

2008 Primary in Review

July 2008

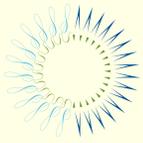


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The most competitive and contentious presidential primary season in recent memory is finally over, bringing to a close months of literally round-the-clock speculation by political junkies about who was winning, who was losing and what it meant for the rest of us.

When the 2008 election season began in January, we were watching to see whether the “Big Three” issues that have dominated election reform since 2000—voting machines, voter lists and voter ID—would continue to drive the headlines. As the primaries progressed, things did not always run smoothly, but by and large the “Big Three” were the dog that didn’t bark.

Rather, the top story of the primaries—at least to an election geek like me—was the staggering voter turnout fueled by the combination of an open White House and a competitive Democratic nomination contest.

This year, Americans went to the polls in record numbers. And in many cases, that meant ballot shortages, long lines and other symptoms of a system overwhelmed by demand.

Right now, election officials probably identify with Sheriff Brody in *Jaws*, who, having seen the great white shark for the first time, turns to his fellow passengers and remarks, “[we]’re gonna need a bigger boat.”

The “Big Three” will certainly be in play come the fall, but the huge spike in voter interest—and the resulting need for election officials to build a “bigger boat” to accommodate it—is likely to drive events between now and Election Day 2008.

Our own little boat at electionline.org has an excellent crew who made this publication possible: My colleagues, Sean Greene, Tanner Horton-Jones, Mindy Moretti, Dan Seligson and Kat Zambon; our interns, Garrett Schlein and Stanford Turner; the talented team at 202design, Mike Heffner, Lucy Pope and Denise Kooper; and the rest of the fleet at the Pew Center on the States and Make Voting Work.

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Introduction

In a primary season featuring neither an incumbent president nor vice president on the ballot, national interest was expected to be high.

But turnout in 2008—especially among Democrats, who endured a seemingly endless and competitive race from early January until June—exceeded expectations in much of the country.

In some jurisdictions around the country, votes were cast on photocopied sheets of paper. In others, optical-scan ballot supplies were exhausted before lunch. The formulas used in the past to predict how many ballots would be needed in each precinct turned out to be inexact science. Polling places, poll workers and election supplies were pushed to the brink by an energized electorate.

“Was this a record? I can’t answer that question because I don’t have historical data going back to 1900. But is it significantly higher than 2000? Of course,” said Michael McDonald, a political science professor at George Mason University who is a consultant for the Pew Center on the States. “If you take the indicators together—small money donations to candidates, high voter registration numbers and interest indicated in polling—you can anticipate a very high turnout in the general election in 2008.”¹

Using available post-election data from 40 states and the District of Columbia that conducted primaries

(states that held caucuses were excluded because they generally do not follow federal election rules), this 2008 Primary Review focuses on the challenges and successes in what was one of the longest and most competitive intra-partisan battles on record.

Primary turnout reached an eight-year high in 36 states, with five states showing turnout declines compared to 2000.²

Many Super Tuesday states saw turnout twice that of 2000. Turnout in Delaware and the District of Columbia more than tripled; more than twice as many Florida voters cast ballots in the 2008 primary compared to 2000, despite the Democratic Party’s vow not to seat the state’s delegates for violating the nominating calendar.³

More voters meant the need for more ballots, yet formulas used by localities to determine ballot allocation were sometimes way off the mark. Precincts in parts of California, Ohio, the District of Columbia and elsewhere ran out of paper ballots at points during the day, while lines and winter weather at the end of the day caused polling places to stay open after the state-mandated closing time.

Some election officials found creative solutions. In Virginia, Chesterfield County Democrats cast ballots on scraps of paper when precincts ran out of ballots, while one registrar made photocopies of optical scan ballots in California.

Confusion aside, the concerns over election administration turned from the nuts and bolts—the machines, voter ID rules and other polling place matters—to a more pressing problem: can the election system handle the rush?

Primary turnout of the voting eligible population exceeded 50 percent only in one state—New Hampshire—but the unusually high degree of interest in the process compared to primaries in years past portends a precedent-setting November vote.

With the boost in turnout came some confusion.

First-time voters and even more experienced ballot casters who wanted to cross partisan lines and vote in the other party's primary were confused by the closed primary rules in a number of states. While the numbers of voters crossing party lines is not easy to nail down, provisional ballot data can offer insights.

Approximately 30 percent of Oklahoma's rejected provisional ballots were those cast by voters who tried to cross party lines in a closed primary. Nearly half of Pennsylvania's 5,500 provisional ballots were rejected for the same reason.

Confusion aside, the concerns over election administration turned from the nuts and bolts—the machines, voter ID rules and other polling place matters—to a more pressing problem: can the election system handle the rush? The primaries proved that high turnout can challenge voters and poll workers alike.

With the interest and stakes much higher in November, the stress on the recently remodeled American election system will face its toughest test.

"If election administrators are not preparing now for what's coming in the general election, they certainly should be. Any hiccups experienced in the primaries will be multiplied many-fold when we get to the general election," McDonald said. "If all of the conditions remain the same as what they are now, we could see turnout up 3-4 percentage points, cresting over turnout rates in the mid-1950s. You have to go back to 1908 to see what we could have in 2008.

"People need to learn from what happened in primaries and make plans now so we're ready to face the challenges in the 2008 election."⁴



Executive Summary

The second presidential election since the passage of the Help America Vote Act in 2002 brought with it continuing fears of machine failures and confusion over polling place rules, such as voter ID and provisional balloting.

After all, many states and localities had recently completed their second voting machine switch in fewer than eight years as many users of direct-recording electronic (DRE) technologies opted to purchase optical-scan systems. Indiana and Georgia had implemented stringent voter ID rules requiring government-issued verification with photographs, rules that in the Hoosier State were recently upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

It turned out, however, that one of the most significant challenges facing voting officials were the voters themselves. Lots of them.

Not every state set records for presidential primary turnout. But the protracted battle for the Democratic nomination, which brought a sustained, neck-and-neck campaign for the nomination practically from the time polls opened in Dixville Notch, New Hampshire, in early January to when they closed in Butte, Montana, five months later, attracted tens of millions of voters, among them hordes of first-time election participants.

This 2008 Primary in Review analyzes turnout—both at polling places on election day and via convenience voting, either through by-mail absentee voting or at early voting sites—as well as the use of provisional balloting.

It examines some of the pitfalls faced during the primary season, including ballot shortages and confusion about open versus closed primary rules. It also looks in-depth at one jurisdiction's experience implementing vote centers, a system in which jurisdictions rely upon a smaller number of super precincts that allow any voter to cast a ballot at any center.

Voter turnout

Nearly 58 million Americans participated in the primaries, with nearly 64 percent in the Democratic contest.

- Turnout in a number of states shot up compared to the 2000 and 2004 contests. Some states with the sharpest increases include: Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, New Jersey, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.
- Precincts in some states ran out of ballots as early as noon, compelling some officials to improvise with scraps of paper or photocopied ballots.

While Georgia and Mississippi require a minimum of one voting machine for each 500 electors, South Carolina rules dictate one machine for 250. Maryland cuts the number to 200.

Ballot allocation formulas

Lines at polling places were caused by a combination of factors. Ballot shortages were one problem.

Regulations about minimum numbers of ballots or voting machines provided to each polling place vary greatly across states.

- While a simple formula in Alabama requires “at least one ballot for each registered elector” in a polling place, more complex equations such as that provided in Iowa require “55 ballots for every 50 votes, or fraction of 50 votes, cast in the last preceding presidential general election.”
- Some states leave the decision entirely up to localities, including Montana and North Carolina, which use the words “sufficient” and “adequate” to describe ballot allocation. The District of Columbia and California both experienced paper-ballot shortages in some areas. California requires “sufficient number[s]” of ballots while there are no apparent allocation rules in the District.
- States that use electronic voting systems—including Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi and South Carolina—also have widely varying allocation rules. While Georgia and Mississippi require a minimum of one voting machine for each 500 electors, South Carolina rules dictate one machine for 250. Maryland cuts the number to 200.

Early Voting

Figures from 27 states indicate nearly a quarter of all primary votes were cast before the polls opened.

- California saw 41 percent of voters cast ballots early.
- Ohio had 15 percent voting absentee, a number consistent with two years earlier, the first time the state offered no-excuse absentee balloting.

Provisional voting

The Help America Vote Act’s mandate for provisional ballots continues to produce disparate results around the country. While every state offers provisional ballots to voters not on the rolls, other reasons ballots are issued and rules about how they are counted vary, leading to widely different distribution and counting totals across states. Data from the 2008 primary indicates this year was no different.

- In Ohio and Utah, more than 75 percent of provisional ballots were counted; in Texas and Louisiana, less than a third were tabulated.
- Confusion over the nature of primaries—whether open to all voters or limited by party registration—might have contributed to higher than usual numbers of provisional ballots and lower rates of counting. In Oklahoma, approximately 30 percent of rejected provisional ballots were cast by voters who participated in a partisan primary for which they were not registered to participate.



Voter Turnout

More than voting systems, voter identification or registration problems, the story of the 2008 primaries was the voters—a whole lot of them.

With nearly 58 million voters participating, some election offices and polling places were overwhelmed despite a Republican primary race that was all but over early in the season.

In California, some precincts ran out of ballots February 5, leading one registrar to photocopy additional ballots. In Ohio, Maryland and other states, courts ordered polling places in areas experiencing winter weather to stay open later to serve voters.⁵ Some precincts in Washington, D.C., ran out of paper ballots as early as 11:30 a.m. Rules allocating one direct-recording electronic machine (DRE or touch screen) per precinct allowed voting to continue—albeit with long lines—while workers waited for supplies to be replenished.⁶

In the worst case scenario, Democratic voters in Chesterfield County, Va. were forced to cast their ballots on scraps of paper when precincts ran out of ballots.⁷

It's easy to dismiss these problems as the result of a lack of foresight by election officials, but more often than not it's a capacity problem. In most states and localities, the rhetoric of "every vote counts" is backed by a system that is not prepared nor funded to handle high turnout.⁸

How states anticipate turnout numbers prior to an election varies about as much as how they conduct elections. However, most states do extrapolate previous turnout.

"The Secretary of State holds a press conference around Friday before each election at which he predicts statewide turnout. We consider factors such as previous turnout for similar elections, the number of contested races on the ballot, controversial ballot measures in various localities and some intangibles such as the weather," said Brad Bryant, election director for the state of Kansas.⁹

Although most states used previous primary turnout to predict numbers for 2008, with so many states moving their primaries up and conducting presidential preference primaries only, predictions got a bit more difficult.

