

Population Estimates

Series P-25, No. 315
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ESTIMATES OF THE POPULATION OF VOTING AGE AND OF THE PERCENT VOTING IN GENERAL ELECTIONS 1920 TO 1964

(The estimates of U.S. voting-age population shown here supersede the corresponding estimates shown in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, Nos. 255 and 221. Estimates of voting-age population and of the percent voting in 1964 and 1960 for States are given in Series P-23, No. 14.)

This report presents estimates of the civilian population of voting age and of the percent of the voting-age population which cast votes for presidential electors or U.S. Representatives in each general election from 1920 to 1964. Estimates are also given of the population of voting age by color and by sex for 1960, 1962, and 1964.

Nearly 63 percent of the estimated civilian population of voting age cast votes for presidential electors in the November 1964 general election and nearly 59 percent cast votes for U.S. Representatives. The percents voting were slightly less than in the November 1960 general election, when 64 percent and 60 percent of the civilian population of voting age cast votes for presidential electors and U.S. Representatives, respectively. The total vote cast for presidential electors was 70,642,000 in 1964 and 68,839,000 in 1960 (table 1).

Interest in voting for presidential candidates has been substantially greater than in voting for U.S. Representatives. Even in presidential election years, the proportion of civilians of voting age casting votes for presidential electors has been consistently higher by several percentage points than the proportion casting votes for U.S. Representatives. The proportion of civilians of voting age casting votes for U.S. Representatives in years

when no president was elected averaged about 13 percentage points lower than in presidential election years in the 1920-64 period.

The proportion of the civilian population of voting age casting votes for the presidency showed a marked rise between 1920, the first election in which women had the right to vote, and 1940. In the earlier year, the figure was only 44 percent; by 1940 it had risen to 59 percent. Since 1940 there has been only a small net gain, all the percents since the 1952 election year being in the low sixties. Similar trends are indicated for the proportions of the voting-age population casting votes for U.S. Representatives, although the level of the figures is lower. It is quite probable that the increasingly greater exercise of their new right of franchise by women played an important part in the rise in the proportion voting in the twenties and thirties.

About 112.5 million civilians in the United States were old enough to vote in the November 1964 general election. This figure includes the civilian resident population 21 years of age and over for the 50 States and the District of Columbia, as well as civilians 18 to 20 years of age residing in Georgia and Kentucky, and civilians 19 and 20 years of age in Alaska and 20 years of age in Hawaii. The four States named permit persons under 21 in the ages noted

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Table 1.—ESTIMATED CIVILIAN POPULATION OF VOTING AGE IN THE UNITED STATES, AND VOTE CAST FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORS AND U.S. REPRESENTATIVES: 1920 TO 1964

(Numbers in thousands. Population as of November 1. Includes aliens. Beginning 1958, includes Alaska and Hawaii; includes District of Columbia in all years)

Year	Civilian population of voting age ¹	Vote cast for presidential electors		Vote cast for U.S. Representatives		Year	Civilian population of voting age ¹	Vote cast for presidential electors		Vote cast for U.S. Representatives	
		Number ²	Percent of civilians of voting age	Number ²	Percent of civilians of voting age			Number ²	Percent of civilians of voting age	Number ²	Percent of civilians of voting age
1964.....	112,549	70,642	³ 62.8	66,031	³ 58.7	1938.....	82,225	(X)	(X)	36,236	44.1
1962.....	109,687	(X)	(X)	51,264	46.7	1936.....	80,055	45,643	57.0	42,886	53.6
1960.....	107,597	68,839	64.0	64,133	59.6	1934.....	77,898	(X)	(X)	32,256	41.4
1958 ⁴	105,455	(X)	(X)	45,818	43.4	1932.....	75,671	39,732	52.5	37,657	49.8
1956.....	103,166	62,027	60.1	58,426	56.6	1930.....	73,521	(X)	(X)	24,777	33.7
1954.....	100,475	(X)	(X)	42,580	42.4	1928.....	70,993	36,812	51.9	33,906	47.8
1952.....	98,279	61,551	62.6	57,571	58.6	1926.....	68,550	(X)	(X)	20,435	29.8
1950.....	97,058	(X)	(X)	40,342	41.6	1924.....	66,195	29,086	43.9	26,884	40.6
1948.....	94,877	48,691	51.3	45,933	48.4	1922.....	63,598	(X)	(X)	20,409	32.1
1946.....	92,018	(X)	(X)	34,398	37.4	1920.....	61,495	26,748	43.5	25,080	40.8
1944.....	⁵ 90,599	⁵ 47,969	⁵ 52.9	45,103	49.8						
1942.....	82,851	(X)	(X)	28,074	33.9						
1940.....	84,319	49,891	59.2	46,951	55.7						

X Not applicable.

¹ Population 21 years and over, except as follows: 18 years and over in Georgia since 1944; 18 years and over in Kentucky since 1956; 19 years and over in Alaska (since 1958); 20 years and over in Hawaii (since 1958).

² Data obtained from Clerk of the House, U.S. Congress, and Governmental Affairs Institute, Washington, D.C.

