

# Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1998

1998

## Population Characteristics

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The right to vote is arguably one of the most important rights of citizenship in a democratic country, yet a substantial number of U.S. citizens choose not to exercise this right. This report examines the characteristics of the people who voted in the November 1998 Congressional election and of those who were registered, as well as why people did not vote. The findings are based on data collected in the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in November 1998.

### Reported voter turnout was at an all time low in 1998.

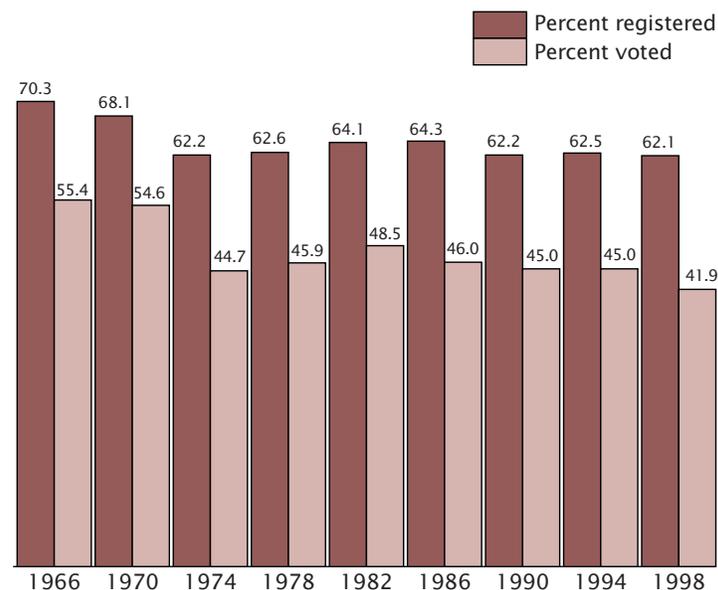
Only 42 percent of the voting-age population reported voting in the 1998 congressional election (see Table A). This turnout is the lowest recorded since the Census Bureau began collecting voting and registration data in the Current Population Survey (see Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> In contrast, 55 percent reported voting in the 1966 Congressional election.

<sup>1</sup> Data from the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate confirm this finding and indicate that the 1998 turnout for the Congressional election was actually the lowest since 1942.

Voting and registration rates historically have been higher in years with Presidential elections than in the “off” years. For the purposes of this report, the 1998 data (a non-Presidential election year) are compared with previous non-Presidential election years (1994, 1990, 1986, etc.).

To avoid confusion with the Presidential elections, this report refers to non-Presidential elections as Congressional elections.

Figure 1.  
**Registration and Voting Rates in Congressional Elections: 1966 to 1998**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

## Current Population Reports

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Table A.

**Reported Voting Rates in Congressional Election Years by Region, Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, and Age: November 1966 to 1998**

[Numbers in thousands]

Characteristics	Congressional elections of —								
	1966	1970	1974	1978	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998
<b>United States</b>									
Total, voting age.....	112,800	120,701	141,299	151,646	165,483	173,890	182,118	190,267	198,228
Percent voted .....	55.4	54.6	44.7	45.9	48.5	46.0	45.0	45.0	41.9
Non-Hispanic White.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	50.1	46.5
Non-Hispanic Black.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	37.4	40.0
Non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	21.8	19.2
Hispanic origin <sup>1</sup> .....	NA	NA	22.9	23.5	25.3	24.2	21.0	20.2	20.0
White.....	57.0	56.0	46.3	47.3	49.9	47.0	46.7	47.3	43.3
Black.....	41.7	43.5	33.8	37.2	43.0	43.2	39.2	37.1	39.6
Male.....	58.2	56.8	46.2	46.6	48.7	45.8	44.6	44.7	41.4
Female.....	53.0	52.7	43.4	45.3	48.4	46.1	45.4	45.3	42.4
18 to 24 years <sup>2</sup> .....	31.1	30.4	23.8	23.5	24.8	21.9	20.4	20.1	16.7
25 to 44 years.....	53.1	51.9	42.2	43.1	45.4	41.4	40.7	39.4	34.8
45 to 64 years.....	64.5	64.2	56.9	58.5	62.2	58.7	55.8	56.7	53.6
65 years and over.....	56.1	57.0	51.4	55.9	59.9	60.9	60.3	61.3	59.5
<b>North and West</b>									
Total, voting age.....	78,355	83,515	96,505	102,894	110,126	114,689	119,740	123,903	128,104
Percent voted .....	60.9	59.0	48.8	48.9	51.9	47.5	46.4	47.3	43.8
Non-Hispanic White.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	52.1	48.6
Non-Hispanic Black.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	40.8	41.2
Non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	22.5	21.1
Hispanic origin <sup>1</sup> .....	NA	NA	NA	23.9	25.8	23.8	20.5	20.8	21.4
White.....	61.7	59.8	50.0	50.0	53.1	48.7	48.2	49.3	45.4
Black.....	52.1	51.4	37.9	41.3	48.5	44.2	38.4	40.2	40.4
<b>South</b>									
Total, voting age.....	34,445	37,186	44,794	48,752	55,357	59,201	62,378	66,365	70,124
Percent voted .....	43.0	44.7	36.0	39.6	41.8	43.0	42.4	40.9	38.6
Non-Hispanic White.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	45.9	42.1
Non-Hispanic Black.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	34.7	39.1
Non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	17.8	9.9
Hispanic origin <sup>1</sup> .....	NA	NA	NA	22.5	24.2	25.0	22.1	19.1	17.3
White.....	45.1	46.4	37.4	41.1	42.9	43.5	43.5	43.0	39.2
Black.....	32.9	36.8	30.0	33.5	38.3	42.5	39.8	34.6	38.9

NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup>Hispanics may be of any race.<sup>2</sup>Prior to 1972, data are for people 21 to 24 years of age with the exception of those aged 18 to 24 in Georgia and Kentucky, 19 to 24 in Alaska, and 20 to 24 in Hawaii.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

Participation rates among the voting-age population decreased by 3 percentage points from 45 percent in 1994 to 42 percent in 1998. The number of people reported to have voted also declined from 86 million to 83 million. Both measures of

turnout declined for people of all ages, for both men and women, and for non-Hispanic Whites.

These voting participation rates for Hispanics<sup>2</sup> and non-Hispanic Asians

<sup>2</sup>Hispanics may be of any race.

and Pacific Islanders did not differ significantly between 1994 and 1998. Among citizens, however, the voting participation rate for non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander declined significantly (from 39 to 32 percent).

The information on voting and registration in this report comes from the November supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS), which asked respondents whether they registered and whether they voted in the election held on Tuesday, November 3rd, 1998. The figures presented in this report may differ from figures based on administrative data or data from exit polls.

CPS estimates differ from exit poll estimates in part because of differences in how the surveys are administered. The CPS is a nationally representative sample survey with very low nonresponse rates, that collects information 2 weeks after the election in November, while exit polls collect data at polling places on election day. Results obtained from exit polls tend to be more biased because certain groups of people, such as those with higher education, are more willing to fill out survey forms at polling places.

For a more detailed explanation, see current population reports, P20-466.

The drop in participation rates among the voting-age population between the 1994 and 1998 elections was greater for some groups than for others. Voting declined 4 percentage points for non-Hispanic Whites. The decline was also greater among younger people than older people — a drop of 3 percentage points among those aged 18 to 24 compared with

2 percentage points for those 65 and over.

In contrast to the general trend of declining voter participation, the percentage of non-Hispanic Blacks who voted rose between 1994 and 1998 from 37 percent to 40 percent. This increase was most notable in the South with a 4 percentage point increase, compared with no change in the remainder of the United States. About one half of the 9 million non-Hispanic Black voters were in the South.

### **Overall registration for Congressional elections remained the same as in 1990.**

Approximately 123 million people, or 62 percent of the voting-age population, reported that they were registered to vote in 1998 (see Table B). This percentage was not significantly different from the 1994 and 1990 Congressional elections.

Non-Hispanic Blacks and Hispanics experienced registration increases between 1994 and 1998 (from 59 percent to 61 percent for non-Hispanic Blacks and 31 percent to 34 percent for Hispanics). There was no significant change in registration between the two election years for non-Hispanic Whites, women, and people ages 25 to 44 years. The percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds who were registered to vote declined slightly from 42 percent in 1994 to 39 percent in 1998.

### **Who votes?**

Of the 198 million people 18 years and older living in the United States in November 1998, 183 million were estimated to be citizens (see

Table C).<sup>3</sup> Generally, people with the biggest stakes in society are the most likely to go to the polls: older individuals, homeowners, married couples, and people with more schooling, higher incomes, and good jobs.

### **Whites, women, older people, and those who are married are more likely to vote.**

The voter turnout rate among citizens is higher for non-Hispanic Whites (47 percent) than for non-Hispanic Blacks (42 percent). However, the 1998 Congressional election was the first since data have

<sup>3</sup>In previous years, the Census Bureau reported voting registration rates for the total U.S. resident population (including noncitizens) because citizenship status was neither directly asked nor consistently edited in prior surveys. Since 1994, the Census Bureau has collected data on citizenship status and is able to show voting and registration rates for citizens. Because citizenship levels may vary among different population groups (for example, by race and ethnicity), most of the discussion in this section refers to the reported voting and registration patterns of citizens.

Separating the citizen population from the resident population increases the voter turnout rate in the 1998 Congressional election to 45 percent of the citizen population, up from 42 percent of the voting-age population. Presenting voter turnout rates based on the citizen population 18 years and over compared with the voting-age population also significantly increases the voter turnout levels of both Hispanics and Asians and Pacific Islanders — by nearly 13 percentage points for each group — because many are not citizens. Indeed, voter participation rates for groups with a large proportion of recent immigrants have been underrepresented historically.