"Any prediction would have to have been based on the turnout for the preferential primary and the votes cast for the president—because it was the only history available—the Super Tuesday primaries were new and at an odd time," said Pam Ratliff with the Arkansas Secretary of State's Office, referring to the new style of contest used in 2008.¹⁰

While New Hampshire was the only state to have over 50 percent of the voting eligible population turn out for the presidential primary, moving forward, states are already gearing up for an unprecedented turnout in November.

Primary turnout, by election date

State	Primary Date	Total population estimate	Voting Age Population (VAP)	Voting Eligible Population (VEP)	Total registered	Ballots cast for president	Total ballots cast	Ballots cast for president as % of VEP
NH	Jan. 8	1,315,828	1,035,537	1,004,879	885,494	527,349	529,711	52.48%
MI	Jan. 15	10,071,822	7,655,929	7,348,195	7,141,914	1,463,567	1,491,261	19.92%
SC	Jan. 19 & 26	4,407,709	3,384,036	3,219,198	2,246,242	977,650	977,650	30.37%
FL	Jan. 29	18,251,243	14,493,282	12,540,365	10,203,112	3,699,418	4,268,602	29.50%
AL	Feb. 5	4,627,851	3,553,574	3,439,561	2,786,824	1,088,835	1,088,835	31.66%
AZ	Feb. 5	6,338,755	4,791,404	4,090,072	2,713,070	996,670	998,393	24.37%
AR	Feb. 5	2,834,797	2,164,054	2,070,312	1,570,961	544,170	544,170	26.28%
CA	Feb. 5	36,553,215	27,405,420	21,725,632	15,712,753	8,104,972	9,068,415	37.31%
CT	Feb. 5	3,502,309	2,712,794	2,446,727	2,044,511	506,143	507,166	20.69%
DE	Feb. 5	864,764	666,836	607,748	567,363	146,613	146,613	24.12%
GA	Feb. 5	9,544,750	7,188,747	6,383,899	5,237,481	2,024,392	2,024,392	31.71%
IL	Feb. 5	12,852,548	9,737,769	8,843,831	7,304,563	2,940,708	2,986,982	33.25%
MA	Feb. 5	6,449,755	5,016,985	4,496,320	4,011,551	1,765,761	1,768,206	39.27%
MO	Feb. 5	5,878,415	4,494,687	4,339,185	2,904,461	1,415,951	1,415,951	32.63%
NJ	Feb. 5	8,685,920	6,694,828	5,520,305	4,862,613	1,707,400	1,714,808	30.93%
NY	Feb. 5	19,297,729	14,858,151	12,902,219	11,363,178	2,561,221	2,561,221	19.85%
OK	Feb. 5	3,617,316	2,729,678	2,617,356	2,022,537	752,261	752,261	28.74%
TN	Feb. 5	6,156,719	4,705,064	4,449,045	3,666,824	1,178,579	1,178,579	26.49%
UT	Feb. 5	2,645,330	1,828,348	1,728,786	1,319,650	427,464	428,459	24.73%
LA	Feb. 9	4,293,204	2,973,037	2,833,599	2,842,402	545,515	577,496	19.25%
DC	Feb. 12	588,292	467,754	422,901	377,007	130,726	131,103	30.91%
MD	Feb. 12	5,618,344	4,310,977	3,842,213	2,850,808	1,199,163	1,229,749	31.21%
VA	Feb. 12	7,712,091	5,955,040	5,387,519	4,619,580	1,475,455	1,475,455	27.39%
WA	Feb. 19	6,468,424	5,032,124	4,614,253	3,311,503	1,221,313	1,386,701	26.47%
WI	Feb. 19	5,601,640	4,302,925	4,115,067	3,304,419	1,524,360	1,531,325	37.04%
OH	Mar. 4	11,466,917	8,754,576	8,518,501	7,826,480	3,603,523	3,603,523	42.30%
RI	Mar. 4	1,057,832	827,524	747,564	665,091	213,435	213,435	28.55%
TX	Mar. 4	23,904,380	17,718,698	15,011,648	12,752,417	4,237,308	4,237,308	28.23%
VT	Mar. 4	621,254	497,096	480,385	421,987	195,202	196,715	40.63%
MS	Mar. 11	2,918,785	2,158,987	2,066,840	1,777,683	577,438	577,438	27.94%
PA	Apr. 22	12,432,792	9,730,156	9,431,577	8,328,123	3,152,408	3,153,408	33.42%
IN	May 6	6,345,289	4,815,124	4,666,581	4,318,557	1,690,987	1,690,987	36.24%
NC	May 6	9,061,032	6,960,051	6,401,965	5,765,303	2,098,309	2,125,215	32.78%
NE	May 13	1,774,571	1,342,038	1,272,293	1,117,495	231,335	260,150	18.18%
WV	May 13	1,812,035	1,437,609	1,423,487	1,183,495	438,932	438,932	30.83%
KY	May 20	4,241,474	3,261,219	3,157,666	2,857,231	899,561	899,561	28.49%
OR	May 20	3,747,455	2,945,747	2,745,234	2,008,957	994,975	1,170,526	36.24%
ID	May 27	1,499,402	1,126,215	1,036,158	721,269	168,372	182,627	16.25%
MT	June 3	957,861	746,544	734,728	630,633	277,138	277,138	37.72%
NM	June 3	1,969,915	1,493,448	1,372,307	897,887	110,939	254,657	8.08%
SD	June 3	796,214	600,024	582,961	508,240	158,761	158,761	27.23%
Totals		278,785,978	212,574,036	190,639,082	157,766,175	57,974,279	60,223,885	30.41%

NOTES

Alabama registration data is as of May 2008.

Connecticut registration data is as of Oct. 30, 2007.

New York registration data is as of Mar. 1, 2008.

Indiana, Maryland, Montana and West Virginia data is unofficial.

Virginia registration data is as of Feb. 1, 2008.

In Nebraska the Democratic primary was non-binding. Democratic delegates were selected at a Feb. 9 caucus.

In New Mexico the total ballots cast for president data is for the Republican presidential primary only. Democrats held a caucus on Feb 9, 2008 with 148,740 votes cast.

In Idaho, the Democratic primary was non-binding. Democratic delegates were selected at a Feb. 5 caucus.

The Washington Democratic primary was non-binding. Delegates were selected at a February caucus.

South Carolina held primaries on separate days.

Caucuses and/or conventions to select delegates were held in both parties in Iowa, Nevada, Colorado, Alaska, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Minnesota, North Dakota and Wyoming.

DEFINITIONS

Voting age population (VAP): Includes every resident 18 years and over.

Voting eligible population (VEP): Adjusted voting age-population excluding ineligible voters, i. e. non-citizens and convicted felons.

SOURCES

The total population estimate is from the U.S. Census Annual Estimates of the Population for the United States, Regions, States, and Puerto Rico: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2007.

VAP and VEP data is from the United States Election Project, "2008 Presidential Primary Turnout Rates," last updated June 9, 2008, available at www.elections.gmu.edu.

Ballots cast data was provided by state election Web sites.

Ballot and voting machine minimums

The following chart details state rules concerning ballot allocation minimums and/or machine distribution at polling places.

STATE	BALLOT/VOTING MACHINE MINIMUMS
Alabama	At least one ballot for each registered elector at each voting place. ¹¹
Alaska	The director shall distribute an adequate supply of official ballots to the election supervisors. ¹² At every polling place, at least one voting booth shall be furnished and not less than one voting booth or screen shall be furnished for each 100 votes or fractional part of 100 votes cast in the previous election. ¹³
Arizona	For each precinct the number of early ballots and printed ballots must exceed by at least 1 percent the number of registered voters whose names appear on the precinct register of the precinct, city, town or district for which the ballots are printed. ¹⁴
Arkansas	Paper ballots: 150 printed ballots for each 100 or fraction of 100 electors voting at the last preceding comparable election. Provided, however, the total number of ballots does not exceed 105 percent of the total number of registered voters in the precinct. ¹⁵
California	The elections official shall provide a sufficient number of official ballots in each precinct to reasonably meet the needs of the voters in that precinct using the precinct's voter turnout history as the criterion, but this number cannot be less than 75 percent of registered voters in the precinct, and for vote by mail and emergency purposes shall provide the additional number of ballots that may be necessary. ¹⁶
Colorado	Paper ballots: the governing body shall provide a sufficient number of voting booths. Electronic or electromechanical voting systems: the designated election official shall supply each precinct with sufficient voting equipment. At general elections using electronic or electromechanical voting systems, the county clerk and recorder shall supply each precinct with one voting booth for each 400 active registered electors or fraction thereof. ¹⁷
Connecticut	Number of voting tabulators: sufficient to provide one tabulator for each voting district for each primary and election and a sufficient number of spare voting tabulators where more than one party is holding a primary in a polling place. Officials shall provide a number of ballot boxes for each voting district sufficient to hold a number of ballots equal to the number of electors eligible to vote at each primary or election in the voting district. They shall provide a number of voting booths sufficient to provide at least one for each 250 or fraction of 250 electors eligible to vote. ¹⁸
Delaware	In general elections, the polling place for every election district shall be supplied with at least one voting machine for every 600 registered voters or majority fraction thereof. ¹⁹
District of Columbia	No regulations found.
Florida	The supervisor of elections shall determine the actual number of ballots to be printed. ²⁰
Georgia	At least one voting machine for each 500 electors, or major fraction thereof, except that at least one voting machine shall be provided in each such precinct in any case. ²¹
Hawaii	Each precinct shall receive a sufficient number of ballots based on the number of registered voters and the expected spoilage in the election concerned. ²²
Idaho	The board of county commissioners authorizes that a suitable number of ballots be printed for each polling place. ²³ County clerks look at a number of factors including: voter turnout in the last like election, population growth of the county, the candidate races and issues on the ballot and how they perceive the level of political interest and activity in the jurisdictions. ²⁴
Illinois	At least 10 percent more ballots than the number of voters registered. ²⁵
Indiana	Where ballot card voting systems are used, the number of ballots should be at least equal to 100 percent of the number of voters in the inspector's precinct, according to the poll list. ²⁶
Iowa	For presidential general elections at least 75 ballots for every 50 votes, or fraction of 50 votes, cast at the last preceding presidential general election. In general elections which are not presidential elections, at least 75 ballots for every 50 votes, or fraction of 50 votes, cast at the last preceding general election which was not a presidential election. ²⁷
Kansas	A number of properly printed ballots shall be supplied that is fully sufficient to meet the demands and needs of all the voters. ²⁸ Number of ballots to print is a decision made by the county election officer. Usually takes into account the number of registered voters in the area, expected turnout, contested races, etc. ²⁹

