

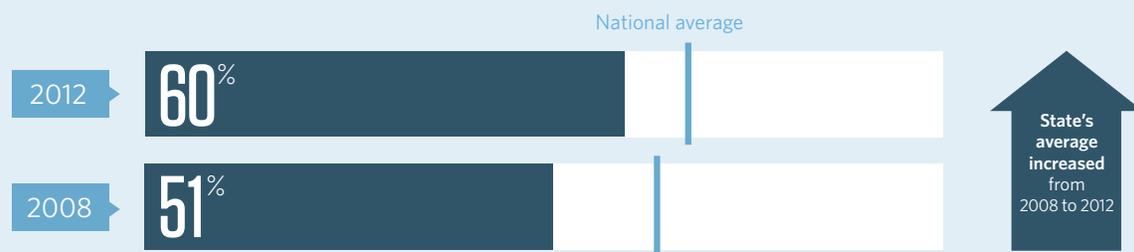


# West Virginia

## Elections Performance Index

This profile reports important trends for West Virginia 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](http://www.pewstates.org/epi).

### Overall EPI Average\*



| Key indicators                         | 2008            | 2012        |
|--|-----------------|-------------|
| Data completeness                      | 76.8%           | 96.0%       |
| Military and overseas ballots rejected | Incomplete data | 0.2%        |
| Turnout                                | 51.2%           | 46.3%       |
| Residual vote rate                     | 3.2%            | 2.1%        |
| Voting wait time                       | 15.0 minutes    | 9.8 minutes |

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

## Beyond the numbers

Although West Virginia was one of six states to rank in the bottom 25 percent in 2008, 2010, and 2012, its overall EPI average improved dramatically, gaining more than 8 percentage points from 2008 to 2012.

Improved data completeness drove much of this improvement, allowing the EPI to calculate several measures of performance for which data had not been available in 2008. West Virginia did particularly well on many of these, including military ballots rejected, for which the state had the nation's second-lowest rate.

The state's improvement was not only due to new data, however. West Virginia lowered its average wait time to vote from 15 minutes in 2008 to less than 10 minutes in 2012. The state also reduced its residual vote rate—the discrepancy between the number of ballots cast and the number of votes counted for an office—by more than 1 percentage point.

## Room for improvement

West Virginia could benefit from further research to explore the possible causes and identify solutions for its poor performance on certain metrics. In particular:

- The state had the nation's third-highest rate of nonvoting due to a disability or illness in both 2008 and 2012—with a slight increase between the two years.
- Although down from 2008, when it had the highest rate in the country, the state's 2.1 percent residual vote rate—the discrepancy between the number of ballots cast and the number of votes counted for an office—was still the nation's second-highest. The residual vote rate is a good indication of voting technology accuracy, so these consistently high rates could be due to a problem with one county or municipality, or of poorly functioning or outdated voting technology statewide.

Legislation allowing voters to register and update their registration information online passed in 2013 and will be implemented soon. Not only will online voter registration raise the state's score for the online registration indicator, but it could improve other metrics as well, including the voter registration rate, wait time, nonvoting due to registration and absentee ballot problems, and provisional ballots cast.

And although the state dramatically expanded its reporting of data since 2008, it was still in the bottom third of states in data completeness in 2012. West Virginia could work with local election officials to establish or improve processes for collection and reporting of key performance data.

Adding online voter registration and improving data collection are both among the recommendations of the [Presidential Commission on Election Administration](#).

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## For further information, please visit:

[pewstates.org/epi](http://pewstates.org/epi)

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