Table B.  
**Reported Rates of Registration by Region, Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, and Age: November 1966 to 1998**

[Numbers in thousands]

Characteristics	Congressional elections of—								
	1966	1970	1974	1978	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998
<b>United States</b>									
Total, voting age.....	112,800	120,701	141,299	151,646	165,483	173,890	182,118	190,267	198,228
Percent registered.....	70.3	68.1	62.2	62.6	64.1	64.3	62.2	62.5	62.1
Non-Hispanic White.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	68.1	67.9
Non-Hispanic Black.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	58.9	60.9
Non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	28.8	29.1
Hispanic origin <sup>1</sup> .....	NA	NA	34.9	32.9	35.3	35.9	32.3	31.3	33.7
White.....	71.6	69.1	63.5	63.8	65.6	65.3	63.8	64.6	63.9
Black.....	60.2	60.8	54.9	57.1	59.1	64.0	58.8	58.5	60.2
Male.....	72.2	69.6	62.8	62.6	63.7	63.4	61.2	61.2	60.6
Female.....	68.6	66.8	61.7	62.5	64.4	65.0	63.1	63.7	63.5
18 to 24 years <sup>2</sup> .....	44.1	40.9	41.3	40.5	42.4	42.0	39.9	42.3	39.2
25 to 44 years.....	67.6	65.0	59.9	60.2	61.5	61.1	58.4	57.9	57.7
45 to 64 years.....	78.9	77.5	73.6	74.3	75.6	74.8	71.4	71.7	71.1
65 years and over.....	73.5	73.7	70.2	72.8	75.2	76.9	76.5	76.3	75.4
<b>North and West</b>									
Total, voting age.....	78,355	83,515	96,505	102,894	110,126	114,689	119,740	123,903	128,104
Percent registered.....	73.8	70.0	63.3	63.8	65.2	64.9	62.6	63.3	61.8
Non-Hispanic White.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	69.2	68.2
Non-Hispanic Black.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	59.0	59.4
Non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	29.5	30.4
Hispanic origin <sup>1</sup> .....	NA	NA	NA	32.0	33.9	33.2	30.4	29.1	31.9
White.....	74.5	70.8	64.6	64.9	66.7	66.2	64.4	65.6	63.9
Black.....	68.8	64.5	54.2	58.0	61.7	63.1	58.4	58.3	58.5
<b>South</b>									
Total, voting age.....	34,445	37,186	44,794	48,752	55,357	59,201	62,378	66,365	70,124
Percent registered.....	62.2	63.8	59.8	60.1	61.7	63.0	61.3	61.1	62.7
Non-Hispanic White.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	65.9	67.4
Non-Hispanic Black.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	58.8	62.1
Non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	24.9	22.7
Hispanic origin <sup>1</sup> .....	NA	NA	NA	34.9	38.3	41.0	36.1	35.3	37.3
White.....	64.3	65.1	61.0	61.2	63.2	63.2	62.5	62.6	63.9
Black.....	52.9	57.5	55.5	56.2	56.9	64.6	59.0	58.8	61.5

NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup>Hispanics may be of any race.

<sup>2</sup>Prior to 1972, data are for people 21 to 24 years of age with the exception of those aged 18 to 24 in Georgia and Kentucky, 19 to 24 in Alaska, and 20 to 24 in Hawaii.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

been collected in the CPS in which the non-Hispanic Black turnout increased (3 percentage points) while the non-Hispanic White turnout rate declined (4 percentage points). The voter turnout rate gap between non-Hispanic Blacks and non-

Hispanic Whites also decreased in the 1998 election.

Hispanic citizens continued to vote at lower levels (33 percent) than non-Hispanic Whites (47 percent) and non-Hispanic Blacks (42 percent). Non-Hispanic Asians

and Pacific Islanders voted at levels similar to Hispanics (32 percent). Non-Hispanic Blacks and Hispanics have lower education levels, are younger, and are more likely to be in poverty than are non-Hispanic Whites; these characteristics have

Table C.  
**Reported Rates of Voting and Registration by Selected Characteristics: November 1998**

[Numbers in thousands]