Ballot and voting machine minimums

Kentucky	The number of ballot cards and envelopes required to be printed: For the general election, equal to the number of registered voters as of the close of registration. For a primary election, be not less than a number equal to the total number of votes cast in the most recent corresponding primary election. For a special or local election, be a number determined by the local clerk. ³⁰
Louisiana	(1) One machine for precincts where 600 or less voters were registered to vote at the last general election; (2) Two machines for precincts where more than 600 but not more than 1,000 voters were registered to vote at the last general election; (3) Three machines for precincts where more than 1,000 voters but not more than 1,400 voters were registered to vote at the last general election; (4) Four machines for precincts where more than 1,400 voters were registered to vote at the last general election. ³¹
Maine	In a general election, at least one voting booth for each 200, or fraction exceeding 1/2 of that number, of the qualified voters in each voting place. In other than a general election, the municipal officers may provide fewer voting booths when circumstances indicate that fewer booths will be adequate. ³² Turnout at prior elections of the same type (primary, general, etc.) is taken into account. ³³
Maryland	Number of voting systems for a primary or general election shall be the greater of one voting unit for each 200 registered voters, plus an additional voting unit for every fractional part of that number; or two voting units; and at least one voting unit with accessible voting equipment. For a special election, the local board may determine in its discretion the number of voting units to be provided in each polling place. ³⁴
Massachusetts	One set of ballots, not less than one for each registered voter, shall be provided for each polling place at which an election for state, city or town officers is to be held. ³⁵
Michigan	At least 25 percent more than the total number of votes cast at the corresponding election held four years previous for the office that received the greatest number of votes. ³⁶
Minnesota	Each precinct shall be furnished with 100 ballots for every 85 individuals who voted in that precinct at the last election for the same office or on similar questions, or at least ten percent greater than the number of votes which are reasonably expected to be cast in that precinct in that election, whichever supply of ballots is greater. ³⁷
Mississippi	One machine for each voting precinct which contains, as nearly as may be, 500 voters; two machines for each voting precinct which contains, as nearly as may be, 1,000 voters; three machines for each voting precinct which contains, as nearly as may be, 1,500 voters; provided that nothing herein shall prevent any voting precinct from containing a greater or lesser number than above if necessary for the convenience of the voters. ³⁸
Missouri	For each election held in a county with a charter form of government and with more than 250,000 but fewer than 350,000 inhabitants, the election authority may provide 55 ballots for each 50 and fraction of 50 voters registered in the voting district at the time of the election. For each election, except a general election, held in any county other than a county with a charter form of government and with more than 250,000 but fewer than 350,000 inhabitants, the election authority shall provide a number of ballots equal to at least one and one-third times the number of ballots cast at the election held two years earlier. For each general election held in any county other than a county with a charter form of government and with more than 250,000 but fewer than 350,000 inhabitants, the election authority shall provide a number of ballots equal to one and one-third times the number of ballots cast in the general election held four years prior. When determining the number of ballots to provide for each polling place, the election authority shall consider any factors that would affect the turnout at such polling place. ³⁹
Montana	The election administrator shall provide each election precinct with sufficient ballots for the electors registered, plus an extra supply to cover spoiled ballots. ⁴⁰
Nebraska	An approximate number of ballots shall be printed based upon what would appear sufficient at the time the ballots are to be printed. Such totals shall take into consideration increases in registration, early voting, annexations, changes in boundaries, spoiled ballots, and any other factor that may influence the total number of ballots needed. Additional ballots shall be printed to meet any contingency in order to provide a sufficient number of ballots. ⁴¹
Nevada	The county clerk shall prepare a quantity of mechanical voting devices which assures an efficient flow of voters. ⁴²
New Hampshire	A number of ballots which the secretary of state shall deem sufficient. ⁴³

Ballot and voting machine minimums

New Jersey	In municipalities having permanent registration the number of booths shall not be less than one for every 100 persons registered at the last preceding general election and not less than three booths shall be provided in any polling place. In municipalities not having permanent registration the number of booths shall not be less than one for every 150 persons registered at the last preceding general election and not less than four booths shall be provided in any polling place. ⁴⁴
New Mexico	The secretary of state shall prescribe the types and number of election supplies to be used in the precincts. ⁴⁵
New York	The state board of elections establishes the minimum number of voting machines required in each polling place and the maximum number of voters that can vote on one voting machine. Such minimum number of voting machines shall be based on the voting machine in use, taking into account machine functionality and capability and the need for efficient and orderly elections and, in the case of a general or special election, the number of registered voters, excluding voters in inactive status, in the election district or, in the case of a primary election, the number of enrolled voters, excluding voters in inactive status. ⁴⁶
North Carolina	The county board of elections shall make available for each precinct voting place an adequate quantity of official ballots or equipment. ⁴⁷
North Dakota	The county auditor shall provide the number of ballots the auditor determines to be necessary. ⁴⁸ The counties take a look at the number of voters that have turned out in a precinct in previous elections and then order ballots totaling at least (secretary of state recommendation) 120 percent of that number. If they sense the turnout will be high or if they know that a precinct has grown in population, the county will order more ballots to accommodate the possible high turnout. ⁴⁹
Ohio	At least one percent more ballots than the total registration in the precinct except if a county chooses to provide ballots on demand. If a board so chooses, the board shall have prepared for each precinct at least five per cent more ballots for an election than previous similar elections. ⁵⁰
Oklahoma	It is the duty of the State Election Board to provide for each county election boards the supplies and ballots required by law to conduct the election. ⁵¹ Usually 90 percent of voter registration based on judgment of chief election official, considering highest probable turnout and experience in previous similar elections; Oklahoma Election Management System (OEMS) software determines the number of ballots printed for each precinct based on the number of registered voters of each party there and the mandatory equal representation of each candidate's name at the top of the ballot; counties use report from OEMS to distribute state-printed ballots to their precincts. ⁵²
Oregon	Each active registered voter is mailed a ballot. ⁵³
Pennsylvania	Fifty ballots of each party for every 45 registered electors of such party and fraction thereof, appearing upon the district register, and shall provide for each election district in which an election is to be held one book of 50 official ballots for every 45 registered electors and fraction thereof appearing upon the district register. ⁵⁴
Rhode Island	One voting booth shall be furnished for every 175 qualified electors. ⁵⁵
South Carolina	At least one voting machine for each 250 registered voters or portion thereof as practicable. ⁵⁶
South Dakota	For a primary, at least ten percent more than the number of votes cast for the gubernatorial candidate of the respective parties in the preceding gubernatorial primary election. For a general election, at least 10 percent more than the number of votes cast for all candidates for governor as shown by the returns of the preceding gubernatorial election. The county auditor shall also provide and retain in that office an ample supply of all official ballots, and if at any time before or during an election, an additional supply for any precinct shall be requested by the precinct superintendent, the county auditor shall immediately cause to be delivered, to the precinct superintendent, a supply of extra official ballots. If the supply of official ballots has been completely exhausted, the county auditor may make emergency substitution by delivering or authorizing the use of sample ballots or photocopies of the official ballot. The election board shall account for any sample ballots or photocopies authorized to be used. ⁵⁷
Tennessee	The coordinator of elections shall make rules for the minimum number of paper ballots. ⁵⁸ Each commission prints a number of paper ballots, which are only used for emergency purposes, equal to 4 percent or more of the number of registered voters at the polling place. The county election commission office reserves a number of paper ballots for each precinct equal to 5 percent of the number of voters used in figuring the number of paper ballots to be printed for the precinct. ⁵⁹

Ballot and voting machine minimums

Texas	Equal to at least the percentage of voters who voted in that precinct in the most recent corresponding election plus 25 percent of that number, except that the number of ballots provided may not exceed the total number of registered voters in the precinct. ⁶⁰ Number of voting machines based on: the number of votes cast at the polling place in previous, similar elections; the number of registered voters eligible to vote at a polling place; the number of units of equipment available; and any other relevant factors. ⁶¹
Utah	In an election using paper ballots, each election officer shall deliver ballots in an amount sufficient to meet voting needs. ⁶²
Vermont	For primary elections, the secretary of state shall furnish each town with a sufficient number of printed ballots based on the history of voter turnout in the town and in consultation with the town clerk. For general elections, a number of printed ballots approximately equal to 100 percent of the number of voters on the checklist for the primary election. If necessary due to unusual growth of the checklist, a town clerk may request additional ballots least 40 days before the election. For local ballots, the town clerk shall cause such number of ballots to be printed and furnished as the board of civil authority shall designate. ⁶³
Virginia	Each electoral board shall have printed the number of ballots it determines will be sufficient to conduct the election. ⁶⁴ Voting machines: Precincts with fewer than 750 registered voters, one machine; Between 750 and 1,500 registered voters, two machines; Between 1,500 and 2,250 registered voters, three machines; Between 2,250 and 3,000 registered voters, four machines; Between 3,000 and 3,750 registered voters, five machines; Between 3,750 and 4,500 registered voters, six machines; Between 4,500 and 5,000 registered voters, seven machines. The governing body of any county or city, which adopts for use at elections any electronic system which requires the voter to vote a ballot which is inserted in an electronic counter, shall provide for each precinct at least one voting booth with a marking device for each 425 registered voters or portion thereof and shall provide for each precinct at least one counting device. ⁶⁵
Washington	The auditor shall mail each active voter a ballot at least 18 days before a primary, general election, or special election. The auditor shall send each inactive voter either a ballot or an application to receive a ballot at least 18 days before a primary, general election, or special election. ⁶⁶
West Virginia	When paper ballots are used, the total number of regular official ballots printed shall equal one and one-twentieth times the number of registered voters eligible to vote that ballot. When paper ballots are used in conjunction with or as part of an electronic voting system, the total number of regular official ballots printed shall equal at a minimum eighty percent of the number of registered voters eligible to vote that ballot. ⁶⁷
Wisconsin	There shall be one voting booth for every 200 electors who voted at the last general election. ⁶⁸ For elections other than local elections the municipal clerks shall certify to their county clerk the approximate number of electors in the municipality. The county clerk shall total these estimates and order a sufficient supply to assure ballots for all electors and voting machines. ⁶⁹
Wyoming	Before the day of election the country clerk shall deliver to each precinct using an electronic voting system a sufficient number of voting devices and ballots. ⁷⁰

Early and Absentee Voting Trends in 2008

Figures from the 27 states where they are available indicate nearly one quarter of all primary ballots were cast before election day, either through the mail or at early polling stations.

