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Projections of the Population of Voting Age for States: November 1982

This report presents projections of the population of voting age for States on November 1, 1982, by broad age groups as a reference for the primary elections and the November general election for members of the 98th Congress of the United States. Projections are shown in table 1 for the population 18 years of age and older (the legal voting age since the passage of the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in the early 1970's) and for ages 18 to 24, 25 to 44, 45 to 64, and 65 and over. The projections relate to the resident population as counted in the decennial census, including members of the Armed Forces where they reside at their duty stations. They exclude the population overseas—currently about 500,000 Armed Forces and 50,000 Federal civilian employees plus their dependents of voting age—who would be eligible to vote by absentee ballot in their home State.

Table 2 shows April 1, 1980, census counts for the voting-age population by sex by State for the same four age groups, as well as percent female, median age of the voting-age population, and the percentage of the total populations which is of voting age. Other 1980 census data on race and Spanish origin of the voting-age population are presented in table 3 by State.

Table 4 contains estimates of the voting-age population of States for the Congressional elections from 1972 to 1980 and

the percentage casting votes for U.S. Representatives at each election. Table 5 shows the percentage voting in the United States for both President and Representatives since 1930. An appendix presents dates of all Congressional primaries and runoffs for the 98th Congress, many of which are scheduled late in the year because of Congressional redistricting.

GENERAL TRENDS

The voting-age population of the United States is projected to reach approximately 170 million persons by November 1982, increases of 5 million since the last Congressional election in 1980 and 29 million since November 1972. This exceeds the growth of 28 million during the preceding 10 years, 11 million of which resulted from the lowering of the voting age to 18 after 1970. This phenomenal growth over the last two decades is the result of much of the baby boom generation reaching adulthood. Although the voting-age population will continue to grow, the decline in the number of births during the 1960's will slow the amount of growth during the 1980's.

The rapid growth of the young adult population during the 1970's had the effect of shifting the median age of the voting-age population down from 42 in 1970 to 40 in 1980. In November 1982, 2 out of every 5 persons of voting age

Table A. Population of Voting Age, By Decade

(As of November 1 of the year specified)

Year	Population of voting age	Increase during preceding decade	
		Number	Percent
1982.....	169,342,000	28,565,000	20.3
1972.....	140,777,000	27,825,000	24.6
1962.....	112,952,000	13,023,000	13.0
1952.....	99,929,000	13,464,000	15.6
1942.....	86,465,000	10,697,000	14.1
1932.....	75,768,000	-	-

Source: Table 5.

will be between the ages of 25 and 44 and nearly 1 out of 5 will be under 25 (table 1).

Women represented the majority of the 1980 voting-age population in all States except Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada, and Wyoming (table 2). By November 1982, they will represent 52.4 percent of the national voting-age population, 8 million more women than men, 5 million of whom will be aged 65 and over (table B). Men 18 to 24 years old have a slight majority over women, but by age 45, women clearly predominate in the voting-age population and represent about 60 percent of persons 65 and over.

Race and Spanish origin. In 1980, the Nation's population of voting age included 17 million Blacks, 9 million persons of Spanish origin, 2.5 million Asian and Pacific Islanders, and 865,000 American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts (table 3). Blacks constitute 10.5 percent of the total national electorate (table C). While the Black outmigration from the South which began in World War I and has spread the settlement of Blacks throughout the United States has considerably equalized the regional distribution of Blacks, they still constitute 1 in every 6 persons of voting age in the South. Two-thirds of the District of Columbia's electorate is Black, and States with high proportions of Blacks in the voting-age population are Mississippi (31 percent), South Carolina and Louisiana (27 percent), Georgia (24 percent), Alabama (23 percent), Maryland (21 percent), and North Carolina (20 percent). New York has the largest Black electorate (1.6 million) followed by California, Texas, and Illinois (more than 1 million).

The Spanish-origin population of voting age in 1980 was half that for Blacks (5.5 percent). Most of the Spanish-origin population is located in the West and in Texas, New York, and Florida. New Mexico has the highest percentage of the voting-age population of Spanish origin (33.1), followed by Texas (17.7), California (16.1), and Arizona (13.3). California and Texas together contain one-half the Spanish-origin electorate (2.8 million and 1.8 million, respectively, mostly Mexican), followed by New York (1.1 million, mostly Puerto Rican), and Florida (629,000, mostly Cuban). Nearly 70 percent of the voting-age population of Spanish origin reside in these four States.

The Asian and Pacific Islander population of voting age also is highly concentrated in a few States. Only in the West does this group constitute a significant portion of the electorate (4.8 percent). About 60 percent of Hawaii's voting-age population in 1980 was Asian and Pacific Islander (mostly Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and Hawaiian). The only other State to have appreciably more than 2 percent of this group in its voting electorate is California (5.2 percent). California and Hawaii together have 1.3 million, or more than half of this population group.

The American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut population represent about 14 percent of the Alaskan voting-age total. In a few other States, this population group constitutes 4 to 7 percent: New Mexico (6.6), Oklahoma (4.8), South Dakota (4.7), Arizona (4.3), and Montana (3.7). Two States, California and Oklahoma, have over 100,000 persons of voting-age in this group.

