Projections of the Voting-Age Population, for States: November 1992

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents projections of the population of voting age (18 years and over) for States for November 1, 1992, by broad age groups and sex and for the White, Black, and other races populations.[1] The projections shown here are based on the April 1, 1990, population as enumerated in the 1990 census.

These projections are designed to serve as a reference for the primary elections and the November general elections for President and members of the 103d 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 and their dependents of voting age 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 1992, this report includes voting-age population estimates and the percent voting for President in 1984 and 1988. Table 3 shows voting-age population and vote totals for the United States since 1930.

[1]No further information on age, sex, and race distributions for the voting-age population for November 1992 will be published by the Bureau of the Census.

GENERAL TRENDS

Age distribution. The voting-age population of the United States is expected to reach 189.0 million persons by November 1, 1992, an increase of 6.3 million, or 3.4 percent, since the 1988 Presidential election (table A).

The past three decades have shown a large 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 1992 projection of 189 million thus represents a 72-percent increase in the number of persons who on the basis of age are eligible to register to vote. Two major factors account for the 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 beginning in the middle- and 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 22nd Constitutional Amendment granted eligibility to 18- to 20-year-olds in all States in time for the 1972 Presidential 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

Table A. **Estimated Voting-Age Population and Change Since Last Election: 1968 to 1992**

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

November of year	Voting-age population	Change since previous election		November of year	Voting-age population	Change since previous election	
		Number	Percent			Number	Percent
1992[1]	189,044	3,232	1.7	1978	158,369	6,061	4.0
1990	185,812	3,033	1.7	1976	152,308	5,970	4.1
1988	182,779	4,213	2.4	1974	146,338	5,561	4.0
1986	178,566	4,098	2.3	1972	140,777	16,279	13.1
1984	174,468	4,532	2.7	1970	124,498	4,213	3.5
1982	169,936	5,341	3.2	1968	120,285	3,647	3.1
1980	164,595	6,226	3.9				

[1]Projection.

Source: Table 3.

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about 4 percent per biennium in the 1970's to around 3 percent in the early 1980s 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-to-44 age group (table B). Since 1980, this group has increased by 19.0 million persons, from 62.7 to 81.7 million, and is now almost totally composed of the Baby Boom cohorts (persons now 28 to 46 years old). This group has increased its already dominant share of the voting-age population from 38.5 percent in 1980 to a projected 43.2 percent in 1992. During the 1980-92 period, the 65-and-over group will have grown by 6.8 million persons, increasing its share of the voting-age population from 15.7 to 17.1 percent. In contrast, the 45-to-64 group will have grown by only 4.1 million persons, dropping its share of the voting-age population from 27.3 percent in 1980 to 25.7 percent in 1992.

The size of the 18-to-24 age group continues to decline as the smaller post-Baby Boom birth cohorts of the 1960's and 1970's reach voting age. This group will have lost 3.6 million persons between 1980 and 1992, and will constitute only 14.0 percent of the total voting-age population in November 1992.

The age distribution of the voting-age population will be similar among most States, although in Florida, half (50.2 percent) of the voting-age population will be above age 45 (table 1), and almost one-fourth (24.1 percent) will be above age 65. Alaska will have the youngest voting-age population, with 15.9 percent of its voting-age population falling between the ages of 18 and 24 and 55.4 percent between the ages 25 to 44 years.

Sex. Women will represent 52.0 percent of the voting-age population in November 1992, outnumbering men by 7.7 million (table 1). They will outnumber men in all voting-age groups except for ages 18 to 24, where men will outnumber women by 824,000. Among persons 65 and over, women represent 59.8 percent. Women will outnumber men in all States except Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada, and Wyoming.

Race.[2] By November 1992, Blacks 18 and over will number 21.5 million and represent 11.4 percent of the persons of voting age (table 1). Another 7.2 million or 3.8 percent of the voting-age population will be races other than White or Black; persons of other races include Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut.