Absentee and early voting

State	Excuse required to cast absentee ballot	Total ballots cast	Absentee ballots counted	Early ballots counted	Total ballots cast before election day	Percent of total ballots cast absentee	Percent of total ballots cast early	Percent of total ballots cast before election day
AR	Yes	544,170	8,502	69,723	78,225	1.56%	12.81%	14.38%
CA	No	9,068,415	3,777,094		3,777,094	41.65%		41.65%
DC	Yes	131,103	3,015		3,015	2.30%		2.30%
DE	Yes	146,613	2,624		2,624	1.79%		1.79%
FL	No	4,268,602		643,420	643,420		15.07%	15.07%
GA	No	2,024,392	32,561	215,336	247,897	1.61%	10.64%	12.25%
IL	Yes	2,986,982	85,206	221,442	306,648	2.85%	7.41%	10.27%
LA	Yes	577,496	5,867	20,718	26,585	1.02%	3.59%	4.60%
MD	Yes	1,199,163	49,094		49,094	4.09%		4.09%
MO	Yes	1,415,951	50,448		50,448	3.56%		3.56%
MS	Yes	577,438	7,524		7,524	1.30%		1.30%
NC	No	2,125,215			456,728			21.49%
NE	No	260,150			35,451			13.63%
NH	Yes	529,711	26,781		26,781	5.06%		5.06%
NJ	No	1,707,400	39,227		39,227	2.30%		2.30%
NM	No	254,657	30,854	49,709	80,563	12.12%		31.64%
OH	No	3,603,523	544,263		544,263	15.10%		15.10%
OK	No	752,261	13,589	25,490	39,079	1.81%	3.39%	5.19%
OR	No	1,170,526	1,170,526		1,170,526	100.00%		100.00%
PA	Yes	3,097,723	32,413		32,413	1.05%		1.05%
SC	Yes	977,650	34,941		34,941	3.57%		3.57%
TN	Yes	1,094,942	14,902	314,252	329,154	1.36%	28.70%	30.06%
TX	Yes	4,237,308		1,843,762	1,843,762	1.14%	43.51%	43.51%
UT	No	428,459	28,402		28,402	6.63%		6.63%
VT	No	196,715	26,756		26,756	13.60%		13.60%
WA	No	1,386,701	1,340,429		1,340,429	96.66%		96.66%
WI	No	1,524,360	81,531		81,531	5.35%		5.35%
Totals		46,287,626	7,406,549	3,403,852	11,802,580	16.00%	7.35%	24.42%

NOTES

In Washington, 36 of 38 counties cast all ballots by mail.

Oregon is an all vote-by-mail state.

Arkansas does not include six counties that have not yet reported data.

In Nebraska, both ballots cast in person and by mail are categorized as early ballots.

In North Carolina, absentee by mail and one-stop absentee (in-person early voting) data is combined.

New Mexico data is unofficial.

Mississippi does not include seven counties that have not yet reported data.

States not listed did not respond to electionline requests for data, did not collect the data separately at the state level, or have not yet finalized results or collected the data from their jurisdictions.

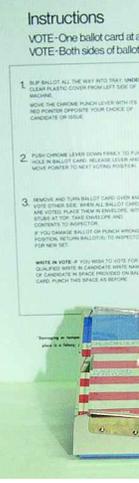
...voters took advantage of opportunities to cast absentee ballots at least in the states that provided data on the 2008 primaries. In the 12 states offering no-excuse absentee balloting, nearly 25 percent of voters voted by mail before election day.

In California, 41 percent of voters cast ballots before election day, similar to the 2006 vote but a 9 point jump when compared to the 2004 general election. Absentee voting was somewhat popular in Ohio, with 15 percent casting absentee ballots in the primary in 2008. Ohio began allowing no-excuse absentee voting in 2006.

Tennessee saw the use of no-excuse early and excuse-required absentee voting drop in the primary versus 2004 and 2006 general elections. While 47 percent of voters in both previous general elections voted early, just over 30 percent did the same during the state's Super Tuesday (February 5) primary.

Clearly, voters took advantage of opportunities to cast absentee ballots, at least in the states that provided data on the 2008 primaries. In the 12 states offering no-excuse absentee balloting, nearly 25 percent of voters voted by mail before election day. When excuses were required by state law, the number of by-mail voters dropped to 1.8 percent.

Provisional Voting



When referring to American election administration, both foreign and domestic observers often note how the process is highly decentralized and varies from state to state.⁷¹ Nowhere is this more evident than in the ways states handle provisional ballots.

Mandated by the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and in place in all states since 2004, provisional ballots ensure that no voter who believes he or she is registered to vote can be turned away without having the opportunity to cast a ballot. The provisional ballot is segregated from regular ballots and counted only if the voter's eligibility can be confirmed. Further, jurisdictions have the additional responsibility of informing voters whether their vote was counted, and if not, why.

The mandate has been implemented differently around the country. Why provisional ballots are issued and which ballots are eligible to be counted varies across state lines, and sometimes even within a state.

In the 2008 presidential primary, a number of states including Arizona, Maryland and Ohio issued high numbers of provisional ballots while others, including Indiana and Pennsylvania, issued relatively few. Eligibility varied as well. In Ohio and Utah more than three-quarters of provisional ballots cast were counted while in Texas and Louisiana less than a third were counted.

Some factors that can affect the number of ballots cast and counted include rules governing where a provisional ballot must be cast to be considered eligible.

In Ohio, provisional ballots are given to those who have moved within a county or within the state (after completing a change of residence form.) During the 2008 primary 123,432 provisional ballots were issued. More than 3.5 million ballots were cast in total.

Weather can also spike provisional ballot counts. In Maryland, icy primary day weather led to polling hours being extended for 90 minutes and the more than 10,000 ballots cast after the official close of polls were, per HAVA, provisional ballots.⁷²

Then there are states with extraordinarily low numbers of provisional ballots. Only 13 Vermont residents cast provisional ballots, largely because state rules allow most would-be provisional voters to cast regular ballots.⁷³

After the ballots are issued, states have differing rules on which ballots are eligible to be counted. More than half of the states don't count provisional ballots cast in the wrong precinct. This was a recent change for Maryland voters, and nearly 3,000 or approximately 13 percent of provisional ballots not counted were cast in the wrong district or ward.⁷⁴

Another challenge that emerged during the 2008 primary was, unlike in a general election, confusion over the nature of the vote. Closed primaries restricted voters to cast ballots only in the party in which they were registered. With the competitive portion of the GOP nomination process ending far earlier than the Democrats, an estimated 3 million registered Republicans cast ballots in Democratic primaries, according to a June poll conducted by Scripps Howard News Service and Ohio University.⁷⁵

Not as clear, however, is how many voters were given provisional ballots when, as Republican or unaffiliated voters, they were informed that they could not cast ballots in the Democratic primaries in states with closed contests.

In Oklahoma, voters who disputed their political affiliation were allowed to cast a provisional ballot for the party to which they stated they were affiliated. Of the 617

Provisional Voting

provisional ballots that were not counted, 181 were rejected (approximately 30 percent) by voters casting ballots in the wrong party. In Pennsylvania, more than half of the state's approximately 5,500 ballots were rejected because they were cast for the wrong political party.

In Ohio, a post-election report by the secretary of state said some poll workers mistakenly issued provisional ballots due to similar confusion over who was eligible to vote in each party's primary.

"Some poll workers erroneously required voters to use a provisional ballot when that person requested a partisan ballot of a different party than what that voter had voted in the next previous primary election. Such voters should have been instructed to sign a change of party affiliation form and they would have voted a regular ballot," the report stated.⁷⁶

Even within states, the rate of counting provisional ballots can differ significantly. Overall, Ohio counted approximately 80 percent of the provisional ballots that

were issued, but this varied between counties, with 100 percent of Summit County's (Akron) provisional ballots being counted compared with just over 55 percent of Lawrence County's (Ironton).⁷⁷

While the provisional ballots are generally considered as a ballot of last resort for those not on the voter list, this variation between and within states concerns some election experts, including Dan Tokaji, Ned Foley and Steven Huefner of the Mortiz College of Law at The Ohio State University.

In a paper issued last year, they wrote, "In general, we believe a system that reduces the need for provisional ballots is preferable to one that relies extensively on them. A large number of provisional ballots increases the risk that a close election will turn into a protracted post-election fight...Equally important is that local authorities follow the rules for counting provisional ballots that the state has set. This is necessary to ensure that voters are treated consistently across jurisdictions within the state."⁷⁸

Provisional voting

State	Total ballots cast	Provisional ballots cast	Provisional ballots counted	Provisional ballots rejected	Percent counted	Percent rejected	Percent of provisional ballots issued of total ballots cast	Provisional ballots as percentage of total ballots cast
AR	544,170	937	438	499	46.74%	53.26%	0.17%	0.08%
AZ	998,393	75,333	33,538	41,795	44.52%	55.48%	7.55%	3.36%
CT	507,166	217	52	165	23.96%	76.04%	0.04%	0.01%
DC	131,103	9,554	3,889	5,665	40.71%	59.29%	7.29%	2.97%
DE	146,613	36	34	2	94.44%	5.56%	0.02%	0.02%
IL	2,986,982	15,205	4,447	10,758	29.25%	70.75%	0.51%	0.15%
IN	1,691,013	2,391	686	1,705	28.69%	71.31%	0.14%	0.04%
KY	897,760	102	8	94	7.84%	92.16%	0.01%	0.00%
LA	545,515	2,634	132	2,502	5.01%	94.99%	0.48%	0.02%
MD	1,199,163	54,038	31,781	22,257	58.81%	41.19%	4.51%	2.65%
MI	1,491,261	276	110	166	39.86%	60.14%	0.02%	0.01%
MO	1,415,951	1,574	539	1,035	34.24%	65.76%	0.11%	0.04%
NC	2,125,215	31,381	19,698	11,683	62.77%	37.23%	1.48%	0.93%
OH	3,603,523	123,432	98,748	24,684	80.00%	20.00%	3.43%	2.74%
OK	752,261	831	214	617	25.75%	74.25%	0.11%	0.03%
PA	3,097,723	8,412	2,868	5,538	34.09%	65.83%	0.27%	0.09%
TX	4,237,308	9,912	2,972	6,940	29.98%	70.02%	0.23%	0.07%
UT	428,459	6,645	5,161	1,484	77.67%	22.33%	1.55%	1.20%
VT	196,715	13	10	3	76.92%	23.08%	0.01%	0.01%
WA	1,386,701	3,407	1,228	2,179	36.04%	63.96%	0.25%	0.09%
WI	1,524,360	564	179	385	31.74%	68.26%	0.04%	0.01%
Total	29,907,355	346,894	206,732	140,156	59.60%	40.05%	1.16%	0.69%

NOTES

Arkansas does not include six counties that had not yet reported provisional ballot data.

