

POPULATION DIVISION

Population Estimates and Projections

STAT. INFO. OFFICE

U.S. Department of Commerce
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Series P-25, No. 732
Issued September 1978

FILE COPY - DO NOT REMOVE

Projections of the Population of Voting Age for States: November 1978

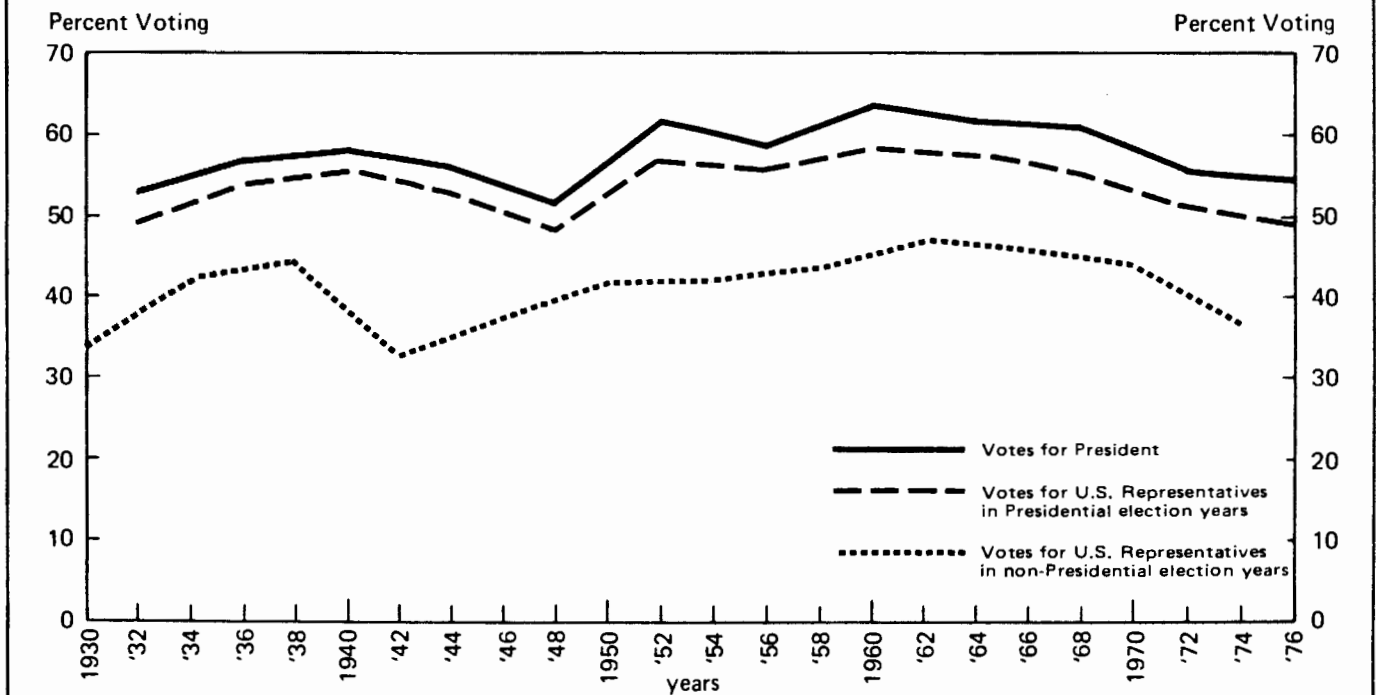
This report presents projections of the November 1978 population of voting age for States, by race and broad age groups as a reference for the upcoming non-Presidential election. Included are estimates of the population of voting age and the percent casting votes in Presidential and Congressional election years in each State since 1960 and in the United States since 1930. The information on the number of votes cast in both Presidential and Congressional election years is published biennially by the U.S. Congress, Clerk of the House, in either *Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Elections* or *Statistics of the Congressional Elections*.

