



# Projections of the Voting-Age Population, for States: November 1990

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## INTRODUCTION

This report presents projections of the population of voting age (18 years and over) for States to November 1, 1990, by broad age groups and sex and for the White, Black, and Other races populations. Four series of projections are included (A,B,C, and D). The discussion and examples in this text use information from Series A only. For more information on the different series, see the section on methodology.

The projections shown in this report were prepared before any results from the 1990 Census of Population became available, therefore, none of the data in this report reflects results from the decennial census conducted as of April 1, 1990.

These projections are designed to serve as a reference for the primary elections and the November general election for members of the 102d Congress of the United States. They are for the resident population of the United States including members of the Armed Forces where they reside at their duty stations. They exclude the population overseas (currently about 520,000 Armed Forces and 65,000 Federal civilian employees and their dependents of voting age, and an unknown number of other American citizens residing overseas) who would be eligible to vote by absentee ballot in their home States.

In addition to projections of the voting-age population for States for 1990, this report includes voting-age population estimates and the percent voting for President in 1988 and 1984 and House of Representatives in 1988, 1986 and 1982. Table 5 shows voting-age population and voting totals for the United States since 1930.

## GENERAL TRENDS

**Age distribution.** The voting-age population (persons 18 years and over) of the United States is expected to reach 186.4 million persons by November 1, 1990, an increase of 7.8 million or 4.4 percent since the 1986 Congressional elections (table A). Since the Presidential election in 1988, the voting-age population has grown by roughly 3.6 million persons.

The past three decades have shown a huge increase in the size of the U.S. voting-age population. In 1960, persons of voting age (21 years and over in most States) numbered 109.7 million. The 1990 projection of more than 186 million thus represents a 70-percent increase the number of persons who on the basis of age are eligible to register to vote. Two major factors account for these large increases in recent decades: (1) the leading edge of the large birth cohorts of the Baby Boom (1946 to 1964) became old enough to vote

**Table A. Estimated Voting-Age Population and Change Since Last Election Year: 1968 to 1990**

(Numbers 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 previous date		Nov. 1 of year	Voting-age population	Change since previous date	
		Number	Percent			Number	Percent
1990 <sup>1</sup> .....	186,382	3,603	2.0	1978.....	158,369	6,061	4.0
1988.....	182,779	4,213	2.4	1976.....	152,308	5,970	4.1
1986.....	178,566	4,098	2.3	1974.....	146,338	5,561	4.0
1984.....	174,468	4,532	2.7	1972.....	140,777	16,279	13.1
1982.....	169,936	5,341	3.2	1970.....	124,498	4,213	3.5
1980.....	164,595	6,226	3.9	1968.....	120,285	3,647	3.1

<sup>1</sup>Projection.

Source: Table 5.

beginning in the late 1960's, and these large cohorts continued to enlarge the voting-age population throughout the 1970's and early 1980's, and (2) ratification of the 22d Constitutional Amendment granted eligibility to 18- to 20-year-olds in all States in time for the 1972 election, adding 11 million persons to the age-eligible population in 1972.

Since around 1982, however, when the smaller cohorts born after the Baby Boom began to reach age 18, the growth in the voting-age population has slowed from about 4 percent per biennium in the 1970's to around 3 percent in the early 1980's and even less in recent years.

Aging of the Baby Boomers has meant that growth in the voting-age population continues to be concentrated in the 25-44 age group (table B). Since 1980 this group has increased by 19.2 million persons, from 62.7 to 81.9 million, and is now almost totally composed of the Baby Boom cohorts (persons now 26 to 44 years old). This group has increased its already dominant share of the voting-age population from 38.5 percent in 1980 to a projected 43.9 percent in 1990. During the 1980-90 period, the 65-and-over group grew by 6.2 million persons, increasing its share of the voting-age population from 15.7 to 17.0 percent. In contrast, the 45-to-64 group grew by only 2.5 million persons, dropping its share of the voting-age population from 27.3 percent in 1980 to 25.2 percent in 1990.

The size of the 18-24 age group continues to decline as the smaller birth cohorts of the post-Baby Boom 1960's and 1970's reach voting age. This group will have lost 4.3 million persons between 1980 and 1990, and will constitute only 13.8 percent of the total voting-age population in November 1990.

The age distribution of the voting-age population is similar among most States, although the median age is higher in Florida where half of the voting-age population is above age 45 (table 1), and almost one-fourth is above age 65. Alaska has the youngest voting-age population, with 17 percent between the ages of 18 and 24 and 55 percent between 25 and 44 years.

**Region.** By November 1, 1990, 64.3 million persons of voting age—nearly one-third of the voting-age total in the United States—are expected to reside in the South. This reflects an increase of 3.3 million persons, or 5.4 percent, since the 1986 Congressional election. Among the four regions of the United States, the West continues to be the fastest growing, with an increase in its voting age population of 7.5 percent since the 1986 election. In 1990, the West and Northeast will be virtually even in the size of their voting-age populations.

