

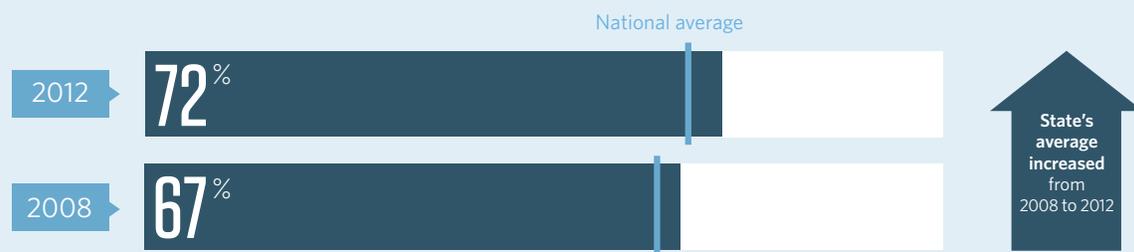


Pennsylvania

Elections Performance Index

This profile reports important trends for Pennsylvania that emerged from the 2012 update to The Pew Charitable Trusts' Elections Performance Index, or EPI. The EPI analyzes 17 key indicators of election administration and scores each state's performance by indicator and overall. For more information and to view the full interactive index, visit www.pewstates.org/epi.

Overall EPI Average*



Key indicators	2008	2012
Military and overseas ballots rejected	0.7%	1.9%
Provisional ballots cast out of all ballots	0.5%	0.8%
Provisional ballots rejected out of all ballots cast	0.24%	0.35%
Registration or absentee ballot problems	5.8%	3.9%
Voting wait time	14.5 minutes	9.1 minutes

*The overall EPI average is a simple average of all 17 indicators.

Beyond the numbers

Pennsylvania had an above-average overall EPI performance in 2012, similar to its showing in 2008. This consistency in its overall average, however, masks some significant changes in individual indicators.

Compared with 2008, more provisional ballots were cast and rejected out of all ballots cast in the state in 2012. Philadelphia accounted for most of the growth: More than 27,000 provisional ballots were issued in the city in 2012, up from approximately 12,600 four years earlier. Most of that increase was attributed to 14,000 voters who were listed in pollbooks or supplemental voter lists and either went to the wrong polling place or couldn't be found on the rolls by poll workers.¹

One area where the state improved was average wait time to vote, which declined more than 35 percent to nine minutes in 2012, below the national average.

Room for improvement

In addition to the tremendous increase in provisional ballots cast, Pennsylvania had the second-largest increase in the rate of unreturned military and overseas ballots from 2008 and 2012, behind Rhode Island. Although many factors, including out-of-date addresses in the voter records or problems with the Postal Service, can play a role in the rate of unreturned ballots, more research is needed to understand why this number jumped so much.

One improvement the state could make would be to add online voter registration. This would not only improve Pennsylvania's performance on the online registration indicator but could also have a positive impact on other indicators, including voter registration rate, provisional ballots cast, and wait times.

Pennsylvania could also upgrade its voter registration lists by participating in data sharing agreements such as the Electronic Registration Information Center, or ERIC, which allows states to get more accurate and up-to-date information on voters who move or die and helps reduce the rate of provisional ballot use.²

Adding online voter registration and participating in ERIC are both recommendations of the [Presidential Commission on Election Administration](#).

Endnotes

- 1 The Pew Charitable Trusts, "Revisiting Provisional Ballots in Philadelphia, PA," Election Data Dispatch (Jan. 3, 2013), <http://www.pewstates.org/research/analysis/revisiting-provisional-ballots-in-philadelphia-pa-85899439811>.
- 2 Gary Bland and Barry C. Burden, *Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) stage 1 evaluation report to the Pew Charitable Trusts*, Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International, http://www.rti.org/pubs/eric_stage1report_pewfinal_12-3-13.pdf.

For further information, please visit:

pewstates.org/epi

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