Characteristics	Total population					Total citizen		
	Total population	Reported registered		Reported voted		Total citizen	Percent registered	Percent voted
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent			
Total, 18 years and over.....	198,228	123,104	62.1	83,098	41.9	183,450	67.1	45.3
<b>Sex</b>								
Male .....	95,187	57,659	60.6	39,391	41.4	87,713	65.7	44.9
Female .....	103,042	65,445	63.5	43,706	42.4	95,738	68.4	45.7
<b>Non-Hispanic White, total</b> .....								
Male .....	146,501	99,510	67.9	68,068	46.5	143,651	69.3	47.4
Female.....	70,624	47,256	66.9	32,786	46.4	69,290	68.2	47.3
Female.....	75,876	52,254	68.9	35,282	46.5	74,361	70.3	47.5
<b>Non-Hispanic Black, total</b> .....								
Male .....	22,603	13,773	60.9	9,044	40.0	21,613	63.7	41.9
Female.....	10,047	5,789	57.6	3,781	37.6	9,555	60.6	39.6
Female.....	12,557	7,984	63.6	5,263	41.9	12,058	66.2	43.7
<b>Non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander, total</b> .....								
Male .....	7,327	2,133	29.1	1,404	19.2	4,344	49.1	32.3
Female.....	3,477	992	28.5	647	18.6	2,079	47.7	31.1
Female.....	3,851	1,141	29.6	757	19.7	2,265	50.4	33.4
<b>Hispanic, total<sup>1</sup></b> .....								
Male .....	20,321	6,843	33.7	4,068	20.0	12,395	55.2	32.8
Female.....	10,327	3,235	31.3	1,942	18.8	6,090	53.1	31.9
Female.....	9,994	3,608	36.1	2,126	21.3	6,305	57.2	33.7
<b>Age</b>								
18 to 24 years .....	25,537	10,014	39.2	4,251	16.6	22,993	43.6	18.5
25 to 34 years .....	38,624	20,239	52.4	10,816	28.0	33,935	59.6	31.9
35 to 44 years .....	44,369	27,664	62.3	18,073	40.7	40,742	67.9	44.4
45 to 54 years .....	34,827	24,137	69.3	17,663	50.7	32,815	73.6	53.8
55 to 64 years .....	22,609	16,724	74.0	13,095	57.9	21,651	77.2	60.5
65 to 74 years .....	17,902	13,810	77.1	11,333	63.3	17,354	79.6	65.3
75 years and over .....	14,361	10,516	73.2	7,867	54.8	13,962	75.3	56.4
<b>Marital Status</b>								
Married-spouse present .....	112,328	77,080	68.6	55,567	49.5	103,901	74.2	53.5
Married-spouse absent.....	2,462	1,037	42.1	652	26.5	1,743	59.5	37.4
Widowed .....	13,406	9,109	67.9	6,309	47.1	12,874	70.8	49.0
Divorced .....	19,153	11,663	60.9	7,205	37.6	18,458	63.2	39.0
Separated .....	4,594	2,327	50.7	1,269	27.6	4,109	56.6	30.9
Never married.....	46,286	21,887	47.3	12,095	26.1	42,365	51.7	28.6
<b>Educational Attainment</b>								
Less than 9th grade .....	13,338	5,357	40.2	3,203	24.0	9,581	55.9	33.4
9th to 12th grade, no diploma.....	21,017	9,113	43.4	5,167	24.6	18,701	48.7	27.6
High school graduate or GED.....	65,579	38,444	58.6	24,334	37.1	62,118	61.9	39.2
Some college or associate's degree	52,903	36,109	68.3	24,454	46.2	50,595	71.4	48.3
Bachelor's degree .....	30,475	22,489	73.8	16,452	54.0	28,614	78.6	57.5
Advanced degree.....	14,916	11,591	77.7	9,487	63.6	13,842	83.7	68.5
<b>Employment Status</b>								
In the civilian labor force .....	135,726	84,278	62.1	55,306	40.7	125,615	67.1	44.0
Employed .....	130,497	81,743	62.6	53,821	41.2	120,961	67.6	44.5
Unemployed .....	5,227	2,535	48.5	1,485	28.4	4,652	54.5	31.9
Not in the labor force .....	62,503	38,826	62.1	27,791	44.5	57,836	67.1	48.1

Table C.  
**Reported Rates of Voting and Registration by Selected Characteristics: November 1998—Con.**  
 [Numbers in thousands]

Characteristics	Total population					Total citizen		
	Total population	Reported registered		Reported voted		Total citizen	Percent registered	Percent voted
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent			
<b>Annual Family Income</b>								
Total family members .....	151,209	96,377	63.7	66,081	43.7	139,625	69.0	47.3
Less than \$5,000 .....	2,866	1,189	41.5	605	21.1	2,387	49.8	25.4
\$5,000 to \$9,999 .....	5,149	2,310	44.9	1,232	23.9	4,260	54.2	28.9
\$10,000 to \$14,999 .....	8,446	4,139	49.0	2,571	30.4	7,118	58.2	36.1
\$15,000 to \$24,999 .....	16,790	9,108	54.2	5,814	34.6	14,553	62.6	40.0
\$25,000 to \$34,999 .....	19,347	11,718	60.6	7,776	40.2	17,581	66.7	44.2
\$35,000 to \$49,999 .....	24,576	16,147	65.7	10,824	44.0	23,043	70.1	47.0
\$50,000 to \$74,999 .....	28,988	20,841	71.9	14,459	49.9	27,639	75.4	52.3
\$75,000 and over .....	29,582	22,873	77.3	16,955	57.3	28,474	80.3	59.6
Income not reported .....	15,463	8,054	52.1	5,845	37.8	14,569	55.3	40.1
<b>Tenure</b>								
Owner-occupied units .....	140,139	97,534	69.6	69,011	49.2	134,305	72.6	51.4
Renter-occupied units .....	55,361	24,090	43.5	13,241	23.9	46,668	51.6	28.4
No cash rent units .....	2,728	1,480	54.2	846	31.0	2,476	59.8	34.2
<b>Duration of Residence</b>								
Less than 1 month .....	3,064	1,253	40.9	552	18.0	2,590	48.4	21.3
1 to 6 months .....	19,450	8,407	43.2	4,063	20.9	16,979	49.5	23.9
7 to 11 months .....	8,412	4,060	48.3	2,169	25.8	7,308	55.6	29.7
1 to 2 years .....	28,647	15,388	53.7	8,951	31.2	25,261	60.9	35.4
3 to 4 years .....	26,169	16,999	65.0	11,160	42.6	23,657	71.9	47.2
5 years or longer .....	100,359	76,297	76.0	55,839	55.6	96,462	79.1	57.9
Not reported .....	12,128	700	5.8	365	3.0	11,194	6.3	3.3
<b>Region</b>								
Northeast .....	38,455	23,380	60.8	15,842	41.2	35,162	66.5	45.1
Midwest .....	45,878	31,275	68.2	21,719	47.3	44,452	70.4	48.9
South .....	70,124	43,953	62.7	27,040	38.6	66,227	66.4	40.8
West .....	43,771	24,495	56.0	18,497	42.3	37,609	65.1	49.2