**Sex.** Women represent over 52 percent of the voting-age population, outnumbering men by almost 8 million (table 2). They outnumber men in all voting-age groups except for 18 to 24, where the numbers are virtually equal. Among persons 65 and over, women represent almost 60 percent.

Women represent the majority in every State except Alaska (46.8 percent) and Hawaii (49.7 percent), both of which have large military populations, and Wyoming (48.3 percent), Nevada (49.4 percent), and North Dakota (49.9 percent). The Northeastern States have the highest proportion of women in the voting-age population, 53 percent.

**Race.<sup>1</sup>** By November 1, 1990, Blacks 18 and over will number 21.1 million and represent 11.3 percent of the persons of voting age (table C). Another 6.1 million or 3.3 percent of the voting-age population will be races other than White or Black; all persons of Other races include Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut.

More than one-half of the Black voting-age population is expected to reside in the South in 1990 (table 3). The District of Columbia has a higher proportion of Blacks in its electorate (64.9 percent) than any State. At

<sup>1</sup>Because much of the data necessary to develop population projections using the cohort component technique is disaggregated according to three racial categories—White, Black, and all other races—separate projections for each of the individual other races, i.e., Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts, were not developed. For the same reasons, projections of the Hispanic voting-age population by State were not developed.

**Table B. Population of Voting Age, by Broad Age Groups: 1960 to 1990**

(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
1990 (Nov. 1) <sup>1</sup>	186,382	25,771	81,898	46,992	31,721	13.8	43.9	25.2	17.0
1988 (Nov. 1) <sup>2</sup>	182,779	26,570	79,437	46,181	30,591	14.5	43.5	25.3	16.7
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	44,810	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

<sup>1</sup>Projection.

<sup>2</sup>Estimate.

Source: Table 1, Series A and decennial census reports for 1960, 1970, and 1980.

**Table C. Projections of the Voting-Age Population, by Race for Regions: 1990**

(Numbers in thousands)

Race	United States	North-east	Mid-west	South	West
Total .....	186,382	38,893	44,736	64,272	38,482
Percent:					
White .....	85.4	87.5	89.2	81.2	85.8
Black .....	11.3	10.3	9.1	17.1	5.3
Other races .....	3.3	2.2	1.6	1.7	8.9

Source: Table 3, Series A.

least 1 out of every 5 persons of voting-age in Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina, Georgia, Maryland, Alabama, and North Carolina will be Black.

The voting-age population of races other than Black or White is concentrated in the Western states, especially Alaska and Hawaii. In Alaska, 18.9 percent of the voting-age population are Other races (mostly American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut); in Hawaii, almost two-thirds of the population is of Other races (mainly Asian or Pacific Islander). California, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Arizona, Washington, and Montana are the only other States having more than 5 percent other races among their voting-age populations.

## VOTER TURNOUT

The "official" count of votes shown in table 5 is based on tabulations of actual votes provided by each State and compiled by the U.S. Congress, Clerk of the House, and published in *Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Election* and *Statistics of the Congressional Election*.

The vote counts shown in table 5 should not be confused with *estimates* of voter participation published regularly in U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, which are obtained from household respondents in the Current Population Survey (CPS), and relate to the civilian noninstitutional population. Survey estimates, which provide information on the voting and registration patterns of population groups, indicate levels of voting considerably higher than those supported by official voting records.

Table 5 shows that voter turnout in the 1988 Presidential election was 50.1 percent, down 3 percentage points from the 1984 election, and far below the 62.8 percent turnout in the 1960 election (table 5). From 1960 to 1980, each Presidential election resulted in lower levels of voter turnout, with the sharpest decline of 5 percentage points between 1968 and 1972. This decline partly resulted from the lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18 in all States, the increase in the proportion of low-turnout young people as Baby Boomers came of voting age, and the general decline in turnout of

the past two decades. In 1984, turnout rose slightly to 53.1 percent, but dropped in 1988 to 50.1 percent, the lowest level since at least 1948.

Because of the substantial increases in the voting-age population, however, the number of voters increased steadily until 1988, when the number of voters dropped by more than a million.

Highest voter turnout traditionally occurs in the West North Central States and New England. These two divisions averaged 58.2 and 57.6 percent voting for a candidate for President in 1988, compared with 50.1 percent for the United States (table 4). Minnesota had the highest voter turnout of any State, with 65.5 percent voting in the 1988 Presidential election. Other States with very high voter turnout in the 1988 election were Montana (62.4 percent) and Maine (61.1 percent); additional States with more than 60 percent voting included Wisconsin, North and South Dakota, and Utah.

The lowest voter turnout in the 1988 Presidential election was in South Carolina (39.0 percent). The South has consistently had the lowest voter turnout, but the gap between the South and the remainder of the United States is not now nearly as great as before the voting rights reforms of the 1960's.

