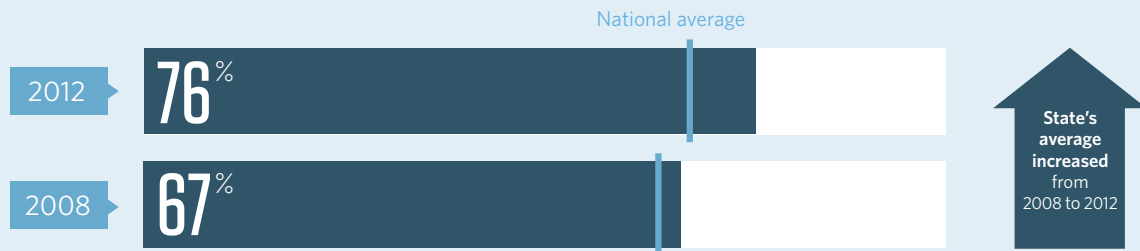# North Carolina

Elections Performance Index

This profile reports important trends for North Carolina 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*

National average

2012 **76**%

2008 **67**%

State's average increased from 2008 to 2012

Key indicators	2008	2012
Mail ballots rejected out of all ballots cast	0.6%	0.05%
Military and overseas ballots rejected	7.9%	0.9%
Military and overseas ballots unreturned	33.0%	20.9%
Voter registration rate	84.5%	88.8%
Voting wait time	21.0 minutes	13.5 minutes

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

Beyond the numbers

North Carolina was one of a dozen states to increase its overall EPI average by 9 percentage points or more, making it one of the highest-performing states in 2012.

There were four key reasons for this improvement:

- The state had the second-largest decrease in military and overseas ballots rejected, giving it the fourth-lowest rate of any state in 2012. It also had the fifth-largest decrease in military and overseas ballots unreturned, which dropped more than 12 percentage points. North Carolina was one of the first states to enact the Uniform Military and Overseas Voters Act, simplifying and improving the process for military and overseas voters. It passed in 2011.

- North Carolina also had the second-largest decrease in mail ballots rejected, behind the District of Columbia. The drop of 0.56 percent moved North Carolina from one of the worst performing states on this indicator in 2008 to one of the best in 2012.
- The state had the fourth-highest voter registration rate in the country in 2012.
- North Carolina's average wait time to vote decreased more than one-third, from over 21 minutes to just over 13.5 minutes.

Room for improvement

The state can improve its overall performance by taking two steps to upgrade its voter registration system that are recommended by the Presidential Commission on Election Administration.

First, the state could add online voter registration. Doing so would not only raise the state's score for the online registration indicator, but it also could have a positive impact on other indicators, including the voter registration rate, wait time, nonvoting due to registration and absentee ballot problems, and provisional ballots cast.

Second, North Carolina already has passed legislation authorizing participation in the Electronic Registration Information Center, a data-sharing partnership. Once the state joins, it will be able to get more up-to-date information on voters who have moved or died and to encourage eligible citizens to register. This helps to keep voter information current and accurate while also helping to eliminate some of the registration problems that often lead to nonvoting or use of provisional ballots on Election Day.[1]

Endnote

1   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