

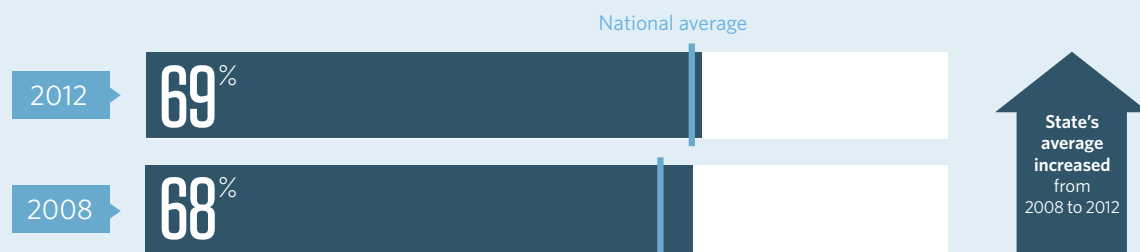


# South Dakota

## Elections Performance Index

This profile reports important trends for South Dakota 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	81.2%	97.3%
Mail ballots rejected out of all ballots cast	Incomplete data	0.04%
Military and overseas ballots unreturned	14.7%	21.8%
Residual vote rate	1.4%	1.3%
Turnout	65.6%	60.1%

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

## Beyond the numbers

Despite some improvements, South Dakota's overall EPI average improved only slightly from 2008 to 2012 and did not keep up with the national average improvement of 4.4 percentage points. The state's performance was hampered by a dramatic increase in the rate of military and overseas ballots unreturned from 2008 to 2012, which undercut gains on other indicators. The state did increase its data completeness rate by more than 16 percentage points from 2008 to 2012.

## Room for improvement

Despite the increase in data completeness, South Dakota could still improve on this metric. The state could work with local election officials to establish or streamline processes for collecting and reporting key performance data.

The state could further boost its overall performance by adding online voter registration. This step would not only raise the state's score for the online registration indicator, but it could improve other metrics as well.

The state could also add a postelection audit requirement for voting equipment to ensure that vote totals match the votes cast and that any problems related to machinery are discovered and reported.

All three of the above recommendations—improving data collection, adding online voter registration, and requiring postelection audits—are also recommended by the [Presidential Commission on Election Administration](#). These changes would significantly improve South Dakota's election administration and, in turn, the voting experience of its citizens.

---

## **For further information, please visit:**

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

---

**Contact:** Stephanie Bosh, officer, communications

**Email:** [sbosh@pewtrusts.org](mailto:sbosh@pewtrusts.org)

**Project website:** [pewstates.org/elections](http://pewstates.org/elections)

---

**The Pew Charitable Trusts** is driven by the power of knowledge to solve today's most challenging problems. Pew applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public, and stimulate civic life.