<sup>1</sup>Hispanics may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

been associated with lower turnout rates.<sup>4</sup>

Among citizens, women were more likely than men to vote in the 1998 Congressional election (46 percent compared with 45 percent). Although men historically have voted at higher rates than women, women's voting rates surpassed those of men for the first time in the Congressional election of 1986. This trend coincides with a number of social changes for women over the past few decades. Educational attainment, a strong correlate of

<sup>4</sup>Lewis, Pierce, Casey McCracken, and Roger Hunt, "Politics: Who Cares?" *American Demographics*. 1994. Vol. 16, No. 10., pp. 20-26.

voting, has risen significantly for them. At the same time, the labor force participation rate for women has also risen. Together, these trends all point to very significant levels of political involvement of women, including voting behavior.

The voting rate is much higher among older age groups than younger age groups. The peak ages for voting participation are evident among the 55- to 74-year-olds, where more than 6 out of every 10 citizens voted in the 1998 election. The lowest voting rates are for 18- to 24-year-old citizens, where slightly less than 1 in every 5 voted. A key difference between

these two groups is registration — while almost 80 percent of older citizens are registered, less than one-half of younger citizens are registered. The young, especially people in their twenties, are the most transient and must register more often, perhaps leading to lower registration levels.<sup>5</sup>

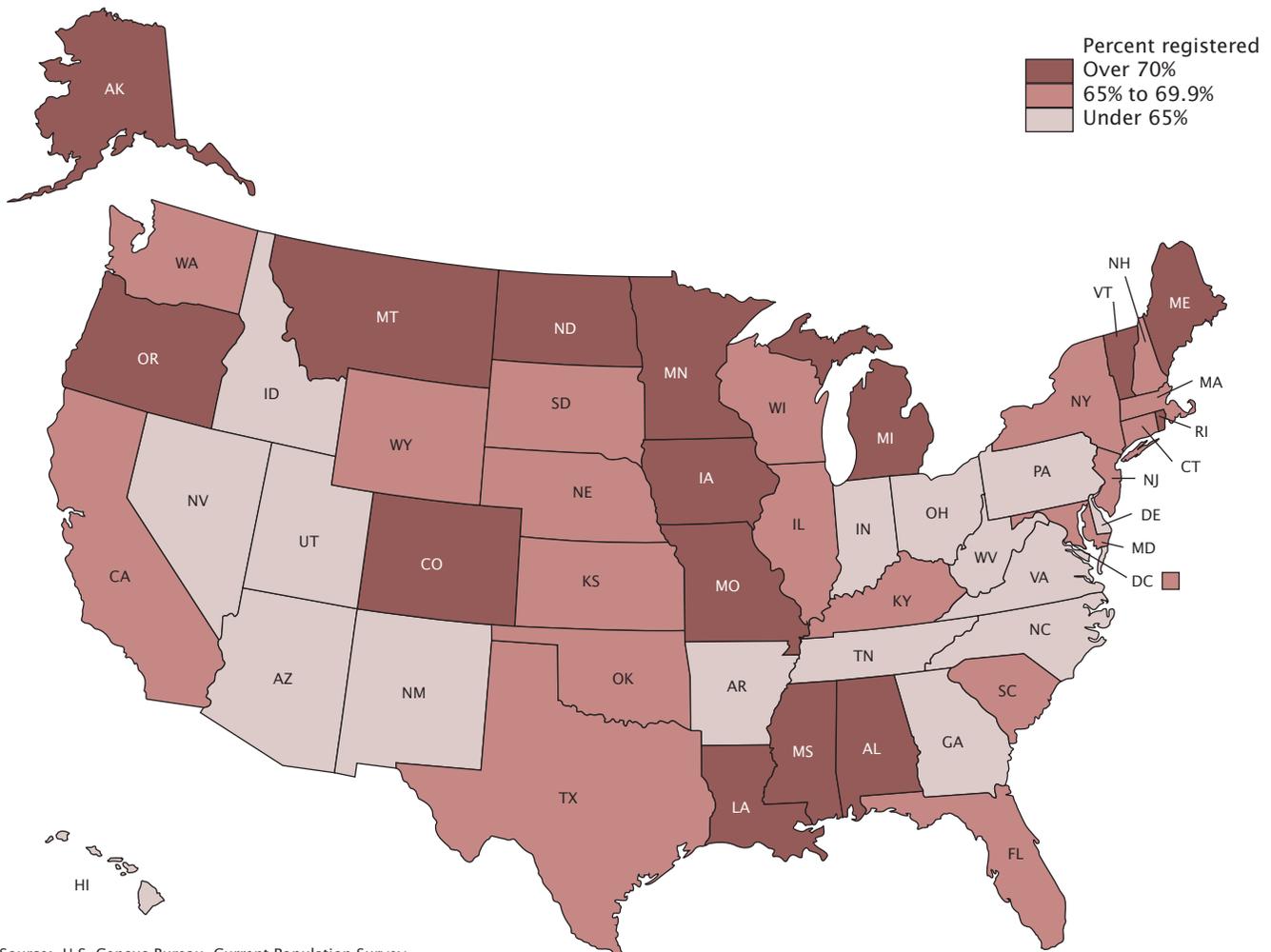
Marital status is related to the propensity to vote. Married individuals (54 percent) are more likely to vote than widowed (49 percent), divorced (39 percent), separated