As a result of the ratification of the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the voting-age data shown in the tables

of this report beginning with 1972 relate to persons 18 years old and over in all States and the District of Columbia, including members of the Armed Forces stationed in each State. They exclude 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. All States and the District of Columbia permit members of the Armed Forces to register and vote by the absentee process. In 1968, the Congress amended the Federal Voting Assistance Act of 1955 to permit all other U.S. citizens temporarily residing overseas to register or vote.¹

¹See U.S. Department of Defense, *Federal Voting Assistance Program*, 11th Report, December 1977. Department of Defense, Washington, D.C.

Figure 1. Percent Casting Votes for President and U.S. Representatives: 1930 to 1976



For elections prior to 1972, the voting-age population included persons 21 years and over, except in Georgia and Kentucky (18 years and over), Alaska (19 years old and over), and Hawaii (20 years old and over).

FINDINGS

In the period between the general elections of November 1976 and 1978, the Nation's potential electorate will increase by 5.4 million persons (table 3). In November 1978, there will be 155 million² persons 18 years old and over in the United States, an increase of about 3.6 percent over 1976 (table A).

Since November 1970, the population of voting age has grown by 31 million or 25 percent. During this period, the total population of the United States increased by only 7 percent. The young adult population has been the most rapidly growing age group during the 1970's as a consequence of the large number of persons born during the post-World War II years. In addition, nearly 11 million of those who reached voting age since 1970 were brought into the voting-age population in 1972 by the 26th Amendment, which lowered the voting age in national elections to age 18. The population in ages 18 to 44 has grown by 16 million since 1970 (22 percent), while the population 45 years and over increased by 6 million, or only 10 percent. As a consequence, the median age of the voting-age population has declined from 43 years in 1970 (table 2) to 41 years by 1978.

Among the four regions of the country, the South and West will have the largest share of the Nation's voting-age population in 1978 for the first time in national elections, with 50.5 percent of the total (table 3). In 1970, the Northeast and North Central regions contained 52 percent of the voting-age population. The attraction of net inmigrants to the South and West at the expense of the Northern industrial States during the 1970's accounts for their increasing proportion of the Nation's potential electorate. Comparison of growth rates for each State with growth rates for the Nation as a whole reveals the extent to which the Nation's electorate has redistributed itself in the last few years. All 13 States in the West, 14 Southern States, and only 6 Northern States exceeded the national growth rate of 7.2

²This figure includes about 4 million noncitizens residing in the United States.

percent between 1974³ and 1978 (table 2). Some 15 Northern States and 2 Southern States were growing more slowly, and the District of Columbia emerged with a smaller voting-age population in 1978 than in 1974.

Women have constituted more than half of the population of voting age in the United States since 1940. By 1970, they had increased their majority to 52.7 percent of the voting-age population (essentially 21 and over) and to 52.5 percent of the population 18 and over. They outnumbered men 18 and over in all States except Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada, and North Dakota (table 2). The female share of the voting-age population has declined slightly since 1970, however, as the large increase in the number of young adults and the addition of 18-to-20 year olds (both with high sex ratios) have offset the effect of the continued growth of the older population.

Minority populations. The Nation's population of voting age includes 136 million Whites, approximately 16 million Blacks, and 3 million persons of other races—mostly American Indian and Asian Americans such as Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese (table 2). Both Blacks and other races are increasing their share of the voting-age population. This is particularly true of Asians, who have immigrated to the United States in large numbers since the middle 1960's. The Spanish origin population of voting age in the United States was estimated at 7 million persons in March 1978, according to the results of the Current Population Survey (CPS).⁴

The Black population, which comprises 10 percent of the total electorate, is considerably younger than the White population of voting age, due in large part to higher fertility rates among Blacks. The Black population constitutes a larger proportion of the South's population of voting age than of any other region (table 2). In the District of Columbia, Blacks are a majority of the electorate. In Mississippi, South Carolina, and Louisiana, they represent somewhat more than a quarter of the voting-age population.