Voting for the House of Representatives in Presidential election years generally falls short of the Presidential vote by several percentage points. Most of this difference results from nontabulation 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. A smaller part of the difference occurs because some voters who vote for a candidate for President do not vote for a candidate for Representative. For these reasons the percent voting for U.S. Representative shown in table 4 may not be a fair representation of turnout in these four States.

In non-Presidential election years, voting for the House of Representatives is much lower than in Presidential election years. In 1986, for example, it was 33.4 percent nationally, compared with 44.8 percent in the 1988 Presidential election year.

## POPULATION INELIGIBLE TO REGISTER

The population of voting age includes a number of persons who meet the age requirement but cannot vote because they cannot register. Because of shortened State residence requirements for voting in national elections and the availability of absentee ballots, few persons are now disenfranchised because they change residence before the election. Since citizenship is a universal requirement for registering in the United States, aliens are the principal group of ineligible voting-age persons. About 6.6 million legal aliens and 2.8 million undocumented aliens 18 and over are included in the

estimates shown in this report and represent about 5 percent of the total population of voting age. In addition, about 850,000 persons will be ineligible to register because they will be in prisons or mental hospitals.

## METHODOLOGY

The estimates of the population of voting age for States on November 1, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1986, and 1988 are based on final 1980 census counts and estimates of the resident population of States by age for July 1, 1981, to 1989. The projections of the population of voting age for November 1, 1990, are based on revised projections of the population of States by age, sex, and race for July 1, 1990, and July 1, 1991. For November 1, 1980, the population age 18 and over is interpolated from the April 1, 1980, census and the July 1, 1981, estimates and adjusted to national controls. The estimates and projections for November 1, 1982, through 1990 are similarly derived by interpolation of estimates and projections between the appropriate July 1 dates.

The November 1, 1990, projections of the voting-age population for States are consistent with revised population projections by age, sex, and race for States published as Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1053. This report presents four alternative series of projections of the population of the 50 States and the District of Columbia. The projections use the cohort-component method which requires separate assumptions for each of the components of population change: births, deaths, internal migration, and international migration. While the four series (Series A, B, C, and D) reflect different assumptions about future internal migration, they use only one assumption for future patterns in each of the other components of population change. Assumptions A, B, and C were developed from the data set on the annual State-to-State flows of migrants developed from annual administrative data for years 1975 through 1988.

Series A is a modified linear trend of the patterns of State-to-State migration observed from 1975 through 1988.

Series B is the average of the State-to-State migration rates observed from 1975 through 1988.

Series C is the average of the State-to-State migration rates observed from 1985 through 1988.

Series D assumes zero net internal migration.

A more complete discussion of the methodology along with a full set of the projections for years 1989 through 2010 are included in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1053.

## RACE DEFINITIONS

The estimates and projections by race shown in this report are consistent with the racial classifications used in the most recent sets of population estimates and with

the racial classifications specified by the Office of Management and Budget in OMB Directive 15. The 1980 census racial categories were modified to be consistent with sources of other administrative data. This modification procedure is described in more detail in Jeffrey S. Passel, "Procedures for Producing Preliminary OMB-Consistent Modified Race Data from the 1980 Census by Age, Sex, and Hispanic Origin for States and Counties," Bureau of the Census, unpublished. A description is also included in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1045.

The census data on race reflect self-identification by respondents and do 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 addition, about 6.3 million persons were added to the 1980 census "White" race category through the modification procedure. Most of these identified themselves as Hispanic origin and did not specify a race category in the census (In 1980 census tabulations, they are included in the "Other race" 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 census questionnaire but reported entries such as Jamaican, Black Puerto Rican, West Indian, Haitian, or Nigerian. The modification added about 188,000 persons to the Black category in 1980.

The category "Other races" as shown in this report includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE NUMBERS

The alternative projections of the population of voting age for November 1, 1990, are developed by extending the July 1, 1988, estimates for states by age forward using projected mortality rates and alternative migration patterns by age. An evaluation of the procedures for developing population estimates for States by age for the 1970-80 period revealed an average error of 0.7 percent for the voting age population (See Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1010 for a more complete discussion of the evaluation.). The projections of mortality and migration by age would be expected to contribute some additional error to the 1990 numbers shown in this report.

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 projections of the voting age population for November 1, 1990, are consistent with projections of the population of States by age, sex, and race published in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1053.

The estimates of the voting-age population for November 1982 through 1988 are consistent with estimates of the population of States by age for July 1, 1981, to 1989 published in Current Population Reports, Series P-25 No. 1058. The estimates for November 1980 through 1988 supersede those published in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1019.

Related data from the Current Population Survey on voting and registration for the civilian noninstitutional population for November 1964 through 1988 are published biennially in Current Population Reports, Series P-20.

## **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.