald doesn’t calculate comparable estimates for other countries.

No matter how they’re measured, U.S. turnout rates have been fairly consistent over the past several decades, despite some election-to-election variation. Since 1976, voting-age turnout has remained within an 8.5 percentage point range –

from just under 50% in 1996, when Bill Clinton was reelected, to just over 58% in 2008, when Barack Obama won the White House. However, turnout varies considerably among different racial, ethnic and age groups.

In several other OECD countries, turnout has drifted lower in recent decades. Greece has a compulsory-voting law on the books, though it's not enforced; turnout there in parliamentary elections fell from 89% in 2000 to 63.5% last year. In Norway's most recent parliamentary elections, 2017, 70.6% of the voting-age population cast ballots – the lowest turnout rate in at least four decades. And in Slovenia, a burst of enthusiasm followed the country's independence from Yugoslavia in 1992, when 85% of the voting-age population cast ballots – but turnout has fallen nearly 31 percentage points in two-and-a-half decades of democracy, sinking to 54.6% in 2018.

On the other hand, turnout in recent elections has bumped up in several OECD countries. Canadian turnout in the two most recent parliamentary elections (2015 and 2019) topped 62%, the highest rate since 1993. In Slovakia's legislative elections this past February, nearly two-thirds (65.4%) of the voting-age population cast ballots, up from 59.4% in 2016. And in Hungary's 2018 parliamentary elections, nearly 72% of the voting-age population voted, up from 63.3% in 2014.

Note: This is an update of a post originally published May 6, 2015.

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