

AMERICA Goes to the Polls

A Report on Voter Turnout in
the 2008 Presidential Primary

Prepared by the
Nonprofit Voter Engagement Network



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Based on voter participation in the 2008 Democratic and Republican primaries and caucuses in the 50 states and District of Columbia

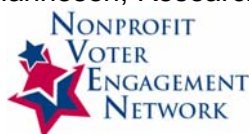
America Goes to the Polls 2008

A REPORT ON VOTER TURNOUT IN THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

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www.nonprofitvote.org

a program of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

The Nonprofit Voter Engagement Network is a nonpartisan network of state and national nonprofit vote, including-



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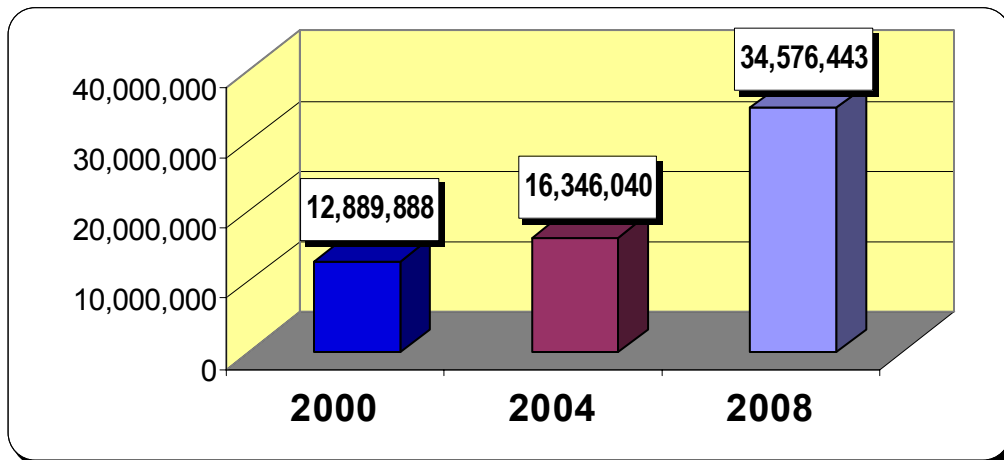
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Participation Growth in 2008 by Party Primaries

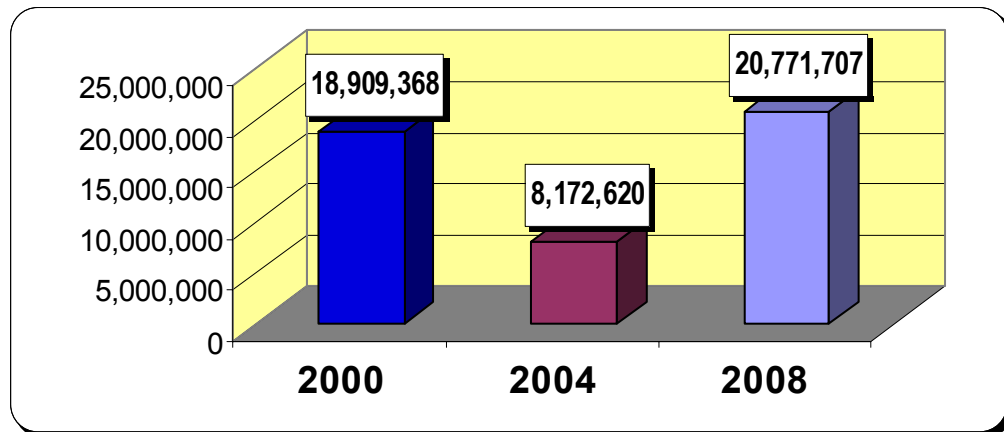
Turnout more than doubled in Democratic primaries over 2004. Republican turnout also rose modestly from the party's competitive 2000 race.

- ⇒ *Democrats:* Voter turnout in Democratic primaries rose 112% over 2004 and 162 % over 2000. Voter turnout increased in every Democratic primary compared to 2004 – more than doubling in 16 of the states with comparable primaries.
- ⇒ *Republicans:* Voter turnout in Republican primaries went up 10%. 2004 cannot be compared to this year as the incumbent President was largely unopposed.
- ⇒ Among states with the highest Democratic turnout growth were Mississippi, Rhode Island, Texas and Utah; Republican turnout increased most in Arkansas, Florida and Oklahoma.

