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Population Estimates and Projections

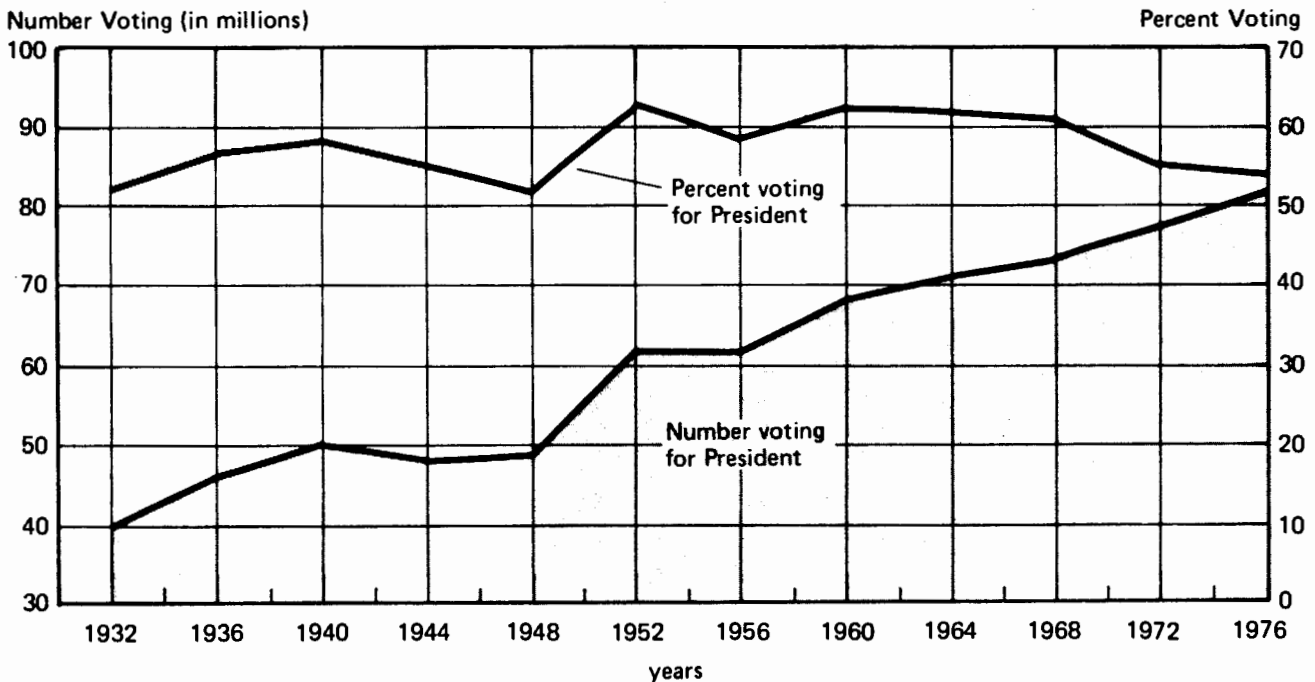
Projections of the Population of Voting Age for States: November 1980

This report presents projections of the November 1980 population of voting age for States, by race and broad age groups as a reference for the upcoming 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 1930.¹ Also shown are dates of Presidential primaries.

¹ 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 484,000 Armed Forces and 60,000 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, Congress amended the Federal Voting

Figure 1. Number and Percent Casting Votes for President: 1932 to 1976



Assistance Act of 1955 to permit all other U.S. citizens temporarily residing overseas to register or vote.²

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 and over), and Hawaii (20 years and over).

General Trends. The Nation's voting-age population is expected to reach 160 million persons³ (table 3) in November 1980, an increase of 10.4 million or 6.9 percent over 1976, the date of the last Presidential election. This increase is slightly lower than the increase of 10.1 million between the Presidential elections of 1972 and 1976, but is only half as much as the increase between 1968 and 1972, when lowering of the voting age to 18 added nearly 11 million voting-age population.

The 1970's have witnessed a heavy immigration into the Southern and Western regions of the country at the expense of the Northeast and North Central States. General population growth in the South and West has brought with it an increasing share of the Nation's voting-age population, growing to 51 percent of the U.S. total in 1980 (table 3).

Comparison of growth rates for each State with growth rates for the Nation as a whole documents the extent to which the Nation's electorate has redistributed itself in recent years. Excluding Alaska, all States in the West, 9 Southern States, and 5 Northern States exceed the National growth rate of 6.9 percent between 1976 and 1980 (table 2). Approximately 16 Northern States and 7 Southern States were growing more slowly, and the District of Columbia is expected to contain a smaller voting-age population in 1980 than in 1976.

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

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

Women have constituted more than half of the population of voting age in the United States since 1940. In 1979, their majority had increased to 52.4 percent of the population 18 years old and over.⁴ In 1970, women outnumbered men 18 years old and over in all States except Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada, and North Dakota (table 2). The female share of the population 18 years old and over currently is at about the same level as 1970, due to the return of more than 600,000 overseas Armed Forces and the addition of 18-to-20 years olds (with high sex ratios), offsetting the effect of the continued growth of the older population.

