



High 2004 Turnout for States with Election Day Registration

Advocates for democracy had one strong reason to cheer on election night: high voter turnout. More than 122 million Americans voted for President in 2004, an increase of 17 million voters or more than 8% of the voting-eligible population (VEP),¹ from the 2000 election.

Once again, the states leading the country in voter participation all have one thing in common: they allow voters to register to vote on Election Day. Election Day Registration (EDR) makes it possible for new voters, the recently relocated, and those whose registrations were incomplete or lost to participate without unnecessary hurdles. **Nationwide, residents of states with Election Day registration voted at rates far higher than average:**

- 73.8% of all eligible voters in EDR states voted, compared with 60.2% of eligible voters in states without EDR -- a difference of 13.6 percentage points.
- Turnout in four of the six states with EDR topped the nation. Minnesota (78.0%), Wisconsin (74.9%), Maine (72.6%), and New Hampshire (70.5%). Oregon, which employs a vote-by-mail system, had a turnout of 70.9%, making it the only non-EDR state to place in the top five.
- Turnout in “safe” states² with EDR averaged 66.9%, compared with 58.5% turnout rates in other “safe” states -- a difference of 8.4 percentage points.
- “Battleground” states with EDR averaged a 75.7% turnout, compared with 65.2% turnout rates in other “battleground” states -- a difference of 10.5 percentage points.
- The 13.6% turnout advantage for EDR states was significantly larger than the 8.2% difference in turnout between “battleground” and “safe” states.
- EDR may enhance the intense mobilization that occurs in “battleground” states. “Battleground” states with traditional voter registration had turnout rates only 6.7% higher than “safe” states. In “battleground” states with EDR, turnout was 8.8% higher than in “safe” EDR states.

¹ The U.S. voting-eligible population (VEP) includes all adult residents of the United States who are citizens and not disfranchised by current felony convictions. It more closely approximates the actual electorate than other more common measures (voting age population and citizen voting age population). Due to data limitations, the state-level VEP figures presented here do not properly account for overseas citizens, former prisoners, probationers or parolees who are still unable to vote under certain state laws, nor adults declared mentally incapacitated and therefore ineligible to vote. VEP data was drawn from the United States Election Project (http://elections.gmu.edu/voter_turnout.htm) on December 14, 2004.

² “Safe” states are those in which one presidential candidate won with more than 5% of the vote. All states with a smaller margin of victory are “battleground” states.

Overall Turnout

	Percent Turnout	Voting Eligible Population	2004 Turnout
All States	60.9%	200,760,369	122,284,728
All EDR	73.8%	10,959,323	8,086,045
All Non-EDR States	60.2%	189,801,046	114,198,683
EDR Advantage	13.6%		

Turnout in “Battleground” States

	Percent Turnout	Voting Eligible Population	2004 Turnout
All Battleground States	66.8%	55,985,041	37,402,724
EDR Battleground States	75.7%	8,592,020	6,503,056
Non-EDR Battleground States	65.2%	47,393,021	30,899,668
New Hampshire	70.5%	961,505	677,662
Wisconsin	74.9%	4,002,710	2,997,007
Minnesota	78.0%	3,627,805	2,828,387
EDR Advantage	10.5%		

Turnout in “Safe” States

	Percent Turnout	Voting Eligible Population	2004 Turnout
All Safe States	58.6%	144,775,328	84,882,004
EDR Safe States	66.9%	2,367,303	1,582,989
Non-EDR Safe States	58.5%	142,408,025	83,299,015
Maine	72.6%	1,019,972	740,752
Idaho	61.8%	967,761	598,376
Wyoming	64.2%	379,570	243,861
EDR Advantage	8.4%		

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