Turnout in 37 Democratic Primaries 2000, 2004 and 2008:



Turnout in 41 Republican Primaries 2000, 2004 and 2008:



Source: David Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections, The Green Papers, State Election offices

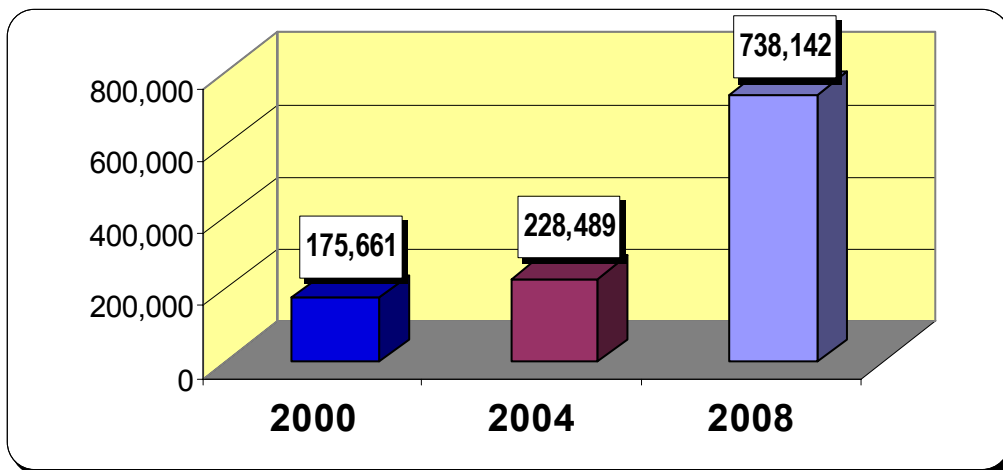
Participation Growth in 2008 by Party Caucuses

Caucus participation more than doubled in Democratic primaries over the 2004 contest. Republican caucus participation also rose compared to its last contested primary in 2000.

- ⇒ *Democrats*: The number of voters participating in Democratic caucuses tripled when compared to 2004. Participation rose in Democratic caucuses by more than 509,000 voters (223%) over 2004, most dramatically in Democratic caucuses in Iowa, Idaho and Kansas.
- ⇒ *Republicans*: Republicans held caucuses in 10 states. Participation was 72% higher in the four with comparable data to 2000, with the biggest change in Alaska and Minnesota.

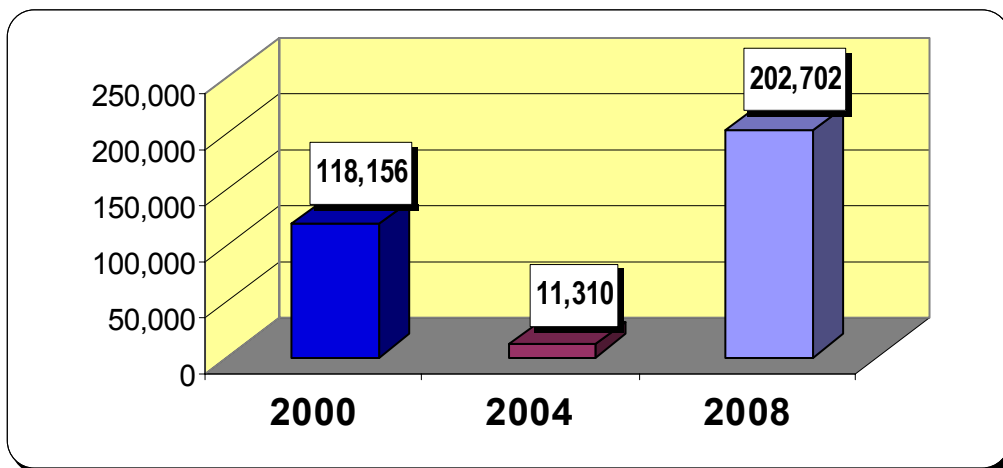
Participation in 10 Democratic Caucuses 2000, 2004 and 2008:

Only caucuses with comparable numbers to 2004 included



Participation in 4 Republican Caucuses 2000, 2004 and 2008:

Only caucuses with comparable numbers to 2000 included



Source: David Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections, The Green Papers, State Election offices

2008 State Voter Turnout Rank

Only including states where both major parties held primaries. Turnout as a percent of eligible voters

Election Day Registration and Early Voting most likely contributed to higher turnout in many states.