Minority populations. The Nation's population of voting age includes 141 million Whites and approximately 17 million Blacks and 3 million persons of other races—mostly American Indian and Asian Americans such as Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese (table A). Both Blacks and other minority 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 7.1 million persons in March 1979, according to the results of the Current Population Survey (CPS).⁵

The Black population comprises 11 percent of the total electorate. The Black population constitutes a larger proportion of the South's population of voting age (17 percent) than found in other regions. In the District of Columbia, Blacks are a majority of the electorate. In Mississippi, South Carolina, and Louisiana, they represent somewhat more than one-fourth of the voting-age population.

⁴Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 870.

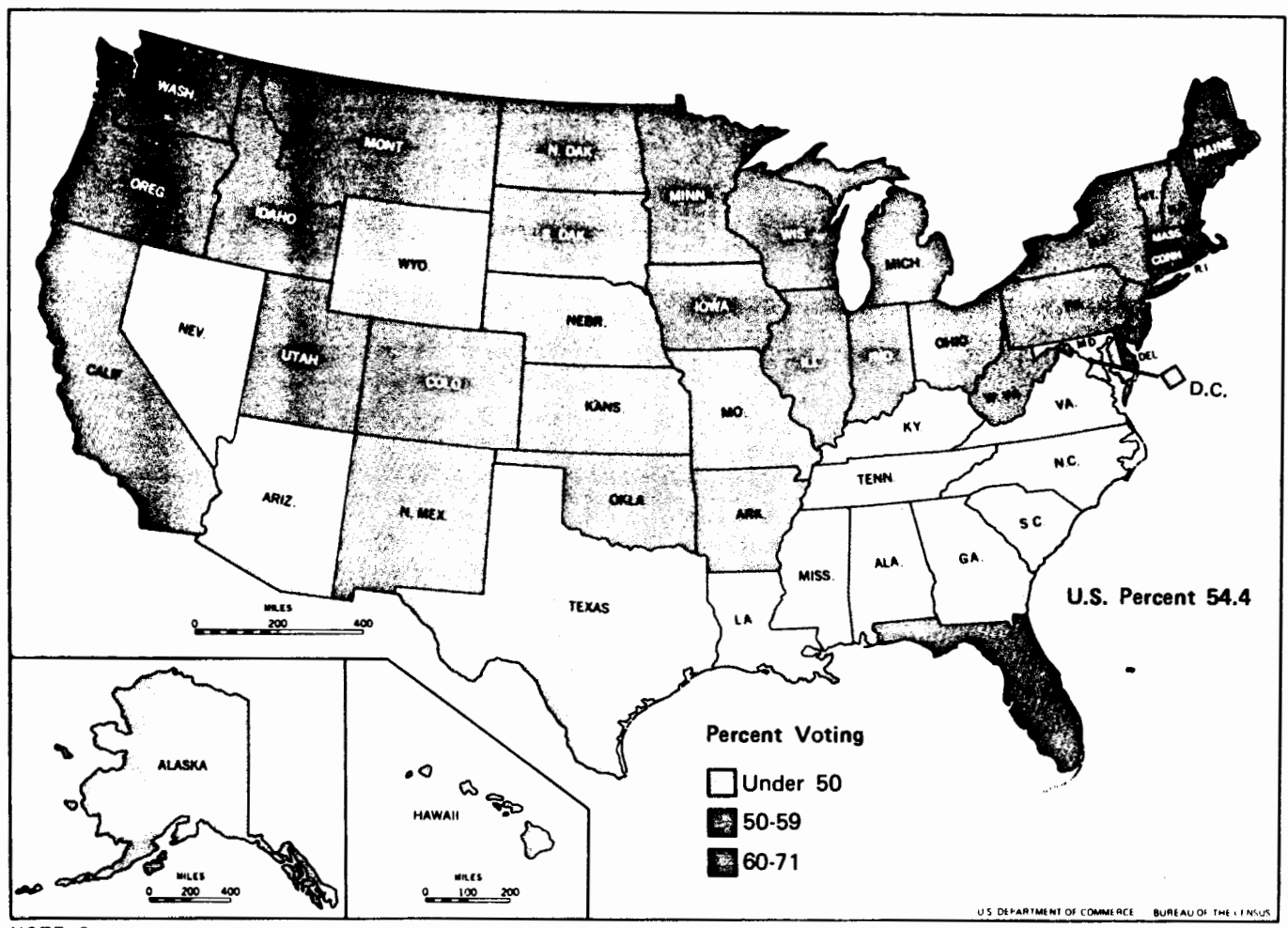
⁵See Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 347. Persons of Spanish origin were self-identified in the March 1979 CPS by a question on the person's origin or descent. Persons of Spanish origin were those who indicated that their origin was Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or some other Spanish origin.

