

**Population Estimates
and Projections**

Series P-25, No. 948

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of the Population
of Voting Age
for States:
November 1984**

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by
Donald E. Starsinic



U.S. Department of Commerce
Malcolm Baldrige, Secretary
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Economic Affairs

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Director



BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
John G. Keane, Director
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for Demographic Fields

POPULATION Division
Roger A. Herriot, Chief

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Projections of the Population of Voting Age for States: November 1984

INTRODUCTION

This report presents projections of the population of voting age for States on November 1, 1984, by broad age groups and sex. These projections are designed to serve as a reference for the primary elections and the November general election for President and members of the 99th Congress of the United States. 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 States.

Also shown are voting-age estimates for States and percent voting for President and House of Representatives since 1976, as well as national voting patterns since 1930. All population estimates and projections are consistent with final 1980 census reports PC80-1-B.

GENERAL TRENDS

The voting-age population of the United States is expected to reach 174 million persons by November 1984, an increase of 4.2 million since the Congressional election of 1982 and nearly 10 million since the 1980 Presidential election (table A). The voting-age population, which has had an enormous increase of 60 million over the last two decades as the baby boom generation reached adulthood, now is leveling off both in terms of numerical and percentage growth. The 4.2 million

change from 1982 to 1984 is barely two-thirds the average level of change during the 1970's, and the 2.4-percent increase is the smallest since the 1964-66 period. The largest baby boom birth cohorts have long since been absorbed into the adult population (the baby boom generation is now 20 to 38 years old), and there is an assurance of smaller and smaller cohorts entering adulthood for at least another decade.

Growth in the voting-age population since the 1980 census has been largely concentrated in the 25-to-44 age group, which experienced a dramatic increase of 9.5 million, from 62.7 to 72.2 million (table B). This age group, swollen by the influx of baby boom cohorts while losing small birth cohorts from the Depression, has increased its already dominant share of the voting-age population from 38.5 to 41.5 percent. The population 65 and over also grew by 2.6 million (more than 10 percent), increasing its share of the 18-and-over population from 15.7 to 16.2 percent. The number of middle-aged voters by contrast has remained at about 44.5 million since 1980, losing some of its share of the total as the late Depression cohorts move into the age group.

For the first time, the number of young adults (18 to 24) is beginning to decline as the baby boom generation ages. The group is estimated to lose nearly 1 million between the 1982 and 1984 elections, decreasing to 29 million and lowering its share of the voting-age population to 17 percent. The young adult population will continue to decline in numbers throughout the 1980's, while the other broad age groups

Table A. Estimated Voting-Age Population and Change Since Last Election Year: 1966 to 1984

(Number in thousands. Beginning 1972 ages 18 and over; prior to 1972 ages 21 and over for all States except four)

Nov. 1 of year	Voting-age population	Change since last election		Nov. 1 of year	Voting-age population	Change since last election	
		Number	Percent			Number	Percent
1984 ¹	173,936	4,151	2.4	1974	146,338	5,561	4.0
1982	169,785	5,312	3.2	1972	140,777	16,279	13.1
1980	164,473	6,104	3.9	1970	124,498	4,213	3.5
1978	158,369	6,061	4.0	1968	120,285	3,647	3.1
1976	152,308	5,970	4.1	1966	116,638	2,548	2.2

¹Projection.

Source: Table 5.

Table B. Population of Voting Age, by Broad Age Groups, 1960 to 1984

(Numbers in thousands)

Year	Total	18-24 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65 years and over	Percent of total			
						18-24 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65 years and over
1984 (Nov. 1) ¹	173,936	28,994	72,166	44,586	28,190	16.7	41.5	25.6	16.2
1982 (Nov. 1) ²	169,342	29,917	67,987	44,475	26,963	17.7	40.1	26.3	15.9
1980 census.....	162,791	30,022	62,717	44,503	25,549	18.4	38.5	27.3	15.7
1970 census.....	133,568	23,697	47,995	41,810	20,066	17.7	35.9	31.3	15.0
1960 census.....	115,121	15,604	46,899	36,057	16,560	13.6	40.7	31.3	14.4

¹Projection.²Estimate.

Source: Tables 1 and 2.

should continue to change through the 1980's more or less the way they have from 1980 to 1984.

Women represent over 52 percent of the voting-age population in 1984 (table 2), outnumbering men by 8 million. They are the majority in every State except Alaska (46.2 percent), Hawaii (48.7 percent) (both of which have large military populations), Wyoming (48.7 percent), and Nevada (49.6 percent). The Northeastern States have the highest proportion of women (53.4 percent) and the West the lowest (51.0 percent).

Among persons 18 to 24 years old, men are a slight majority of the population (50.5 percent). This relationship reverses in favor of women in the 25-to-44 age group. By the 45-to-64 age group, women predominate (52.4 percent), and in the elderly ages they represent about 60 percent of the population and exceed males by 5.6 million.

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). By November 1984, an additional 2 million Blacks are projected to be in the voting-age population, bringing the total to about 19 million or 11 percent of the total national electorate. No detail is available on the distribution of the Black population since the 1980 census, nor is there updated information beyond the census for other racial groups and for

the population of Spanish origin. The remaining discussion in this section relates to 1980 census findings.