In Maryland, North Carolina and Pennsylvania, counted ballot data includes partially counted ballots.

Vermont law directs poll workers to offer a sworn affidavit to voters not on the checklist. If the voter swears they submitted a voter registration before the deadline, they are allowed to cast a regular ballot.

States not listed did not respond to requests for data, did not collect the data separately at the state level or had not yet finalized results or collected the data from jurisdictions.

Open and Closed Primaries

Despite the fact that political parties in most states have not changed how they conduct their presidential primary elections in years, one of the hurdles in this year's election was apparent voter confusion over open versus closed primaries.

Closed primaries restrict voting to party registrants. Only Democrats can participate in the Democratic primary. Open primaries allow crossing of party lines, while modified primaries permit unaffiliated voters to participate in one party's contest.

Because of the high degree of national interest and competitiveness of the contest, unaffiliated voters in many states with closed primaries sought to cast ballots in the Democratic primary.

Or they did not vote. In Oregon—which holds a closed primary—that meant as many as 22 percent of the state's registered voters were unable to participate.⁷⁹

In Kentucky, if a voter wished to switch her party affiliation in order to cast a ballot in the May 20 primary, she had to do so before Jan. 1, 2008.⁸⁰ Despite warnings and reminders from the state elections division in the days leading up to the primary, many of the 9,000 newly registered Kentuckians were confused and angered when they could not cast a ballot in the primary.

Once Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) became the presumptive Republican nominee, many Republican voters chose to cross party lines and vote Democratic in open primaries. In closed primaries,⁸¹ many Republicans, whether encouraged by media pundits or for other policy or personal reasons, chose to switch their registration to Democratic.

"Crossover voters," as they've been dubbed, were seen most dramatically in Pennsylvania where traditionally Republican counties are now heavily Democratic. Whether these voters change their registration yet again in advance of the general election remains to be seen—and has the potential to create another dash for registration four years from now if they do not.

It wasn't just voters who were confused, however. So were the army of election-day volunteers for candidates.

Voters in the District of Columbia told poll workers that they were registered independents but were informed by campaign volunteers for one Democratic candidate that they could cast ballots in the Democratic primary.⁸²

Another factor driving the confusion may have been that many states separated the presidential primary from their state and local primaries.

And of course it could be that the 3.5 million newly registered voters who headed to the polls this year might have simply been unfamiliar with the process.

Open and Closed Primaries

Primary type

This chart describes whether states that held presidential primaries (not caucuses) have open, closed or modified primaries.

Open primaries allow voters of any affiliation to vote for any party. **Closed primaries** allow only voters affiliated with a party to vote in its primary. **Modified primaries** may allow unaffiliated or independent voters to vote in any party's primaries, but those affiliated with a party must vote in their party's election.

STATE	ELECTION TYPE
Alabama	Open Primary ⁸³
Arizona	Closed Primary ⁸⁴
Arkansas	Open Primary ⁸⁵
California	Closed Primary (Republicans) Modified Primary (Democrats & Independents) ⁸⁶
Connecticut	Closed Primary ⁸⁷
Delaware	Closed Primary ⁸⁸
District of Columbia	Closed Primary ⁸⁹
Florida	Closed Primary ⁹⁰
Georgia	Open Primary (Closed Runoff) ⁹¹
Idaho	Open Primary (Republicans) ⁹²
Illinois	Closed Primary ⁹³
Indiana	Open Primary ⁹⁴
Kentucky	Closed Primary ⁹⁵
Louisiana	Closed Primary ⁹⁶
Maryland	Closed Primaries ⁹⁷
Massachusetts	Modified Primary (Unenrolled can vote either party) ⁹⁸
Michigan	Open Primary ⁹⁹
Mississippi	Open Primary ¹⁰⁰
Missouri	Open Primary ¹⁰¹
Montana	Open Primary (Democrats) ¹⁰²
Nebraska	Closed Primary ¹⁰³
New Hampshire	Modified Open Primary ¹⁰⁴

STATE	ELECTION TYPE
New Jersey	Modified Open Primary (Democrats & Republicans) Open for independent voters ¹⁰⁵
New Mexico	Closed Primary ¹⁰⁶
New York	Closed Primary ¹⁰⁷
North Carolina	Closed Primary ¹⁰⁸
Ohio	Modified Open Primary Vote in same primary as vote in last primary election or complete form at polls confirming party change ¹⁰⁹
Oklahoma	Closed Primary ¹¹⁰
Oregon	Closed Primary ¹¹¹
Pennsylvania	Closed Primary ¹¹²
Rhode Island	Closed Primary ¹¹³
South Carolina	Open Primary ¹¹⁴
South Dakota	Closed Primary ¹¹⁵
Tennessee	Open Primary ¹¹⁶
Texas	Open Primary ¹¹⁷
Utah	Closed Primary ¹¹⁸
Vermont	Open Primary ¹¹⁹
Virginia	Open Primary ¹²⁰
Washington	Open Primary ¹²¹
West Virginia	Open Primary (Democrats, Unaffiliated & Independents) ¹²²
Wisconsin	Open Primary ¹²³

SPOTLIGHT: VOTE CENTERS IN TIPPECANOE COUNTY, INDIANA

Note: The Pew Center on the States' Make Voting Work initiative is funding vote-center research in Tippecanoe and Wayne counties through a grant to Ball State University.

A competitive May 6 presidential primary brought record numbers of voters to the polls across Indiana. And while high turnout can always present a resource challenge for election administrators, in Tippecanoe County this was even more of a test as the county was using vote centers for the first time during a major election.

Vote centers, first implemented in Larimer County, Colo. in 2003, replace precinct-based polling places with fewer but generally larger centers and allow voters to cast their ballots anywhere across the county rather than at assigned locations.

Along with Tippecanoe, Cass and Wayne counties in Indiana were also selected by Secretary of State Todd Rokita (R) as pilot counties to use vote centers. Rokita has been a supporter of the concept and along with a team from his office first observed a vote-center election in Larimer County in 2005.¹²⁴

Tippecanoe County first used 22 vote centers during the 2007 municipal elections. For the 2008 primary, the county used 20 centers – this is compared with 92 polling places that would have been used if the election had been administered conventionally.

Both the convenience for voters and cost savings via fewer polling places and poll workers are cited as advantages of the vote center model.

“The vote center concept means voters no longer have to worry about finding the right precinct, because any

center in the county will work,” Rokita stated in a release.¹²⁵ The change translates to taxpayer savings by reducing the number of voting systems needed to run an election, reducing the number of election workers needed to run an election, and eliminating the need for the costly printing and storage of poll books.¹²⁵

COST SAVINGS IN TIPPECANOE

The price tag for the 2008 election seems to confirm Rokita’s assertion.

In a draft post-election analysis of vote centers in Tippecanoe County, Linda Phillips, the county’s clerk, said early data suggested the use of electronic poll books instead of paper poll books saved the county both storage and labor costs.

“We cannot print [paper poll books] during business hours because of the demand on our printers for other uses, so we must have staff work nights and weekends. The problem is even more acute during a county-wide election. During the 2006 election, we printed nearly 31,000 pages which took 47 overtime hours to accomplish,” the report said.¹²⁶

Election-day labor costs were similarly lower, with total poll-worker pay slashed by approximately 70 percent from just over \$70,000 to just over \$21,000. And while the report states it is challenging to compare overall vote center costs with a precinct-based election, the county estimates that a precinct-based election would have cost \$2.78 per voter while the vote center model was less expensive at \$1.88 per voter.¹²⁷

DETERMINING TURNOUT

In the months before the primary, the county began to estimate potential turnout and ponder the allocation of resources for the vote.

Initially, looking at the county’s voting history going back to 1990 suggested preparing for 15,000 to 20,000 voters. However, watching neighboring states’ primaries and previous partisan election results, the county estimated 30,000 voters would cast ballots. Tippecanoe County had 91,736 registered voters when rolls closed for the primary.¹²⁸

The county also used satellite absentee voting beginning April 17, allowing county officials a predictor of voter interest for election day. More than 11,000 ballots were cast at early voting sites.

“As we progressed through the early voting process, we began to get a little nervous about the total turnout; we made some contingency plans in case turnout was substantially over our estimates. We purchased additional bar code scanners as this allows us to check in voters more quickly and we identified more extra workers who could fill in on election day in the event of overwhelming turnout. These contingency plans proved to be a good idea; interest in the election exceeded even our generous estimates as nearly 40,000 voters voted in the primary,” the report stated.¹²⁹

Tippecanoe officials also had turnout estimates for each of the 20 vote centers.

Each was sorted into three categories of predicted turnout: tier one centers

where they expected 1,800 or more voters; tier two centers where they expected 1,200-1,800 voters; and tier three centers where they expected fewer than 1,200 voters.¹³⁰

After the election, Phillips said there were two tier-three centers that ended up having enough voters to be tier-one centers. This was discovered early in the day and was addressed by getting more voting equipment to the two sites and by using the media to alert people to go to other centers that weren't receiving as many voters.¹³¹

One concern some voters voiced was the lack of centers in rural areas. Of the county's 20 vote centers, 18 were in the main population centers of Lafayette and West Lafayette (home of Purdue University).

