

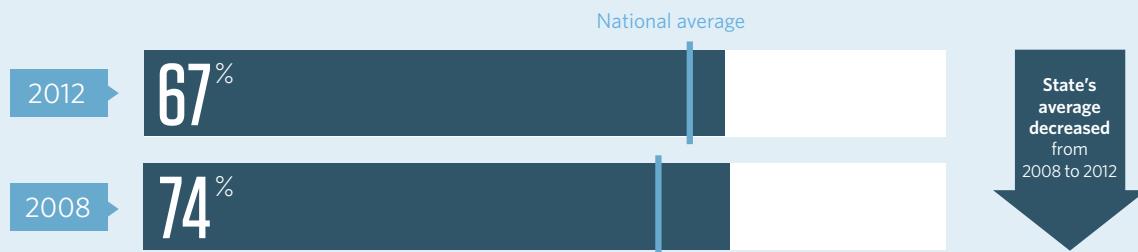


Georgia

Elections Performance Index

This profile reports important trends for Georgia 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
Data completeness	99.9 %	94.1 %
Disability- or illness-related voting problems	14.2%	16.8%
Military and overseas ballots unreturned	31.3 %	34.5 %
Registration or absentee ballot problems	5.8%	6.3%
Voting wait time	38 minutes	18 minutes

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

Beyond the numbers

Georgia had the nation's largest decrease in overall EPI average at seven percentage points.

The state is one of only 10 where data completeness fell between 2008 and 2012. It had nearly 100 percent completeness in 2008 but dropped to 94 percent in 2012, a decline that had implications for other indicators. For example, in 2008, Georgia had the fourth-lowest rate of registrations rejected, but in 2012, it provided insufficient data to calculate this indicator.

On the other hand, in both years, the state had one of the 10 lowest rates of both unreturned and rejected mail ballots. Georgia has no-excuse mail voting, meaning that voters do not need to provide a reason to receive and cast a mail ballot.

Room for improvement

Georgia can make substantial headway by taking steps to examine the causes for low performance and identify improvement strategies on a number of indicators:

- Even though the average voting wait time fell dramatically, Georgia still had one of the 10 longest waits in the nation in 2012. The Presidential Commission on Election Administration stated that “long wait times at select polling places result from a combination of mismanagement, limited or misallocated resources, and long ballots” and that “jurisdictions can solve the problem of long lines through a combination of planning … and the efficient allocation of resources.”¹ The state should look for ways to work with counties and municipalities to build efficiencies and reduce voting wait times.
- Georgia should pay significant attention to the issue of nonvoting due to disability or illness. The state had the third-largest increase in this rate between 2008 and 2012, and more research is needed to explore how this problem can be addressed administratively.
- The state’s rate of military and overseas ballots unreturned also remained high; in both 2008 and 2012, it was among the 10 highest in the nation, at more than 30 percent. Research and data collection are needed to ascertain why Georgia voters living abroad fail to return their ballots.

In addition, Georgia can take concrete policy steps to improve its performance on several other metrics:

- On April 1, 2014, Georgia’s online voter registration system went live. The state will improve not only on the online registration indicator, but possibly on others as well, including the voter registration rate, wait time, nonvoting due to registration and absentee ballot problems, and provisional ballots cast.
- Further, as described above, Georgia was one of only 10 states where the data completeness rate declined in 2012. The state can work with local election officials to establish or improve collection and reporting procedures for the key performance data measured in this index.
- The state could also require a postelection audit of voting equipment to ensure that vote totals match the votes cast and that problems related to machinery are discovered and reported.

The [Presidential Commission on Election Administration](#) also recommends that states improve data collection, add online voter registration, and require postelection audits.

Endnote

¹ *The American Voting Experience: Report and Recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration*, January 2014, pp. i, 1, <https://www.supportthevoter.gov/files/2014/01/Amer-Voting-Exper-final-draft-01-09-14-508.pdf>.

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