Other racial minorities comprise only a small proportion of the voting-age population in the country. The greatest proportion of American Indians and Asian Americans are

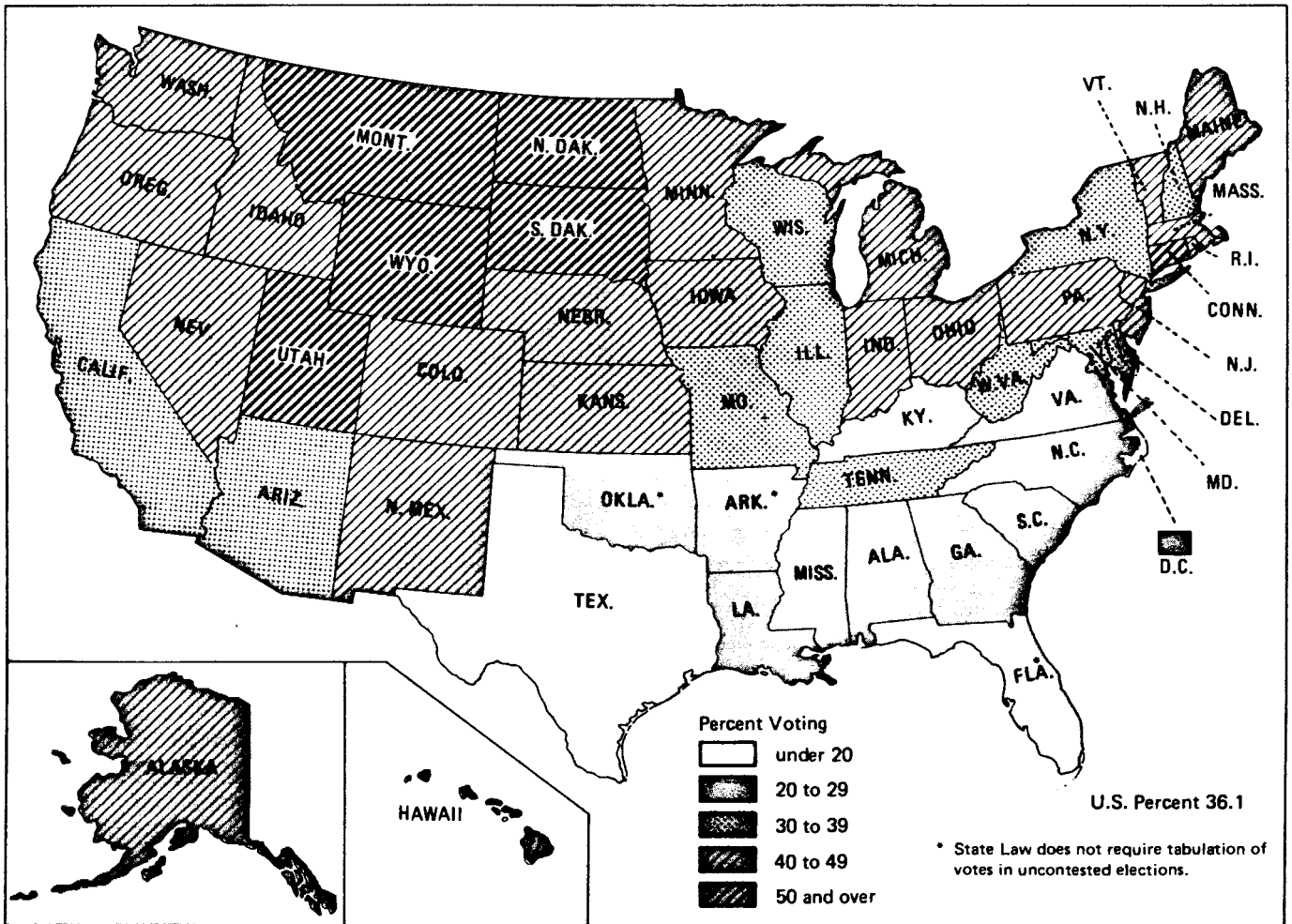
³The last Federal election year without a Presidential contest.