<sup>5</sup>See Carol S. Faber. *Geographic Mobility: March 1997 to March 1998*. Current Population Reports P20-497. Washington, DC. U.S. Census Bureau, 1999.

Figure 2.

## Reported Registration by State: November 1998

(As a percent of the citizen population)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

(31 percent), or never-married individuals (29 percent). Separated and never-married individuals are generally younger, which may also influence their voting patterns.

### People with more education, higher incomes, and employment are more likely to vote.

Education is a key socioeconomic characteristic related to voting behavior because it is related to a person's occupation, income, and economic position. Education may also influence an individual's

interest in and commitment to the political process. In 1998, citizens who had bachelor's degrees were nearly twice as likely (58 percent) to report that they voted as those who had not completed high school (30 percent). At each level of educational attainment from high school completion and above, voting rates increase significantly. People with bachelor's and advanced degrees made up 31 percent for those who reported voting in the election, compared with just 10 percent for those who did not graduate from high school.

The greater the income of an individual, the higher the propensity to vote. Over 50 percent of citizens living in families whose total income was \$50,000 or more reported voting in the election, compared with less than 28 percent of those with a family income of under \$10,000. All together, about one-half of those living in families who voted in the November 1998 election had family incomes over \$50,000.

A person's employment status is another key indicator of voting



Table D.  
**Reported Voting and Registration by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Selected Characteristics:  
 November 1998**

[Numbers in thousands]

Characteristics	Non-Hispanic White			Non-Hispanic Black			Hispanic <sup>1</sup>		
	Citizen population	Percent registered	Percent voted	Citizen population	Percent registered	Percent voted	Citizen population	Percent registered	Percent voted
<b>Total, 18 years and over</b> .....	143,651	69.3	47.4	21,613	63.7	41.8	12,395	55.2	32.8
<b>Sex</b>									
Male .....	69,290	68.2	47.3	9,555	60.6	39.6	6,090	53.1	31.9
Female .....	74,361	70.3	47.4	12,058	66.2	43.6	6,305	57.2	33.7
<b>Age</b>									
18 to 24 years .....	16,372	45.9	19.5	3,372	40.6	16.9	2,448	36.4	14.7
25 to 34 years .....	25,021	60.8	32.4	4,863	61.9	35.6	2,769	51.9	25.6
35 to 44 years .....	31,582	70.0	46.3	5,046	65.2	42.0	2,772	57.2	33.3
45 to 54 years .....	26,286	75.4	55.4	3,531	69.9	51.9	1,895	60.2	41.7
65 to 74 years .....	14,451	80.7	66.9	1,582	76.4	59.7	896	73.2	54.5
75 years and over .....	12,223	76.3	57.2	1,030	73.3	53.4	456	68.2	50.4
<b>Educational Attainment</b>									
Less than 9th grade .....	5,976	55.6	32.2	1,298	62.5	41.4	1,944	56.3	33.8
9th to 12th grade, no diploma ...	12,570	50.4	28.8	3,612	50.4	28.4	2,099	39.0	20.4
High school graduate .....	48,921	63.7	40.8	7,707	59.1	36.7	3,948	51.4	28.5
Some college or associate's degree .....	39,937	72.9	49.8	5,998	70.2	46.8	3,070	64.2	39.5
Bachelor's degree .....	24,262	79.9	58.7	2,103	77.9	59.6	987	70.9	47.7
Advanced degree .....	11,984	85.0	70.2	894	82.7	66.0	347	66.3	50.4
<b>Employment Status</b>									
In the civilian labor force .....	98,168	69.0	45.8	14,778	65.3	42.9	8,587	54.5	30.6
Employed .....	95,339	69.4	46.2	13,632	66.1	43.8	8,093	55.4	31.2
Unemployed .....	2,829	56.8	34.5	1,146	55.9	29.8	493	39.8	20.5
Not in the labor force .....	45,483	69.8	50.7	6,835	60.3	40.0	3,809	56.9	37.8
<b>Annual Family Income</b>									
Under \$5,000 .....	1,114	50.6	26.8	858	50.0	24.8	392	41.3	18.9
\$5,000 to \$9,999 .....	2,219	51.1	27.5	1,307	58.5	31.7	599	57.8	28.5
\$10,000 to \$14,999 .....	4,433	61.2	40.2	1,460	58.8	31.6	1,001	46.2	25.1
\$15,000 to \$24,999 .....	10,231	65.1	42.5	2,287	63.7	37.5	1,577	51.6	31.3
\$25,000 to \$34,999 .....	13,182	68.1	45.8	2,282	68.9	46.4	1,528	56.7	31.7
\$35,000 to \$49,999 .....	18,458	72.1	48.7	2,281	65.9	44.6	1,642	61.3	37.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999 .....	23,216	76.9	53.7	2,114	76.5	54.5	1,337	68.5	42.82
\$75,000 and over .....	24,797	81.5	60.5	1,391	79.4	62.7	1,092	71.8	51.3
Income not reported .....	11,661	58.0	42.4	1,638	45.6	32.7	795	47.9	30.9
<b>Tenure</b>									
Owner-occupied units .....	111,227	74.1	52.8	11,822	69.8	50.2	7,273	63.0	39.9
Renter-occupied units .....	30,520	52.0	28.4	9,508	56.3	31.9	4,939	43.9	23.1
No cash rent units .....	1,905	61.7	37.5	283	57.2	26.9	183	48.6	15.8
<b>Region</b>									
Northeast .....	28,922	68.6	46.8	3,335	60.4	41.1	2,175	56.7	33.9
Midwest .....	38,896	71.4	49.8	3,918	67.8	48.1	901	55.0	31.5
South .....	48,227	68.3	42.7	12,404	63.9	40.2	4,511	55.9	25.9
West .....	27,606	68.8	52.7	1,956	60.2	40.7	4,809	63.4	46.0