The Black outmigration from the South which began in World War I has spread the settlement of Blacks throughout the United States and has considerably equalized the regional distribution of Blacks. Blacks still constitute 1 in every 6 persons of voting age in the South, however (table C). 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.

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.

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.

Voter participation. Voter participation in the 1980 Presidential election was 52.6 percent, down 1 percent from the level of the 1976 election, and well below the highest participation level of 62.8 percent in the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon election (table 5). Since 1960, each successive Presidential election has resulted in lower levels of voter participation, with the sharpest decline of 5 percent between 1968 and 1972 largely resulting from the lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18. The number of voters has increased steadily over the years, however, because of the substantial increases in the voting-age population. Over 86 million persons or 52.6 percent voted for President in 1980, and if the same proportion votes in 1984, nearly 92 million votes will be cast.

Highest voter participation traditionally takes place in the West North Central States and New England. These two divisions averaged 62 and 60 percent voting for President in 1980 (table 4). Minnesota was the only State to have 70 percent or more vote in both the 1976 and 1980 Presidential elections. Other States with very high voter turnout in the 1980 Presidential election were Idaho (67.8 percent), South Dakota and Wisconsin (each 67.3 percent), and seven other States that had more than 60 percent voting—North Dakota, Maine, Montana, Utah, Iowa, Oregon, and Connecticut.

The South has consistently had the lowest voter turnout, but the gap between the South and the remainder of the United States is not nearly as great since the voting rights reforms of the 1960's. Lowest State voter participation in 1980 Presidential election was in South Carolina (40.1 percent), Nevada (40.5 percent), and Georgia (41.2 percent). The District of Columbia had 32.2 percent voting.

Voting for the House of Representatives on Presidential election years generally falls short of the Presidential vote by 4 to 5 percent. Some part of this difference results from non-tabulation of votes in uncontested elections in three Southern States (Arkansas, Florida, and Oklahoma) and the use of the general election only for runoff purposes after an open primary in Louisiana. This difference in voter turnout, however, occurred in every region and every State in 1980. Only Arizona had a differential of as little as 1 percent. Voting for the House of Representatives in nonpresidential election years

tends to be much lower than in Presidential election years. In 1982, it was 37.7 percent nationally, compared with 47.4 in 1980. Voter turnout in 1982 for the House of Representatives was much stronger than in the last two nonpresidential election years, where only 34.5 percent (1978) and 35.8 percent (1974) voted.

The estimates of voter participation shown here are based on official tabulations of votes cast provided by each State. They should not be confused with estimates of voter participation published regularly in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, which are obtained from household surveys in order to assess the voting and registration patterns of various demographic groups. The survey estimates indicate levels of voting somewhat higher than those supported by the official voting statistics.

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 in recent years 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 1984, about 4 percent of the total voting-age population. In addition, illegal aliens will be ineligible. It is estimated that approximately 2 million illegal aliens were counted in the 1980 census. Somewhat more than 500,000 additional 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 1982, and projections for 1984, were based on final 1980 census counts and estimates of the resident population of States by age for July 1, 1981, to 1983. For November 1, 1980, the population age 18 and over was interpolated from the April 1, 1980, census and the July 1, 1981, estimates and adjusted to national controls. The November 1, 1982, estimates were similarly derived using estimates of the population 18 and over for July 1, 1982, and 1983.

For November 1, 1984, the trend in the State's population from the April 1, 1980, census to the July 1, 1983, estimates in each of four age groups (18 to 24, 25 to 44, 45 to 64, and 65 and over) was extrapolated an additional 16 months, and each age group was adjusted to an independent U.S. value for the date. The 1980 proportion male by State in each of the four age groups was adjusted by the numerical change in the proportion male in the United States from 1980 to 1984 for the age group and applied to a 1984 projection for the total population in the age group to project the 1984 male population by age. As a final step, these age projections for males were adjusted to a U.S. control by age for November 1, 1984. Projections of the female population in

these ages for 1984 were obtained by subtracting males from the total population.

Estimates of the voting-age population for each State for the elections of November 1976 and 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, 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 President or the House of Representatives for each State by the State's estimated population 18 and over for November 1 of each election year. The percent voting for U.S. Representatives 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 Congressional primary.

1980 CENSUS DEFINITIONS

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 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 to 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 in 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-S1-7, *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 NUMBERS

The procedure for developing the age projections for November 1984 involves a 16-month extrapolation of age trends beyond the estimates for July 1, 1983. 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. A comparable study of estimates prepared during the 1970's has not been completed. The average percent error for the estimates of the voting-age population as shown by the earlier test was 1.5 percent. The extrapolation procedure used to develop the age projections would be expected to contribute some additional error.

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

RELATED REPORTS

The estimates of the voting-age population for November 1982 are consistent with estimates of the population of States by age for July 1, 1981, to 1983 to be published in Current Population Reports, Series P-25. The estimates for November 1980 and 1982 supersede those published in Series P-25, No. 916. Estimates of the voting-age population and percent voting for 1972 and 1974, shown in No. 916, are still current, and estimates for election years 1960 to 1970 can be found in Series P-25, No. 879.

Related data from the Current Population Survey on reported voting and registration in the Congressional elections of November 1982 are published in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 383, and data for the Congressional and Presidential elections of November 1980 appear in Series P-20, No. 370.

Statistics on the Presidential and 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.