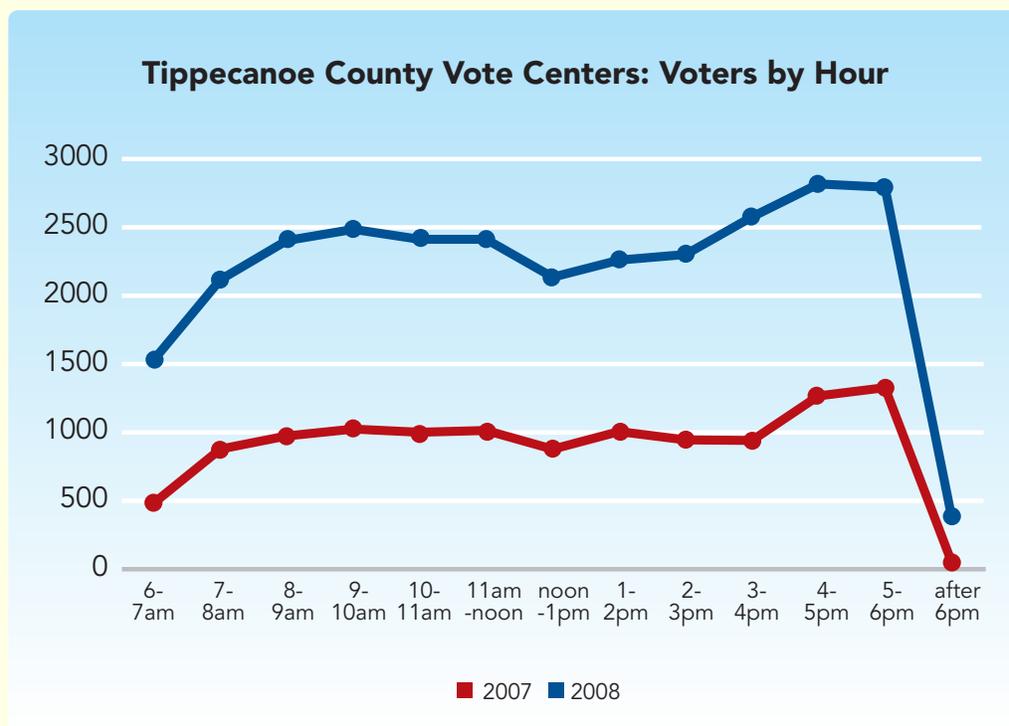
Finding rural vote centers was not due to a lack of effort, according to the report. The county explored vote centers in three smaller townships – Jackson, Randolph and Shelby – and found no buildings that were accessible under the Americans with Disabilities Act. However, in examining

turnout data, the county found that 46.2 percent of registered voters in "rural" precincts voted, greater than the county total of 43.4 percent.¹³²

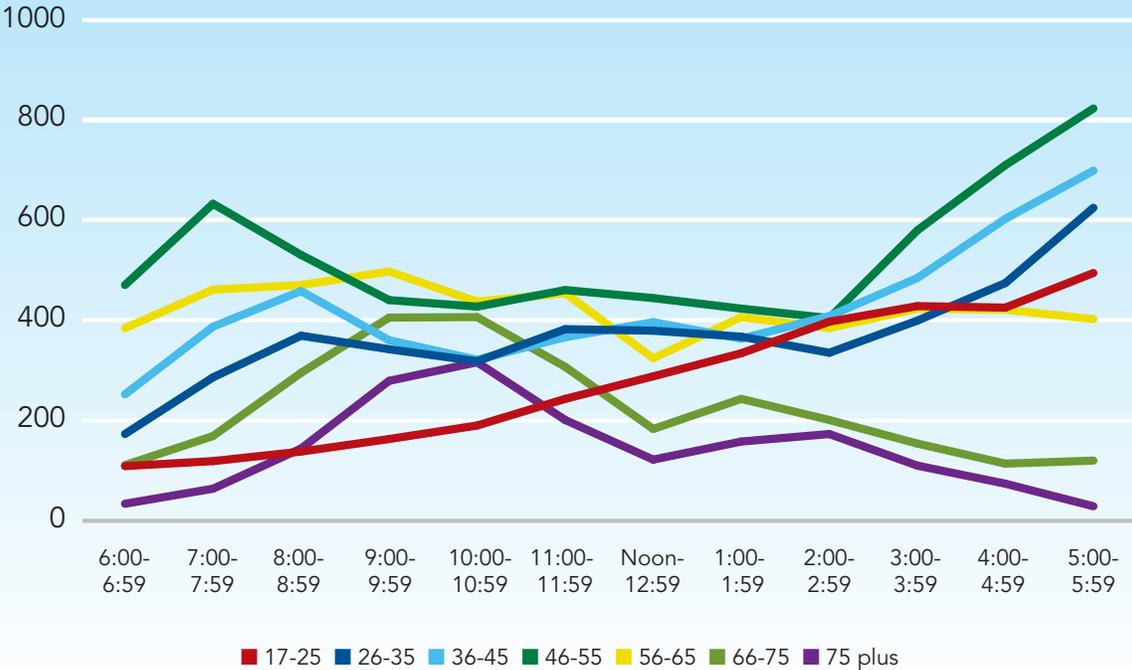
Along with turnout, Phillips cited other challenges vote centers presented: more computer literate poll workers are needed who can use the electronic poll books to check voters in; training poll workers requires more effort; and additional voter education efforts are needed.

To check-in voters from all over the county, each vote center (including early satellite voting locations) was equipped with an electronic poll book. One of the benefits of the poll books is they can generate a great deal of data such as what time of day people vote, which can be useful in future decisions allocating resources during an election.

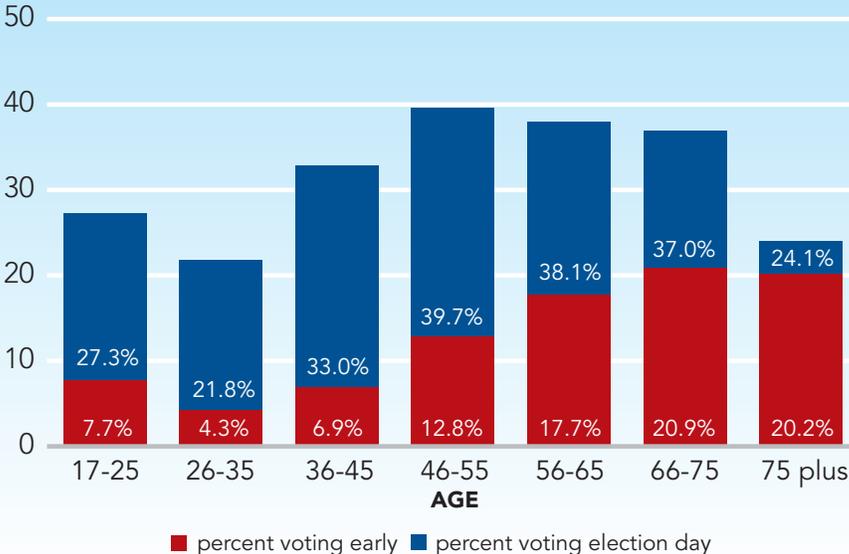
Some of the data generated during Tippecanoe County's May 2008 primary:¹³³



Tippecanoe County Vote Centers: Age/Time of Election Day Voters



Tippecanoe County Vote Centers: Percentage of Voters by Age Group Who Voted Early and On Election Day



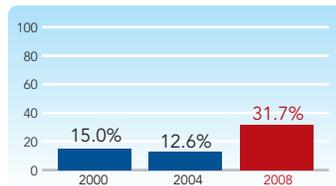


Snapshot of the States

Alabama

DATE: Feb. 5
 PRIMARY TYPE: Open
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 2,776,937

TURNOUT:

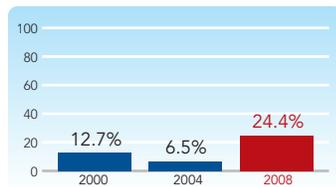


VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots
 EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

Arizona

DATE: Feb. 5
 PRIMARY TYPE: Closed
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 2,713,070

TURNOUT:

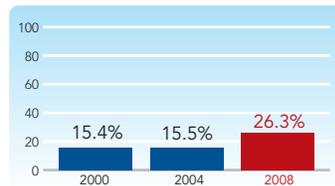


PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 44.5%
 VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, DRE with VVPAT (voter-verified paper audit trail) and ballot marking device
 EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

Arkansas*

DATE: Feb. 5
 PRIMARY TYPE: Open
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 1,570,961

TURNOUT:



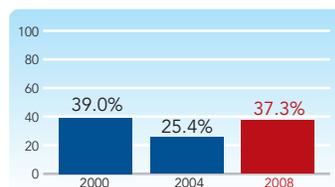
ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 8,502
 IN-PERSON EARLY BALLOTS: 69,723
 PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 46.7%
 VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, DRE with VVPAT and DRE

*Data from six counties was not provided for absentee or early voting.

California

DATE: Feb. 5
 PRIMARY TYPE: Closed for Republicans, Democratic primary open to unaffiliated voters
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 15,712,753

TURNOUT:

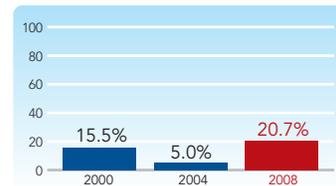


ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 3,777,094
 VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, DRE with VVPAT and ballot-marking device

Connecticut

DATE: Feb. 5
 PRIMARY TYPE: Closed
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 1,108,486

TURNOUT:

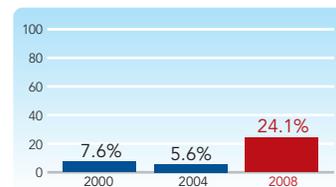


PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 24.0%
 VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots and vote-by-phone system
 EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

Delaware

DATE: Feb. 5
 PRIMARY TYPE: Closed
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 567,363

TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 2,624
 PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 94.4%
 VOTING SYSTEM(S): DRE

NOTE: Turnout data is total ballots cast for president divided by the voting eligible population (VEP). The VEP data from 2000, 2004 and 2008 is from the United States Election Project. Votes cast for president for 2000 and 2004 is from the Federal Election Commission unless otherwise noted. VEP is used instead of registered voters because how and when states purge their voter registration rolls differs. All other data is derived from state election Web sites and from email correspondence and phone calls with state election officials. Provisional ballot and absentee ballot information is not listed for all states because some states did not respond to requests for data, some do not yet have the data available and some did not collect that data.