<sup>1</sup>Hispanics may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

Table E.

**Reported Reasons for Not Voting Among Those Who Reported Registering but Not Voting, by Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, Age, and Educational Attainment: November 1998**

[Numbers in thousands. Percent distribution]

Characteristics	Reasons given for not voting													
	Number	Total percent	Too busy	Not interested	Ill / disability	Didn't like candidates	Out of town	Forgot	No transportation	Inconvenient	Registration problems	Weather conditions	Other reasons	Refused/don't know
Total	40,006	100.0	34.9	12.7	11.1	5.5	8.3	5.3	1.8	1.1	3.6	0.2	8.3	7.1
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>														
Non-Hispanic White	31,442	100.0	34.6	13.3	11.2	6.0	9.2	4.9	1.5	1.2	3.4	0.2	8.2	6.3
Non-Hispanic Black	4,729	100.0	32.1	10.2	12.8	3.5	4.9	7.5	3.7	0.7	4.1	0.1	8.1	12.3
Non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander	728	100.0	48.8	10.2	7.5	2.4	6.8	2.8	0.6	0.8	4.0	—	8.3	7.8
Hispanic Origin <sup>1</sup>	1,090	100.0	39.3	10.8	8.2	4.1	5.8	7.0	2.3	1.1	4.8	0.2	9.2	7.2
<b>Sex</b>														
Male	18,267	100.0	37.4	13.3	7.3	5.5	10.3	4.7	1.0	0.9	3.4	0.1	7.4	8.7
Female	21,739	100.0	32.7	12.2	14.3	5.5	6.7	5.9	2.6	1.2	3.8	0.2	9.1	5.8
<b>Age</b>														
18 to 24 years	5,763	100.0	38.6	9.8	2.6	3.0	9.8	6.4	1.2	1.2	5.5	—	8.2	13.5
25 to 44 years	19,014	100.0	43.3	13.0	5.7	5.1	6.5	5.2	1.3	1.2	4.1	0.1	8.2	6.4
45 to 64 years	10,103	100.0	30.9	14.0	11.3	7.5	10.1	5.8	1.5	1.1	2.5	0.2	8.7	6.4
65 years and over	5,126	100.0	7.4	12.2	40.2	5.8	10.1	3.6	5.3	0.7	2.2	0.5	8.2	3.8
<b>Educational Attainment</b>														
Not high school graduate	6,100	100.0	21.5	15.3	23.8	5.7	5.2	6.7	4.6	0.7	2.7	0.3	8.6	5.1
High school graduate or GED	14,110	100.0	35.4	14.7	10.9	6.2	6.1	5.5	1.6	1.0	2.8	0.3	8.0	7.6
Some college or associate's degree	11,655	100.0	39.3	10.6	7.5	5.2	9.3	5.3	1.3	1.1	4.1	0.1	8.4	7.8
Bachelor's degree or more	8,142	100.0	37.6	10.3	7.2	4.5	13.3	4.2	1.0	1.4	5.1	0.1	8.6	6.7

<sup>1</sup>Hispanics may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

and voting, due in part to the fact that people are able to register on election day in some of these states.<sup>6</sup>

In every state, more than one-half of the citizen population 18 and older had registered to vote in 1998 (Figure 2). North Dakota and Minnesota were the only states where registration exceeded 75 percent (at 91 percent and 83 percent respectively). Many of the states with lower rates of registration were in the West. Nevada

<sup>6</sup>Idaho, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, and Wyoming have election day registration. North Dakota has no voter registration.

had the lowest point estimated rate at 52 percent.