Table B. Population of Voting Age, by Sex and Age: November 1982

Sex	18 and over	18 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 and over
Total.....	169,342,000	29,917,000	67,987,000	44,475,000	26,963,000
Male.....	80,667,000	15,061,000	33,602,000	21,148,000	10,846,000
Female.....	88,675,000	14,856,000	34,385,000	23,327,000	16,117,000
Percent female.....	52.4	49.7	50.6	52.4	59.8

Table C. Population of Voting Age, by Race and Spanish Origin, for Regions: 1980 Census

Race or Spanish origin	United States	Region			
		Northeast	North Central	South	West
Total.....thousands..	162,791	36,052	41,947	53,735	31,057
Percent:					
Black.....	10.5	8.9	8.1	16.7	4.9
American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut.....	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.4	1.4
Asian and Pacific Islander.....	1.5	1.1	0.6	0.6	4.8
Spanish origin.....	5.5	4.5	1.8	5.2	12.2

Source: Table 3.

Voter participation. Voter participation in Congressional elections in the non-Presidential election years has traditionally lagged well behind that in Presidential years. Unless economic or political issues bolster the turnout, the voting trend shown in table 4 for 1974 and 1978 suggests that voter participation in the United States in 1982 could drop to the lowest level since 1942, when only 32.5 percent of the voting-age population voted for Representatives. The percent voting for U.S. Representatives declined from 43.8 to 35.8 between 1970 and 1974; possibly half of this decline was the result of the lowering of the voting age to 18. The percent voting for Representatives dropped again from 1974 to 1978, falling to 34.5, and in the Presidential election years of 1976 and 1980, the percent voting for Representatives fell from 48.9 to 47.5. In 1978, the only three States to have more than 50 percent voting for Representatives were Minnesota, South Dakota, and Montana (table 4).

Population ineligible to vote. The population of voting age includes a relatively modest number of persons who meet the age requirement but cannot vote; this number has been appreciably smaller since 1972 because of shortened residence requirements. Aliens, both legal and illegal, are the principal group of ineligible voting-age persons. Based on the Current Population Survey, it is estimated that there will be approximately 6 million legal aliens 18 years and over residing in the United States in November 1982; about 4 percent of the total voting-age population. In addition, illegal aliens will be ineligible, some of whom may have been counted in the 1980 census. Somewhat more than 500,000 persons will be ineligible to vote because they will be in prisons, mental hospitals, or other institutions.

METHODOLOGY

The estimates of the population of voting age for States on November 1, 1980, and projections for 1982 were based on the 1980 census advance report counts and provisional July 1, 1981, estimates of the resident population of States by age. For November 1, 1982, the 1980-81 trend in the proportion in each age group was extended 16 months to November 1982 and applied to State totals projected for the date. The State totals themselves were extrapolated from the 1980-81 trend and were adjusted to independent national projections for November 1, 1982. For November 1, 1980, the proportion of the population age 18 and over was interpolated from the April 1, 1980, census and the July 1, 1981, estimate, applied to a State estimate for the date, and adjusted to national controls.

Estimates of the voting-age population for each State for the elections of November 1972 to 1978 have been revised to make them consistent with recently released intercensal State population totals for July 1, 1970, to 1979 related to the 1980 census count. The proportion 18 and over of each State's total population as of the 1980 and 1970 censuses was interpolated to November 1, 1972, 1974, 1976, and 1978 and applied to State totals based on the intercensal estimates series and adjusted to independent national controls 18 and over for each date.

The percent voting in each election was obtained by dividing the reported number of voters for the House of Representatives for each State by the estimated population 18 and over for November 1 of each election year. The percent voting as shown in table 4 may not be a fair representation of voter participation in certain States. In Arkansas, Florida, and Oklahoma, votes may not have been tabulated for all Congressional seats because uncontested elections do not require tabulation. In Louisiana, the November general election is used as a runoff election (where necessary) for the State's open primary.

1980 CENSUS SOURCES AND DEFINITIONS

All estimates and projections shown in the report are consistent with 1980 census *Advance Reports*, PHC80-V. The 1980 census counts shown in tables 2 and 3, however, are derived from final census tabulations contained in Summary Tape File 1, and the detail will appear in final census reports PC80-1-B later this year. Final tabulations reflect corrections of errors in the advance reports. The median ages shown in table 2 were computed from data for single year of age developed from the advance report counts.

Race. The census data on race reflect self-identification by respondents. It does not denote any clear-cut scientific definition of biological stock.

The category "White" includes persons who indicated their race as White, as well as persons who did not classify themselves in one of the specified race categories listed on the questionnaire but entered a response such as Canadian, German, Italian, Lebanese, or Polish. In the 1980 census, persons who did not classify themselves in one of the specific race categories but marked "Other" and wrote in entries such as Cuban, Puerto Rican, or Mexican were included in the "Other" race category; in the 1970 census, most of these persons were included in the "White" category.

The category "Black" includes persons who indicated their race as Black or Negro, as well as persons who did not classify themselves in one of the specific race categories listed on the questionnaire but reported entries such as Jamaican, Black Puerto Rican, West Indian, Haitian, or Nigerian.