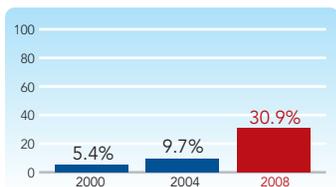
District of Columbia

DATE: Feb. 12

PRIMARY TYPE: Closed

REGISTERED VOTERS: 377,007

TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 3,015

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 40.7%

VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots and DRE

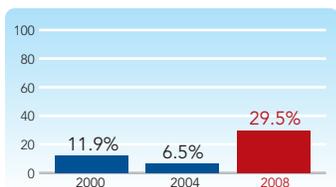
Florida

DATE: Jan. 29

PRIMARY TYPE: Closed

REGISTERED VOTERS: 10,203,112

TURNOUT:



IN-PERSON EARLY BALLOTS: 643,420

VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots and DRE

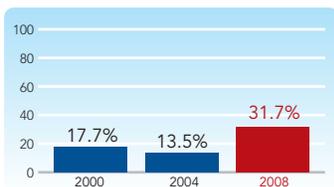
Georgia

DATE: Feb. 5

PRIMARY TYPE: Open

REGISTERED VOTERS: 5,237,481

TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 32,561

IN-PERSON EARLY BALLOTS: 215,336

VOTING SYSTEM(S): DRE

Idaho

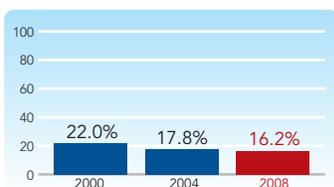
DATE: May 27

(The Democratic primary was non-binding. Democratic delegates were selected at a Feb. 5 caucus.)

PRIMARY TYPE: Open

REGISTERED VOTERS: 721,269

TURNOUT:



VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, punch card, hand-counted paper ballots and ballot-marking device

EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

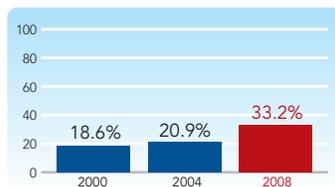
Illinois

DATE: Feb. 5

PRIMARY TYPE: Closed

REGISTERED VOTERS: 7,304,563

TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 85,206

IN-PERSON EARLY BALLOTS: 221,442

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 29.3%

VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, DRE with WVPAT and ballot-marking device

EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

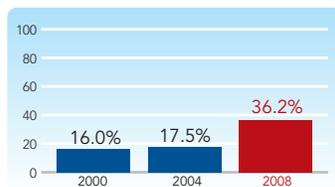
Indiana

DATE: May 6

PRIMARY TYPE: Open

REGISTERED VOTERS: 4,318,557

TURNOUT:



PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 28.7%

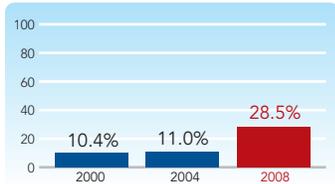
VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, DRE and ballot-marking device

EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

NOTE: Turnout data is total ballots cast for president divided by the voting eligible population (VEP). The VEP data from 2000, 2004 and 2008 is from the United States Election Project. Votes cast for president for 2000 and 2004 is from the Federal Election Commission unless otherwise noted. VEP is used instead of registered voters because how and when states purge their voter registration rolls differs. All other data is derived from state election Web sites and from email correspondence and phone calls with state election officials. Provisional ballot and absentee ballot information is not listed for all states because some states did not respond to requests for data, some do not yet have the data available and some did not collect that data.

Kentucky

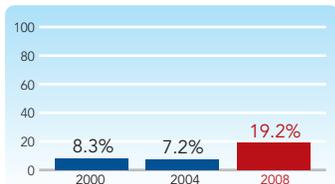
DATE: May 20
 PRIMARY TYPE: Closed
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 2,857,231
 TURNOUT:



PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 7.8%
 VOTING SYSTEM(S): DRE and Optically scanned paper ballots
 EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

Louisiana

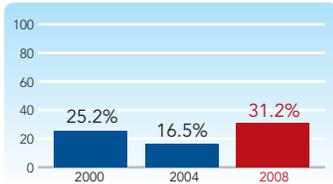
DATE: Feb. 9
 PRIMARY TYPE: Closed
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 2,842,402
 TURNOUT:



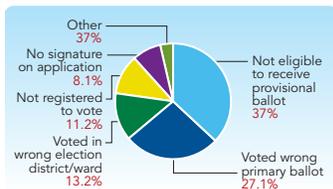
ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 5,867
 IN-PERSON EARLY BALLOTS: 20,718
 PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 5.0%
 VOTING SYSTEM(S): DRE

Maryland

DATE: Feb. 12
 PRIMARY TYPE: Closed
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 3,135,773
 TURNOUT:



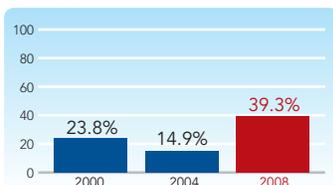
ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 49,094
 PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 58.8% (includes partially counted ballots)
 REASONS PROVISIONAL BALLOTS NOT COUNTED:



VOTING SYSTEM(S): DRE

Massachusetts

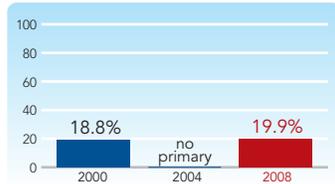
DATE: Feb. 5
 PRIMARY TYPE: Modified—
 independents can vote in either primary
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 4,011,551
 TURNOUT:



VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, ballot-marking device and DRE with VVPAT
 EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

Michigan

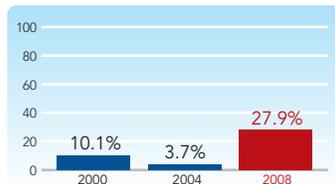
DATE: Jan. 15
 PRIMARY TYPE: Open
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 7,141,914
 TURNOUT:



PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 39.9%
 VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots and ballot-marking device
 EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

Mississippi*

DATE: March 11
 PRIMARY TYPE: Open
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 1,777,683
 TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 7,524
 VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots and DRE with VVPAT
 EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

*Data from 7 counties not included.

NOTE: Turnout data is total ballots cast for president divided by the voting eligible population (VEP). The VEP data from 2000, 2004 and 2008 is from the United States Election Project. Votes cast for president for 2000 and 2004 is from the Federal Election Commission unless otherwise noted. VEP is used instead of registered voters because how and when states purge their voter registration rolls differs. All other data is derived from state election Web sites and from email correspondence and phone calls with state election officials. Provisional ballot and absentee ballot information is not listed for all states because some states did not respond to requests for data, some do not yet have the data available and some did not collect that data.

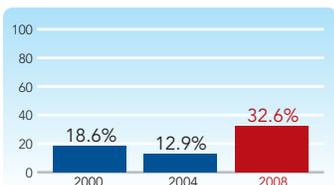
Missouri

DATE: Feb. 5

PRIMARY TYPE: Open

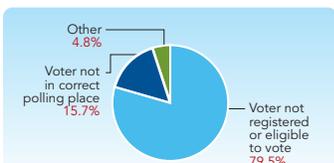
REGISTERED VOTERS: 3,904,461

TURNOUT:



PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 34.2%

REASONS PROVISIONAL BALLOTS NOT COUNTED:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 50,448

VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, ballot-marking device and DRE with VVPAT,

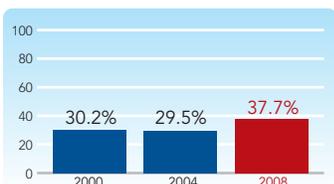
Montana

DATE: June 3

PRIMARY TYPE: Democrats—open primary

REGISTERED VOTERS: 277,138

TURNOUT:



VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, hand-counted paper ballots and ballot-marking device

EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

Nebraska

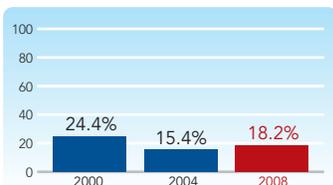
DATE: May 13

(Democratic primary was non-binding. Democratic delegates were selected at a Feb. 9 caucus.)

PRIMARY TYPE: Closed

REGISTERED VOTERS: 1,117,495

TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE/EARLY BALLOTS: 35,451

VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots and ballot-marking device

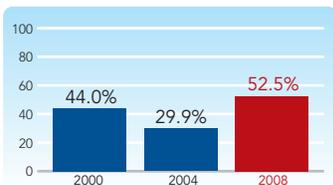
New Hampshire

DATE: Jan. 8

PRIMARY TYPE: Modified—independents can vote in either primary

REGISTERED VOTERS: 885,494

TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 26,781

VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, hand-counted paper ballots and vote-by-phone system

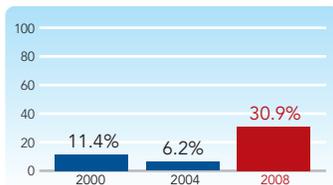
New Jersey

DATE: Feb. 5

PRIMARY TYPE: Modified—independents can vote in either primary

REGISTERED VOTERS: 4,845,847

TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 39,227

VOTING SYSTEM(S): DRE

New Mexico

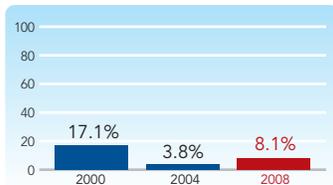
DATE: June 3

(Republican presidential primary only. Democrats held a caucus on Feb 9, 2008 with 148,740 votes cast.)

PRIMARY TYPE: Closed

REGISTERED VOTERS: 1,085,854

TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 30,854

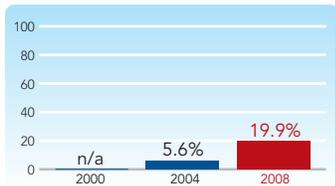
IN-PERSON EARLY BALLOTS: 49,709

VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots and ballot-marking device

NOTE: Turnout data is total ballots cast for president divided by the voting eligible population (VEP). The VEP data from 2000, 2004 and 2008 is from the United States Election Project. Votes cast for president for 2000 and 2004 is from the Federal Election Commission unless otherwise noted. VEP is used instead of registered voters because how and when states purge their voter registration rolls differs. All other data is derived from state election Web sites and from email correspondence and phone calls with state election officials. Provisional ballot and absentee ballot information is not listed for all states because some states did not respond to requests for data, some do not yet have the data available and some did not collect that data.