Table A. Projections of the Population of Voting Age in the United States and Regions, by Race: November 1980

(In thousands)

Race	United States	Northeast	North Central	South	West
NUMBER					
Total.....	160,491	36,061	42,066	51,945	30,418
White.....	140,558	32,323	38,254	42,743	27,238
Black.....	16,967	3,292	3,443	8,718	1,514
Other races.....	2,966	446	369	484	1,666
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION					
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
White.....	87.6	89.6	90.9	82.3	89.5
Black.....	10.6	9.1	8.2	16.8	5.0
Other races.....	1.8	1.2	0.9	0.9	5.5

Figure 2. Percent of the Voting-Age Population Voting in the 1976 Presidential Election



NOTE: State law does not require tabulation of votes in uncontested elections.

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

In 1979, 59 percent of the population of Spanish origin lived in the five Southwestern States (Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas), and they were largely concentrated in metropolitan areas.

Both the Black population and Spanish-origin population have rather large proportions of young persons largely due to birth rates above the national average. In 1979, the median age of the Spanish-origin voting-age population (35 years) was lower than the median age of the Black voting-age population (37 years) and the overall voting-age population in the United States (41 years).

Voter Participation—The Last 5 Decades. The pattern of voting behavior in 12 Presidential and 25 Congressional elections over the past 5 decades is presented in table 5. Between the Presidential elections of 1932 and 1976, both the number of voters and the voting-age population doubled.

Except for the 1948 Presidential election, when barely half of the voting-age population went to the polls, the turnout for Presidential elections in the post-World War II

years was approximately 60 percent through 1968. After many barriers to registration and voting were removed by various legal actions during 1964 and 1965, voter participation rose to 61 percent in 1968 and then declined in the succeeding two Presidential elections.⁶

Changes in the age distribution of the electorate contributed to the decline in voter turnout. The young adult population has been the most rapidly growing group as a consequence of the surge in the birth rate beginning in 1947 and continuing into the late 1950's. When the approximately 11 million young persons entered the electorate for the first time in 1972 with the lowering of the voting age in national elections to age 18, the voter participation level dropped sharply to approximately 55 percent. These younger Americans tend to vote in much smaller proportions than the older population, thus contributing to the decline in voter participation.

Results from the Current Population Survey after each national election provide additional information on the characteristics of voters. The survey of 1976, for example,

⁶ Literacy tests were suspended under the 1965 Voting Rights Act. In 1966, the Supreme Court of the United States found use of the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting to be unconstitutional. The Voting Rights Act Amendment of 1970 eliminated the residency requirement as a precondition to voting for President and Vice President of the United States.

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

(As reported in 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.

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-20 No. 322 "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1976," March 1978, table 2.

indicated that voter participation among Whites was substantially higher than for Blacks (about 12 percentage points) and about twice the rate for the population 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 the men. Younger women voted at slightly higher rates than men and older women at somewhat lower rates.⁷ Voting turnout for both Whites and Blacks in 1976 was about 10 percentage points below their respective levels in the 1964 election, whereas the figure for persons of Spanish origin was 6 percentage points below that of 1972, the first year the Bureau of the Census obtained voting data for the group separately.

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 1980, somewhat less than 3 percent of the total voting-age population.⁸ 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 1980 were based on the 1970 population counts and provisional July 1, 1979, estimates of the resident population by age, for States.⁹

⁷Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 322, *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1976*, March 1978.

⁸See U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1977 Annual Report*.

⁹See *1970 Census of Population*, Vol. 1, "Characteristics of the Population," for each State, table 19, and Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 875.

The 1970 census base was adjusted slightly to reflect corrections to area counts made since the census tabulations, and to 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 1980 were derived by extending the trend for July 1, 1978 to July 1, 1979, 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, 1980.

The 1980 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 by race by assuming that the proportion 18 years of age and over in each State changed from 1970 to 1975 by the same absolute amount as the United States rate and applying the estimated 1975 proportion 18 years and over 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 old and over was then extended linearly to November 1, 1978. The estimates of the racial proportions for 1980 are assumed to remain at the 1978 values. As a last step, the projections were adjusted to the State age projections for 1980 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 totals for States published in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, Nos. 460, 304, and 72. 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 and over in Alaska) in the two consecutive censuses, was derived. Linear interpolation between census proportions provided an estimate for each State for each of the election years. These proportions were then 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, 1979. An evaluation of the procedure for developing population estimates for States by age for the period 1960-70 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 a longer duration. By virtue of this fact and the likelihood of less precision in the 1975 race estimates than in the 1979 age estimates, it is likely that the projections by race are subject to greater error than the detail by age.

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 1980 are consistent with estimates of the population of States by age for July 1, 1979, published in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 875. The estimates for 1978 contained in this report supersede those published in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 732. Estimates of the U.S. population by race and single years of age up to 1979 appear in Series P-25, No. 870.

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

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.