The categories "American Indian," "Eskimo," and "Aleut" include persons who classified themselves as such in one of the specific race categories. In addition, persons who did not report themselves in one of the specific race categories but entered the name of an Indian tribe were classified as American Indian.

In this report, the category "Asian and Pacific Islander" includes persons who indicated their race as Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Asian Indian, Hawaiian, Guamanian, or Samoan. Persons who did not report themselves in one of the specific race categories but reported a write-in entry indicating one of the nine categories listed above were classified accordingly.

The category "Other" includes Asian and Pacific Islander groups not listed separately (e.g., Cambodian, Laotian, Pakistani, Fiji Islander) and other races not included in the specific categories listed on the questionnaire.

Differences between 1980 and 1970 census counts by race seriously affect the comparability for some race groups. First, Spanish-origin persons reported their race differently in the 1980 census than in the 1970 census; this difference in reporting has a substantial impact on the counts and comparability for the "White" and "Other" populations. Second, in 1970, most persons who marked the "Other" race category and wrote in a Spanish designation, such as Mexican, Venezuelan, or Latino, were reclassified as "White". In 1980, such persons were not reclassified but remained in the "Other" race category. In 1980, 40 percent of the Spanish-origin population was classified as "Other," compared with only 1 percent in 1970. Consequently, 1980 population totals for "White" and "Other" races are not comparable to corresponding 1970 figures.

The 1980 count for the Asian and Pacific Islander population reflects a high level of immigration during the 1970's as well as a number of changes in census procedures which were developed, in part, as a result of this high level of immigration. The number of Asian and Pacific Islander categories listed separately on the 1980 census questionnaire was expanded over that in 1970 to include four additional groups: Vietnamese, Asian Indian, Guamanian, and Samoan. Asian Indians, which were classified as "White" in 1970, were included in the "Asian and Pacific Islander" category in 1980. The Vietnamese, Guamanian, and Samoan populations were included in the "Other" race category in the 1970 census but were included in the "Asian and Pacific Islander" category in 1980.

For a more detailed discussion of race and comparability of 1970 and 1980 census race detail, see appendix B of 1980 census, PC80-1-B, *General Population Characteristics*, State reports.

Spanish origin. Persons of Spanish origin or descent are those who classified themselves in one of the specific Spanish origin categories listed on the questionnaire—Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban—as well as those who indicated that they were of other Spanish/Hispanic origin. Persons reporting "Other Spanish/Hispanic" origin are those whose origins are from Spain or the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, or they are Spanish origin persons identifying themselves generally as Spanish, Spanish American, Hispano, Latino, etc. Origin or descent can be viewed as the ancestry, nationality group, lineage, or country in which the person or person's parents or ancestors were born before their arrival in the United States. Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.

Preliminary evaluations of 1980 census data suggest some limited overreporting of Spanish origin. Available evidence indicates that the overreporting may have occurred only in selected areas with relatively small Spanish-origin populations, such as in some Southern States, but it is not apparent in those areas with the largest concentrations of Spanish-origin persons. For further discussion of the reporting in the Spanish-origin item, see the 1980 census Supplementary Reports, series PC80-S1, *Persons of Spanish Origin by State: 1980*.

The 1980 figures on Spanish origin are not directly comparable to 1970 Spanish-origin totals because of a number of factors: overall improvements in the 1980 census, better coverage of the population, improved question design, a shift in the tendency of the population to report Spanish origin, and an effective public relations campaign by the Census Bureau and national and community ethnic groups. These efforts also undoubtedly resulted in the inclusion of a sizable but unknown number of persons of Hispanic origin who are in the country in other than legal status.

LIMITATIONS OF THE ESTIMATES

The procedure for developing the age projections for November 1982 involves a 16-month extrapolation of age trends beyond the estimates for July 1, 1981. An evaluation of the procedure for developing population estimates for States by age for the 1960-70 period appears in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 734. The average percent error for the estimates of the voting-age population as shown by the test was 1.5 percent. The extrapolation procedure used to develop the age projections would be expected to contribute some additional error.

The projections contained here are designed to provide approximate growth patterns and levels of the voting-age population by race. Small differences between figures, as well as small changes over time, should be interpreted cautiously.

RELATED REPORTS

The projections of the voting-age population for November 1982 are consistent with estimates of the population of States by age for July 1, 1981, published in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 913. The estimates for November 1972 through 1980 supersede those published in Series P-25, No. 879. Estimates shown in No. 879 are still current for earlier election years extending back to 1960.

Related data from the Current Population Survey on reported voting and registration in the Congressional elections of November 1978 are published in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 344, and data for the Congressional and Presidential elections of November 1980 appear in Series P-20, No. 370.

Statistics on Congressional elections used in this report to estimate the percent voting are published biennially in U.S. Congress, Clerk of the House, *Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Election* or *Statistics of the Congressional Election*, as appropriate.

ROUNDING OF ESTIMATES

The estimates shown in the tables of this report have been rounded to the nearest thousand without adjustment to group totals, which are independently rounded. The percentages are based on unrounded numbers.