

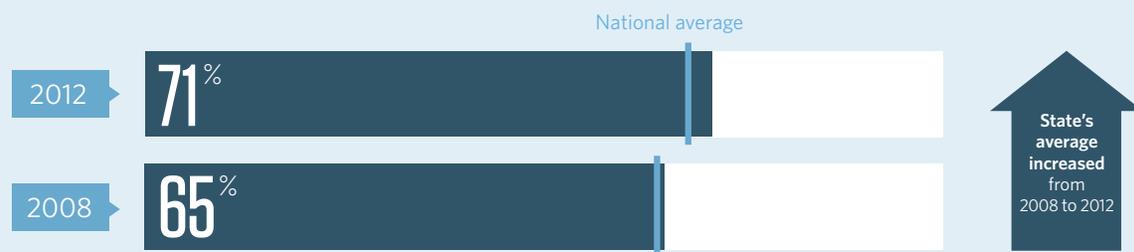


# Louisiana

## Elections Performance Index

This profile reports important trends for Louisiana 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	100%	100%
Mail ballots unreturned	2.6%	21.7%
Military and overseas ballots unreturned	29.1%	38.8%
Online registration available	No	Yes
Voting information lookup tools	1 of 2	5 of 5

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

### Beyond the numbers

Louisiana had a 6-percentage-point increase in its overall EPI average, which was larger than the national average increase of 4.4 percentage points.

The state's gains were driven, in part, by the addition of online registration in 2010 and by improving the availability of online voting information lookup tools from one of two in 2008 to five of five in 2012. This upgrade was part of a larger state effort to make better use of technology to aid voters. Louisiana operates *GeauxVote*, a website that acts as a clearinghouse for voting information and includes Web and mobile applications through which voters may access online registration and lookup tools.

The state was also one of six to submit 100 percent of the data tracked in the index to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission in both presidential election years.

## Room for improvement

The state's rate of mail ballots unreturned increased from 2.6 percent in 2008 to 21.7 percent in 2012, jumping from one of the five lowest in the nation to the fourth-highest. In 2012, 11,217 of the 54,903 absentee ballots transmitted were not returned. One likely reason for this increase is that, in 2010, a new law made seniors and citizens with disabilities eligible for permanent absentee status, allowing them to receive mail ballots every election. States that offer voters this option tend to have higher rates of unreturned mail ballots.

Louisiana also saw a large increase in its rate of military and overseas ballots that were not returned, which rose from 29 percent in 2008 to 39 percent in 2012. This was the third-highest rate in the country. Although there are many legitimate reasons that voters do not return absentee and military and overseas ballots, high rates may signal a systemic problem. Louisiana election officials could investigate to determine the causes and identify possible solutions.

The state could further improve its election performance by requiring a postelection audit of voting equipment to ensure that vote totals match the votes cast and that any problems related to machinery are discovered and reported. This is a key recommendation 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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