⁴See *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 328. Persons of Spanish origin were self-identified in the March 1978 CPS by a question on the person's origin or descent. Persons of Spanish origin were those who indicated that their origin was Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or some other Spanish origin.

Table A. Projections of the Population of Voting Age in the United States and Regions, by Race: November 1978
(In thousands)

Race	United States	North-east	North Central	South	West
Total.....	155,492	35,806	41,154	50,100	28,432
White.....	136,600	32,179	37,501	41,372	25,539
Black and other races.....	18,892	3,627	3,643	8,729	2,893

Figure 2. Percent of the Voting-Age Population Voting in the 1974 Congressional Elections



found in the West, where they constituted 1 percent and 3 percent respectively, of the voting-age population in 1970.

Sixty percent of the population of Spanish origin live in the five Southwestern States (Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas), and are largely concentrated in metropolitan areas. Another 13 percent live in New York and 6 percent in Florida. The Spanish origin population includes a substantial number of young persons. In 1978, the median age of the Spanish origin voting-age population (35 years) was lower than the median age of the Black voting-age population (38 years) and the overall voting-age population in the United States (41 years).

Voting participation. Voter participation in the United States has traditionally been lower in non-Presidential elections than in years when a President was being elected. In the non-Presidential election of 1974, only 36 percent of the national voting-age population voted for U.S. Representatives, 18 percentage points below the Presidential vote in 1976 and 14 percentage points less than the Congressional vote in 1976 (figure 1). Part of the difference between the vote for President and Congress in any Presidential election year results from the nontabulation of Congressional votes in uncontested elections in a few of the Southern States. Nonetheless, most of the differential in non-Presidential

election years may be attributed to lower levels of voter participation.

In the last non-Presidential election in 1974, Connecticut, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming were the only States with more than half of the voting-age population voting for Congress. South Dakota had the highest level of voter participation with 59 percent. At the other extreme, less than 19 percent voted in Florida and Texas, and four other Southern States had only 20 to 24 percent voting (table 4).

An analysis of voting statistics since 1960 has shown a great decline in voter participation, with the national level of voting in Presidential elections down from 63 percent in 1960 to 54 percent in 1976. Voting in non-Presidential elections indicates a similar pattern of decline moving from 46 percent in 1962 to 36 percent in November 1974 (table 4). This decline has been particularly notable since 1970, explained only partly by the broadening of the voting base to include persons 18 to 20, who have voted in much smaller proportions than the older voters.

Results from the CPS conducted after each national election provide additional detail on the characteristics of voters. The survey of 1976, for example, indicated that voter participation among Whites was substantially higher than for Blacks (about 12 percentage points) and about twice the rate

for persons of Spanish origin (table B). Voter participation in general rose with increased educational level and with increased age. Women are now voting with the same frequency as men. In 1976, 59 percent of the women of voting age reported themselves as voting compared with 60 percent of men. Younger women (under 45 years) voted at slightly higher rates than men and older women at somewhat lower rates.⁵

Population ineligible to vote. The population of voting age includes a relatively modest number of persons who meet the age requirement but cannot vote, although the number has been appreciably smaller since 1972 due to shortened residence requirements. Aliens are the principal group of ineligible voting-age persons. It is estimated that there will be about 4 million aliens 18 years and over residing in the United States in November 1978, somewhat less than 3 percent of the total voting-age population.⁶ In addition, somewhat more than 500,000 persons will be disenfranchised because they have been committed to prisons, mental hospitals, or other institutions.