The pattern was somewhat different with regard to the percentage of citizens who voted (see Figure 3). Minnesota had the largest point estimate of 66 percent. At the bottom of the list was Virginia with just 31 percent of its citizens voting.

**Race differences in voting participation diminish when other characteristics are taken into account.**

Even though the non-Hispanic Black rate of voting increased in 1998,

the overall percentage was still significantly below that of non-Hispanic Whites. Yet, for people with similar characteristics, — age, educational attainment, family income, and tenure, for example — the pattern of voting participation was quite similar for non-Hispanic Whites and non-Hispanic Blacks (see Table D).

Regardless of race, older people were more likely to vote than younger people, higher educated people were more likely to vote than less educated people, people from higher family incomes were more likely to vote more than people from lower family incomes,

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and people who owned their homes were more likely to vote than people who rented. For people with a bachelor's degree or more and for people with an annual family income below \$10,000 or higher than \$50,000, there were no significant differences between non-Hispanic Whites and non-Hispanic Blacks. Hence, variations in age, education, income, and tenure appear to be the underlying factors that contribute to the overall voting rate differential evident by race.

For other characteristics, the pattern of voting rates by race are notably different. For example, although non-Hispanic White women and men did not differ in voter participation (about 47 percent each), non-Hispanic Black women were more likely than non-Hispanic Black men to vote — 43 percent compared with 40 percent.

### **About one-third reported that they did not vote because they were too busy or had conflicting work or school schedules.**

Low levels of voting bring into question why people elect not to vote. The 1998 CPS included a question which asked non-voters why they did not exercise their electoral option. Of the 40 million people who reported that they registered, but did not vote in the 1998 election, about one-third reported that they did not vote because they were too busy or had conflicting work or school schedules (see Table E). Another 13 percent did not vote because they were not interested or felt their vote would not make a difference; 11 percent reported that they did not vote because they were ill, disabled, or had a family emergency; 8 percent were out of town.

Other specified reasons for not voting included not liking the candidates or campaign issues (6 percent), forgetting to vote (5 percent), confusion or uncertainty about registration (4 percent), and transportation problems (2 percent).

Men, younger people (18 to 44 years), non-Hispanic Asians and Pacific Islanders, and those with more education were more likely to report that they did not vote because they were too busy or had conflicting work or school schedules compared with women, the elderly, non-Hispanic Whites or non-Hispanic Blacks, and less educated people. Women and the elderly were more likely than men and younger people to report that they did not vote because they were ill or disabled or had a family emergency. Those with no more than a high school education were more likely than those with more education to respond that they were not interested in the election or felt their vote would not make a difference. Non-Hispanic Whites were more likely than non-Hispanic Blacks to report that they did not prefer any of the candidates. Men, non-Hispanic Whites, and more educated people were more likely to report that they were out of town.

### **Source of the Data**

Most estimates in this report come from the Voting and Registration Supplement to the November 1998 Current Population Survey (CPS), but some estimates come from the November CPS in earlier years. The Census Bureau conducts the CPS every month. The voting and registration data are collected every other year (in even years) in November.

### **Accuracy and Reliability of the Data**

Statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and non-sampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet the Census Bureau's standards for statistical significance. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process — including the overall design of surveys, testing the wording of questions, reviewing of the work of interviewers and coders, and conducting statistical review of reports.

The Current Population Survey employs ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but how it affects different variables in the survey is not precisely known. Moreover, biases may also be present when people who are missed in the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the categories used in weighting (age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin). All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on statistical standards and the computation and use of standard errors, contact John M. Finamore of the Demographic Statistical Methods Division

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### More Information

The set of detailed tabulations on voting and registration from the 1998 November CPS consists of 13 detailed tables and 2 historical tables. The electronic version of these tables is available on the Internet, at the Census Bureau's World Wide Web site <<http://www.census.gov>>. Once on the site, under the "Subjects A-Z" area, click on "V" for "Voting." A paper version of these tables is available as PPL-120 for \$18.00. To receive a paper copy, send your request for the "PPL-120, Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1998," along with a

check or money order in the amount of \$18.00 payable to Commerce-Census 88-00-9010, to:

U.S. Department of Commerce  
U.S. Census Bureau  
P.O. Box 277943  
Atlanta, GA 30384-7943

or call our Statistical Information office at 301-457-2422. A copy of these tabulations will be made available to any existing CPR P20 subscriber without charge, provided that the request is made within 3 months of the issue date of this report. Contact our Statistical Information Office at 301-457-2422.

### Contacts

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### User Comments

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of data and report users. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write to:

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