³ If the percent casting votes were based on the estimated total population including Armed Forces overseas, the figure would be 61.7 percent for presidential electors and 57.6 percent for U.S. Representatives.

⁴ Includes Alaska, which voted for a U.S. Representative in November 1958 although it did not achieve statehood until January 1959. Also includes the estimated 1959 population of voting age for Hawaii and the vote cast in the July 1959 election although Hawaii did not achieve statehood until August 1959.

⁵ Total population including Armed Forces overseas. Civilian population was 81,024,000; vote cast by civilians, 45,285,000; and percent of voting age, 55.9.

to vote. If members of the Armed Forces at home and abroad are included, the number of potential voters in November 1964 is increased by about 2 million to 114.6 million (table 2). Not included in these figures are U.S. civilians residing

abroad, some of whom would be eligible to vote. In November 1964 an estimated one-quarter million dependents of Armed Forces or citizen employees of the U.S. Government and their dependents of voting age were residing abroad.

Table 2.—ESTIMATED POPULATION OF VOTING AGE IN THE UNITED STATES, BY COLOR AND SEX: NOVEMBER 1, 1964, 1962, AND 1960

(In thousands. Population 21 years old and over, except as follows: 18 years and over in Georgia and Kentucky, 19 years and over in Alaska and 20 years and over in Hawaii. Includes 50 States and the District of Columbia in all years)

Color and sex	Total population including Armed Forces overseas			Total resident population			Civilian resident population		
	1964	1962	1960	1964	1962	1960	1964	1962	1960
Total.....	114,559	111,710	109,518	114,019	111,128	109,024	112,549	109,687	107,597
Male.....	55,250	54,042	53,164	54,713	53,463	52,673	53,261	52,041	51,267
Female.....	59,309	57,668	56,354	59,306	57,665	56,351	59,288	57,646	56,330
White.....	102,840	100,328	98,429	102,349	99,799	97,973	100,990	98,467	96,662
Nonwhite.....	11,719	11,382	11,089	11,670	11,329	11,051	11,559	11,220	10,935

The population of voting age includes a great many persons who are old enough to vote but cannot do so for many reasons. Among these persons are aliens. About 3.4 million aliens registered under the requirements of the Immigration and Nationality Act with the Immigration and Naturalization Service in January 1965; the majority of these are usual residents of the United States and of

voting age. Among citizens of voting age, many are unable to vote because they have not satisfied State requirements as to registration or as to length of residence in the State, county, and election precinct.¹ Some others are not permitted to vote because they have been committed to penal institutions, mental hospitals, or other institutions. All States permit persons in the Ar_{nd}

ces and their dependents to vote by absentee ballot, but several States do not permit absentee voting by mail by civilians. State requirements relating to the payment of poll taxes, as a prerequisite for voting in national elections, were abolished just before the general election in 1964 by a Constitutional amendment. Many persons are still not able to vote because they do not meet other requirements called for by State laws, such as the requirement to pass literacy or other tests.

It is not possible to prepare satisfactory estimates of the number of persons in most of the categories of persons ineligible to vote. Hence, estimates of the number of persons who were actually eligible to vote in the 1964 general election or earlier general elections are not offered here.

Of all potential voters in November 1964, 55.2 million were men and 59.3 million were women. The white population of voting age was 102.8 million; the nonwhite population was 11.7 million. Between the general elections in November 1962 and 1964, the number of potential voters showed a net increase of 2.8 million. Between the general elections in 1960 and 1964, the number of potential voters showed a net increase of 5.0 million but at 10.5 million persons reached voting age.

Currently more than two-thirds of the States require a residence in the State of at least 1 year, and most of the remaining States require a residence of at least 6 months. Moreover, in nearly all States advance registration is required.

Although persons of voting age in the District of Columbia were eligible to vote for the first time in a general election in 1964, a substantial number of persons of voting age in the District lack voting residence in the District or in any State.

The national average of persons of voting age for each of the 538 presidential electors chosen in November 1964 was 213,000. The national average of persons of voting age for each of the 537 presidential electors chosen in November 1960 was 204,000.

METHODOLOGY

The estimates of voting-age population were based on the estimates of the population of the United States by age, color, and sex, published in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, Nos. 98, 114, 265, 276, 293, and 310; unpublished estimates by age, color, and sex, for November 1, 1964; and estimates of the total population for 1960 to 1964 published in Series P-25, No. 302. These estimates, in turn, were based on data from the Census of 1960; statistics and estimates of births and deaths provided by the National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Public Health Service; statistics on immigration and emigration provided by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Department of Justice, supplemented by data on passenger movement from Puerto Rico to the mainland as reported by the Government of Puerto Rico; and figures relating to the Armed Forces provided by the Department of Defense. In some cases these data had to be extended for some months to bring the series up to November 1964.

The estimates of U.S. voting-age population and of the percentage voting for years from 1950 to 1962 shown in this report supersede the corresponding estimates shown in Series P-25, Nos. 255 and 221. Estimates of voting-age population and of the percentage casting votes for presidential electors in 1964 for States, with comparable figures for 1960, are given in Series P-23, No. 14. This report also gives county data on voting in 1960.

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