METHODOLOGY

The projections of the population of voting age shown by State, age, and race for November 1978 were based on the 1970 population counts and provisional July 1, 1977 estimates of the resident population, by age for States.⁷ The 1970 census base was adjusted slightly to reflect corrections to area counts made since the census tabulations, and to

⁵ *Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 322, "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1976,"* March 1978.

⁶ Based on unpublished data from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service to be included in the forthcoming *1977 Annual Report*.

⁷ See *1970 Census of Population, Volume I, Characteristics of the Population, for each State, table 19 and Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 734.*

correct for the overstatement of other races and the centenarian population in the census.

The projections of the voting-age population for States shown by age for November 1978 were derived by extending the trend for the period April 1, 1970 to July 1, 1977, linearly for 1 year and 4 months. The projections by age for States obtained in this manner were adjusted to an independent national projection of the population by age for November 1, 1978.

The 1978 projections shown by race for each State were based on July 1, 1975 estimates of the population by race shown in *Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 67, "Population Estimates by Race for States: July 1, 1973 and 1975."*

The projections of the population of voting age were developed for race by assuming that the proportion 18 years of age and over in each State changed from 1970 to 1975 at the same rate as the United States and applying the estimated 1975 proportion to the 1975 race estimates to estimate a 1975 population 18 years and over. The 1970 and 1975 proportion of each State's population 18 years and over to the total for the United States was then extended linearly to November 1, 1978. As a last step, the projections were adjusted to the State age projections and to an independent national total by race for the age group.

The estimates of the resident population of voting age for each State for elections prior to November 1970 were based on intercensal estimates of the resident population of States published in *Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 460.* The proportion of the population of each State which was 21 years old and over (18 years and over in Kentucky and Georgia, 20 years and over in Hawaii, and 19 years old and over in Alaska) in the two consecutive censuses, was derived. Linear interpolation between the 1960 and 1970 census proportion provides an estimate for each State for each of the election years. These proportions were then

Table B. Percent Reported Voting by Age, Sex, and Race: November 1976

(As reported in the Current Population Survey. Civilian noninstitutional population)

Age	Total	White	Black	Spanish origin ¹	Men	Women
Total, 18 years and over.....	59.2	60.9	48.7	31.8	59.6	58.8
18 to 24 years.....	42.2	44.7	27.9	21.8	40.9	43.4
25 to 34 years.....	55.4	57.3	46.0	29.3	54.6	56.1
35 to 44 years.....	63.3	65.1	54.4	38.6	62.5	64.0
45 to 64 years.....	68.7	69.9	62.3	40.3	69.7	67.9
65 years and over.....	62.2	63.2	54.3	29.9	68.3	58.0

¹Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.

applied to the appropriate annual estimates of the intercensal population for States to yield estimates of the voting-age population. As a final step, these estimates were adjusted to an independent estimate of the voting-age population for the United States as a whole.

LIMITATIONS OF THE PROJECTIONS

The procedure for developing the age projections involves a 16-month extrapolation of age trends beyond the estimates for July 1, 1977. An evaluation of the procedure for developing population estimates for States by age 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 extrapolative procedure used to develop the age projections would be expected to have a larger error.

The method used to develop the estimates by race also involved an extrapolative technique, but of longer duration (2 years and 4 months). By virtue of this fact and the likelihood of less precision in the 1975 race estimates than in the 1977 age estimates, the projections by race are subject to much greater possible error than the detail by age. The 1975 estimates of the total Black population, however, were evaluated against an independent source, the Survey of Income and Education (SIE). The comparison revealed that the 1975 estimates and the results of the SIE are within

normal sampling variance for the Black population. (See **Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 67**.)

The estimates contained here are designed primarily 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 1978 are consistent with estimates of the population of States by age for July 1, 1977, published in **Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 734**. The estimates for 1976 contained in the report supersede those published in **Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 626**. Estimates of the U.S. population by race and single years of age up to 1977 appear in Series P-25, No. 721.

Related data from the CPS on reported voting and registration in the national elections of November 1976 and 1974 are published in **Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 322 and 293**.

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.