

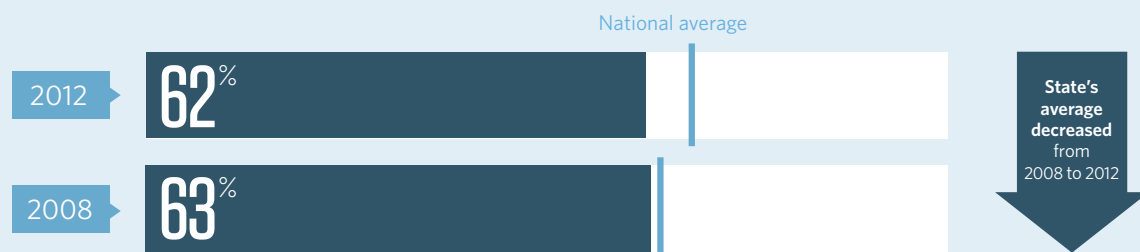


# Texas

## Elections Performance Index

This profile reports important trends for Texas 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
Mail ballots rejected out of all ballots cast	0.2%	0.06%
Military and overseas ballots unreturned	30.7%	51.5%
Registrations rejected	21.3%	2.6%
Voter registration rate	79.5%	77.1%
Voting information lookup tools	1 of 2	2 of 5

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

## Beyond the numbers

Texas had the nation's fifth-largest drop in performance and was one of only 10 states whose overall EPI average declined from 2008 to 2012. The state had the fifth-largest increase of provisional ballots rejected and among the lowest registration and turnout rates.

The state also had an increase in unreturned military and overseas ballots from 30.7 percent to 51.5 percent, the largest increase in the nation.

The Lone Star State, however, dramatically improved its rate of registrations rejected, which declined from 21.3 percent in 2008 to a lower-than-average 2.6 percent.

## Room for improvement

Texas could improve its elections performance by implementing some key policies and practices. For instance, the state could make all five voting information lookup tools available on its state election website. In 2012, Texas had only two of the five tools. This change would improve the experience of voters by providing them with the information they need about an election where they are most likely to look for it—online.

The state could further improve its overall performance by adding online voter registration. Not only would this raise the state's score for the online registration indicator, but it could have positive effects on other metrics as well, including the voter registration rate, wait time, nonvoting due to registration and absentee ballot problems, and provisional ballots cast.

The rate of provisional ballot use could also be reduced through participation in data-sharing agreements. Although there are many valid reasons why provisional ballots may be cast or rejected in Texas, upgrading voter registration lists by participating in data-sharing agreements, such as the Electronic Registration Information Center, can help address these issues, allowing states to get more accurate and up-to-date information on voters who move or die and reduce the rate of provisional ballot use.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, Texas provided less data in 2012 than in 2008. Further, some of the data the state provided to the federal Election Assistance Commission were inaccurate, including those related to military and overseas ballots and early voting. The state could work with local election officials to establish or improve procedures for collecting and reporting key performance data.

The [Presidential Commission on Election Administration](#) also recommends adding online voter registration, improving data collection, and participating in data-sharing agreements.

## 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, Dec. 10, 2013), [http://www.rti.org/pubs/eric\\_stage1report\\_pewfinal\\_12-3-13.pdf](http://www.rti.org/pubs/eric_stage1report_pewfinal_12-3-13.pdf).

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## For further information, please visit:

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

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