New York

DATE: Feb. 5
 PRIMARY TYPE: Closed
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 11,363,178
 TURNOUT:

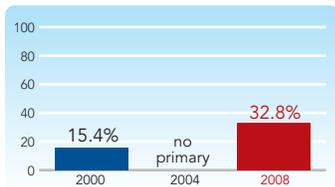


VOTING SYSTEM(S): Lever, ballot-marking device and DRE with VVPAT

EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

North Carolina

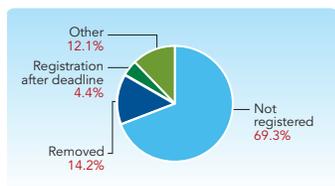
DATE: May 6
 PRIMARY TYPE: Closed
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 5,765,303
 TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE/EARLY BALLOTS: 456,728

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 62.8%

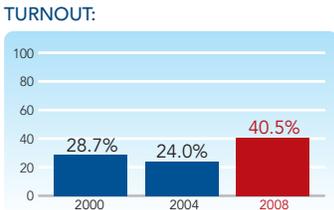
REASONS PROVISIONAL BALLOTS NOT COUNTED:



VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, ballot-marking device and DRE with VVPAT

Ohio

DATE: March 4
 PRIMARY TYPE: Vote in same primary as vote in last primary election
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 7,826,480
 TURNOUT:



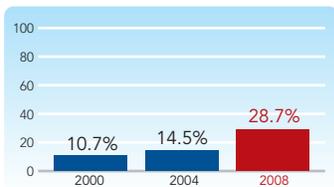
ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 544,263

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 81.0%

VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, ballot-marking device and DRE with VVPAT

Oklahoma

DATE: Feb. 5
 PRIMARY TYPE: Closed
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 2,022,537
 TURNOUT:

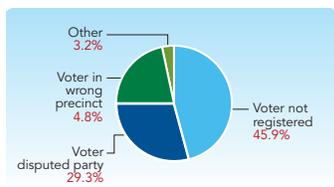


ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 13,589

IN-PERSON EARLY BALLOTS: 25,490

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 25.8%

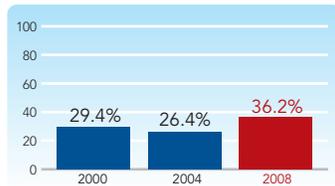
REASONS PROVISIONAL BALLOTS NOT COUNTED:



VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots and vote-by-phone system

Oregon

DATE: May 20
 PRIMARY TYPE: Closed
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 2,017,369
 TURNOUT:

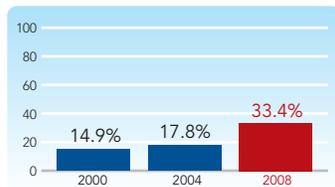


ABSENTEE BALLOTS: All mail ballots

VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned vote-by-mail ballots and Alternative Format Ballot (AFB) for individuals unable to vote using a regular printed ballot. The AFB allows voters to use a computer, scanner, and printer to mark, print or verify a ballot.

Pennsylvania

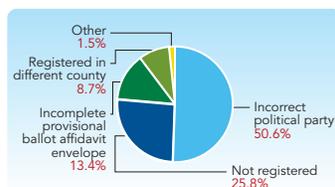
DATE: April 22
 PRIMARY TYPE: Closed
 REGISTERED VOTERS: 8,320,083
 TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 32,413

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 34.1%

REASONS PROVISIONAL BALLOTS NOT COUNTED:



VOTING SYSTEM(S): Lever, optically scanned paper ballots, DRE and ballot-marking device

NOTE: Turnout data is total ballots cast for president divided by the voting eligible population (VEP). The VEP data from 2000, 2004 and 2008 is from the United States Election Project. Votes cast for president for 2000 and 2004 is from the Federal Election Commission unless otherwise noted. VEP is used instead of registered voters because how and when states purge their voter registration rolls differs. All other data is derived from state election Web sites and from email correspondence and phone calls with state election officials. Provisional ballot and absentee ballot information is not listed for all states because some states did not respond to requests for data, some do not yet have the data available and some did not collect that data.

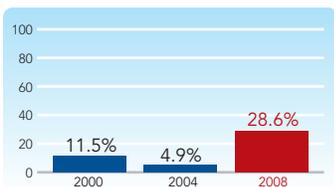
Rhode Island

DATE: March 4

PRIMARY TYPE: Closed

REGISTERED VOTERS: 665,091

TURNOUT:



VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots and ballot-marking device

EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

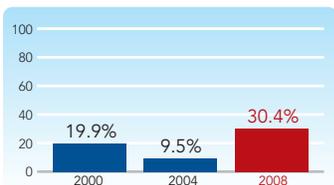
South Carolina

DATE: Jan. 19 (Republican);
Jan. 26 (Democrat)

PRIMARY TYPE: Open

REGISTERED VOTERS: 2,246,242

TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 34,941

VOTING SYSTEM(S): DRE

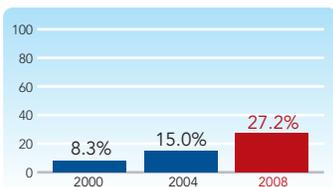
South Dakota

DATE: June 3

PRIMARY TYPE: Closed

REGISTERED VOTERS: 453,133

TURNOUT:



VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots and ballot-marking device

EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

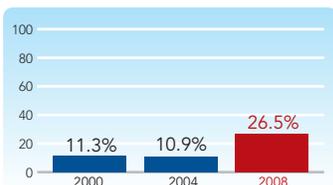
Tennessee

DATE: Feb. 5

PRIMARY TYPE: Open

REGISTERED VOTERS: 3,666,824

TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 14,902

IN-PERSON EARLY BALLOTS: 314,252

VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots and DRE

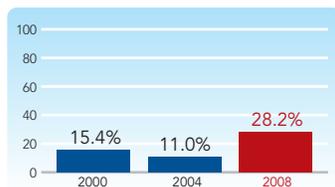
Texas

DATE: March 4

PRIMARY TYPE: Open

REGISTERED VOTERS: 12,752,417

TURNOUT:



IN-PERSON EARLY BALLOTS: 1,843,762

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 30.0%

VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, DRE and ballot-marking device

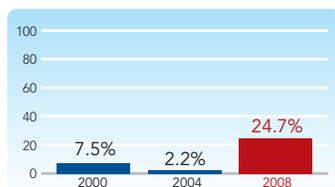
Utah

DATE: Feb. 5

PRIMARY TYPE: Closed

REGISTERED VOTERS: 1,319,650

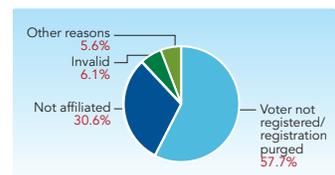
TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 28,402

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 77.7%

REASONS PROVISIONAL BALLOTS NOT COUNTED:



VOTING SYSTEM(S): DRE with VVPAT

NOTE: Turnout data is total ballots cast for president divided by the voting eligible population (VEP). The VEP data from 2000, 2004 and 2008 is from the United States Election Project. Votes cast for president for 2000 and 2004 is from the Federal Election Commission unless otherwise noted. VEP is used instead of registered voters because how and when states purge their voter registration rolls differs. All other data is derived from state election Web sites and from email correspondence and phone calls with state election officials. Provisional ballot and absentee ballot information is not listed for all states because some states did not respond to requests for data, some do not yet have the data available and some did not collect that data.

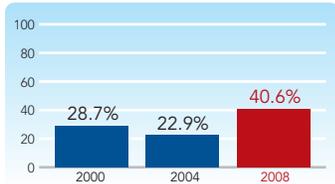
Vermont

DATE: March 4

PRIMARY TYPE: Open

REGISTERED VOTERS: 421,987

TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 26,756

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 76.9%
(Only 13 provisional ballots were cast. State rules allow many would-be provisional voters to cast regular ballots.)

VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, hand-counted paper ballots and vote-by-phone system

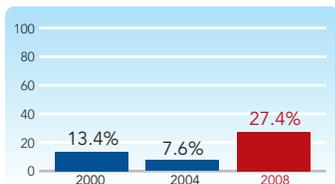
Virginia

DATE: Feb. 12

PRIMARY TYPE: Open

REGISTERED VOTERS: 4,619,580

TURNOUT:



VOTING SYSTEM(S): DRE, Optically scanned paper ballots and ballot-marking device

EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

Washington*

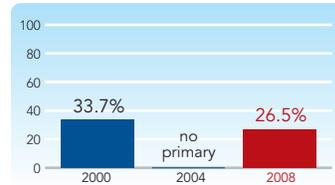
DATE: Feb. 19

(The Democratic primary was non-binding. Delegates were selected at a caucus.)

PRIMARY TYPE: Open

REGISTERED VOTERS: 3,311,503

TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 1,340,429
(36 of 38 counties all mail-in ballots)

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 36.0%

VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, DRE with VVPAT and ballot-marking device

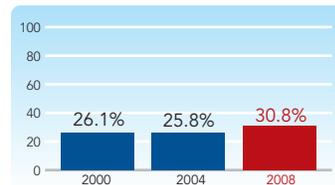
West Virginia

DATE: May 13

PRIMARY TYPE: Democrats, Unaffiliated & Independents - Open

REGISTERED VOTERS: 1,183,495

TURNOUT:



VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, DRE with VVPAT, hand-counted paper ballots and ballot-marking device

EARLY AND ABSENTEE: Unavailable

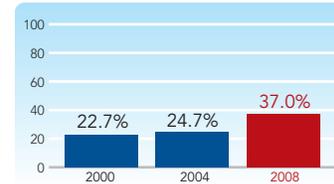
Wisconsin

DATE: Feb. 5

PRIMARY TYPE: Open

REGISTERED VOTERS: 3,304,419

TURNOUT:



ABSENTEE BALLOTS: 81,531

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS COUNTED: 31.7%

VOTING SYSTEM(S): Optically scanned paper ballots, hand-counted paper ballots, DRE with VVPAT and ballot-marking device

Endnotes and Methodology

Research was compiled through the use of primary and secondary sources, including data derived from state law, state election division Web sites, email and phone correspondence with state and local election officials, news accounts and information provided by other non-governmental organizations.

All sources are cited below in the endnotes.

The opinions expressed by election officials, lawmakers and other interested parties in this document do not reflect the views of nonpartisan, non-advocacy electionline.org or The Pew Charitable Trusts.

All questions concerning research should be directed to Sean Greene, project manager, research at sgreene@electionline.org.

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45. New Mexico Statutes §1-11-18.
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48. North Dakota Century Code §16.1-06-16.
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