The District of Columbia will have a higher proportion of Blacks in its electorate (64.3 percent) than any State. At 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. Alaska and Hawaii are States with high concentrations of other races: in Alaska, 17.7 percent of the voting-age population are other races (mostly American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut); in Hawaii, almost two-thirds (62.7 percent) of the population are of other races (mainly Asian or Pacific Islander). California, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Arizona, Washington, Montana, and Nevada are the only other States having more than 5 percent of their voting-age populations of other races.

VOTER TURNOUT

The "official" count of votes shown in table 3 is based on tabulations of actual voters provided by each State and compiled by the U.S. Congress, Clerk of the House, and published in *Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Elections* and *Statistics of the Congressional Elections* or by the Election Research Center, and published in its volumes, *America Votes*.

[2]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 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 18 Years and Over, by Broad Age Groups: 1960 to 1992**

(Numbers in thousands)

Year	Total	18 to 24 years	25 to 44 years	45 to 64 years	65 years and over	Percent of total: 18 to 24 years	25 to 44 years	45 to 64 years	65 years and over
1992 (Nov. 1)[1]	189,044	26,392	81,745	48,555	32,352	14.0	43.2	25.7	17.1
1990 (census)	184,786	26,942	80,595	46,169	31,079	14.6	43.6	25.0	16.8
1988 (Nov. 1)[2]	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	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

[1]Projection.
[2]Estimate.

Source: Table 1 and decennial censuses for 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990.

The count of votes shown in table 3 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 3 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. From 1960 to 1980, each Presidential election resulted in lower levels of voter turnout, with the sharpest decline of 5.7 percentage points between 1968 and 1972. This decline 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 over the past two decades. In 1984, turnout rose slightly to 53.1 percent, but dropped again in 1988 to 50.1 percent.

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

Highest voter turnout traditionally occurs in the West North Central States and New England (table 2). 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 (62.5 percent) and North Dakota (61.4 percent); additional States with more than 60 percent voting included Maine, Wisconsin, 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.

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. According to the November 1990 Current Population Survey on Voting and Registration, an estimated 10.5 million persons aged 18 years and over (or nearly 6 percent) were aliens. Census Bureau research to evaluate decennial census coverage estimated that about 2 million undocumented immigrants (all ages) were included in Current Population Surveys in 1988[3] and 1989[4]. These estimates of undocumented residents will be updated by analysis of 1990 census data.[5]

METHODOLOGY

The projections of the voting-age population for States use the cohort-component method, which requires separate assumptions for each of the components of population change. The fertility, mortality, and international migration asumptions are consistent with those used in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1053, which also explains the derivation and application of these assumptions. The internal migration assumptions involve the application of time-series methods to annual data on State-to-State migration for the years 1975 to 1989. The particular time-series model used assumes that for each State-to-State migration rate the change that occurs in a given year is a function of the change that occurred in the previous year. The research that led to our adoption of this model is presented in Edward Freese, *Forecasting State-to-State Migration Rates*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Research Division Report, Series, RR-90/06.

RACE DEFINITIONS

The population is divided into three groups on the basis of race: White, Black, and "other races." The term "other races" refers to that portion of the United States population that is neither White nor Black. The "other races" category includes American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut; Asian or Pacific Islander; and any other specified race.

RELATED REPORTS

Projections of the voting-age population as of November 1 for States, by age, sex, and race are published biennially in Current Population Reports, Series P-25.

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[3]Karen A. Woodrow, 1990, and Jeffrey S. Passel, 1990, "Post-IRCA Undocumented Immigration to the United States: An Assessment Based on the June 1988 CPS." *Undocumented Migration to the Unitead States: IRCA and the Experience of the 1980's,* edited by F.D. Bean, B. Edmonston, and J.S. Passel, Washington, DC.: The Urban Institute.

[4]Karen A. Woodrow, 1990, "Undocumented Immigrantss Living in the United States." *Proceedings of the Social Statistics Section of the American Statistical Association,* Washington, DC.

[5]No questions about legal status are included in the census or CPS. Research to estimate undocumented aliens in censuses and surveys is based on analysis of aggregate figures.

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.

ROUNDING OF ESTIMATES

The estimates shown in the tables in this report have been rounded to the nearest thousand without adjustment to group totals, which are independently rounded.