

2008 ELECTIONS

The U.S. is currently experiencing a shift in party affiliation.

- ▶ Republican registrations are declining as Democratic and Independent registrations are rising.
- ▶ Since November 2004, Democratic registration increased by nearly 700,000 voters while Republican registration decreased by nearly 1 million in the 29 states where voters register by party.¹
- ▶ In Kentucky, Louisiana and Oklahoma, Republican registration increased slightly while Democratic registration decreased.
- ▶ In 12 states, Independent registrations are increasing faster than either Republican or Democratic registrations.²
- ▶ Even though party registration does not necessarily dictate how people will vote on Election Day—sometimes voters change parties just to vote in primaries—this shift toward Independent and Democratic party affiliation is a trend that has been observed for nearly four years.



Voter turnout is increasing slightly, but the majority of Americans still don't vote regularly.

- ▶ Only 35 percent of the adult population votes regularly in both presidential and off-year elections.³
- ▶ Twenty percent of the adult population typically votes in presidential elections, but not in off-year elections. Six in 10 who vote in the presidential elections reported that a lack of knowledge about candidates prevents them from participating in off-year elections.⁴
- ▶ Compared to the primary season in 2000, nearly 23 million more voters cast ballots during the 2008 primaries in their states.⁵

The November 2008 election has the potential to dramatically change the political landscape, both in Washington, D.C., and in the states.

- ▶ Thirty-four U.S. Senate seats are up for regular election in November. Twenty-two of the 34 seats are currently held by Republicans, but five of the Republican incumbents are not seeking re-election; the remaining 12 seats are Democrat incumbents.
- ▶ All 435 U.S. House seats are up for election, and six Democrats and 26 Republicans are voluntarily retiring from the House.
- ▶ In the states, 11 governorships are up for election. Four Democrat and four Republican incumbents are up for re-election, and three states have open contests.
- ▶ State legislatures could also see major changes, with more than 1,000 state senate seats up for election and more than 4,500 state house seats up for election across the country.

¹ Cook, Rhodes. July 17, 2008. "A New Electorate in the Making?" Real Clear Politics. Accessed from http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2008/07/a_new_electorate_in_the_making.html on August 27, 2008.

² Steinhauer, Jennifer. August 10, 2008. "Democratic, Independent Registration Rises". *New York Times*. Accessed from <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2008/aug/10/democratic-independent-registration-rises/> on August 27, 2008.

³ The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. 2006. *Regular Voters, Intermittent Voters, and Those Who Don't: Who Votes, Who Doesn't, and Why*. Accessed from <http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/292.pdf> on August 27, 2008.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ "2008 Primary Packs the Polls". *Dayton Daily News*. Accessed from http://www.daytondailynews.com/p/content/oh/media/news/elections/primary_turnout on August 27, 2008.

NUMBER OF MAJOR OPEN OFFICES UP FOR ELECTION IN 2008 BY STATE

State	Governor	Lieutenant Governor	Supreme Court	State Senate	State House	U.S. Senate	U.S. House
Alabama			1			1	7
Alaska				10	40	1	1
Arizona				30	60	1	8
Arkansas			2	18	100	1	4
California				20	80		53
Colorado				19	65	1	7
Connecticut				36	151		5
Delaware	•	•		11	41	1	1
Florida			1	20	120		25
Georgia			2	56	180	1	13
Hawaii				12	51		2
Idaho			2	35	70	1	2
Illinois			1	39	118	1	19
Indiana	•	•	2	25	100		9
Iowa				25	100	1	5
Kansas			2	40	125	1	4
Kentucky			2	19	100	1	6
Louisiana						1	7
Maine				35	151	1	2
Maryland			2				8
Massachusetts				40	160	1	10
Michigan					110	1	15
Minnesota			2		134	1	8
Mississippi						1	4
Missouri	•	•	1	17	163		9
Montana	•	•	2	25	100	1	1
Nebraska				25	unicameral	1	3
Nevada			2	10	42		3
New Hampshire	•			24	400	1	2
New Jersey						1	13
New Mexico			2	42	70	1	3
New York				62	150		29
North Carolina	•	•	1	50	120	1	13
North Dakota	•	•	2	23	46		1
Ohio			2	16	99		18
Oklahoma			3	24	101	1	5
Oregon			2	15	60	1	5
Pennsylvania				25	203		19
Rhode Island				38	75	1	2
South Carolina				46	124	1	6
South Dakota				35	70	1	1
Tennessee				16	99	1	9
Texas			3	15	150	1	32
Utah	•	•		14	75		3
Vermont	•	•		30	150		1
Virginia						1	11
Washington	•	•	3	26	98		9
West Virginia	•		2	17	100	1	3
Wisconsin			1	16	99		8
Wyoming			1	15	60	2*	1

*One special election.

Additional Information

- ▶ The Council of State Governments' Election Center: <http://www.csg.org/pubs/Election2008/2008ElectionResultsByState.aspx>
- ▶ The Book of the States: <http://www.csg.org/pubs/TheBookoftheStates.aspx>
- ▶ The Pew Center for the People and the Press: <http://people-press.org/>
- ▶ Gallup: <http://www.gallup.com/Home.aspx>
- ▶ Politico.com: <http://www.politico.com>
- ▶ Real Clear Politics: <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/>