Besides competitive elections or the date of the primary, a number of factors influence voter turnout. For example:

- ⇒ *Election Day Registration (EDR):* Allowing voters to register or fix their registration at the polls ensures that more voters can successfully participate. Of the states with some form of Election Day Registration, most held caucuses. The three states with primaries, Wisconsin, New Hampshire and North Carolina, had high participation. Voters in North Carolina, normally a lower turnout state, benefited from the state letting early voters to register and vote at the same time up until 3 days before the election. New Hampshire gets a boost from going first.
- ⇒ *Early Voting:* Allowing voters more and better opportunities to vote early can raise turnout in contests with traditionally lower turnout, like primaries³. Four of the ten states with the highest 2008 voter turnout - Oregon, Illinois, Florida and California - have broad early voting systems in place.

RANK	STATE <small>(source-US Election Project)</small>	Turnout % of Eligible Voters	RANK	STATE <small>(source-US Election Project)</small>	Turnout % of Eligible Voters
1	New Hampshire	52.5%	19	Oklahoma	28.7%
2	California	41.7%	20	District of Columbia	28.5%
3	Ohio	40.5%	21	Rhode Island	28.5%
4	Oregon	39.7%	22	Kentucky	28.4%
5	Vermont	39.2%	23	Texas	28.3%
6	Massachusetts	38.7%	24	Maryland	27.3%
7	Wisconsin	36.5%	25	Washington	27.3%
8	Indiana	36.1%	26	Virginia	26.9%
9	Florida	33.8%	27	Mississippi	26.5%
10	Illinois	33.2%	28	Tennessee	26.4%
11	North Carolina	32.8%	29	Arkansas	26.0%
12	Georgia	32.7%	30	Arizona	23.7%
13	Missouri	32.6%	31	Delaware	23.7%
14	Pennsylvania	32.5%	32	Utah	23.7%
15	Alabama	31.7%	33	Michigan	20.2%
16	South Carolina	30.4%	34	New York	19.9%
17	New Jersey	30.2%	35	Connecticut	19.8%
18	South Dakota	28.9%	36	Louisiana	19.3%

³ Early voting adds convenience for regular voters and can help more voters participate in lower turnout contests. Studies note potential drawbacks depending its use and implementation - problems associated with voting by mail or voting too early or how early voting may further skew income inequalities in voter participation.

Latino Vote 2008

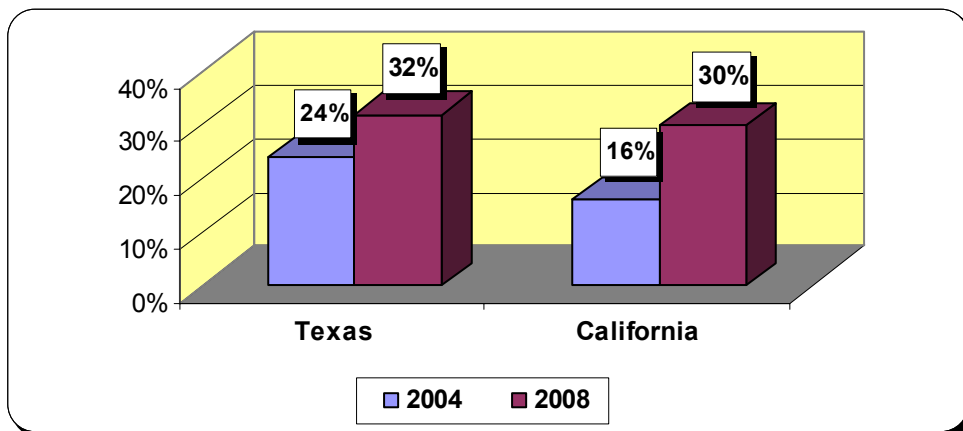
Analysis by the Pew Hispanic Center

The Latino vote continued to rise nationally, with some states showing very large increases- most notably Texas and California.

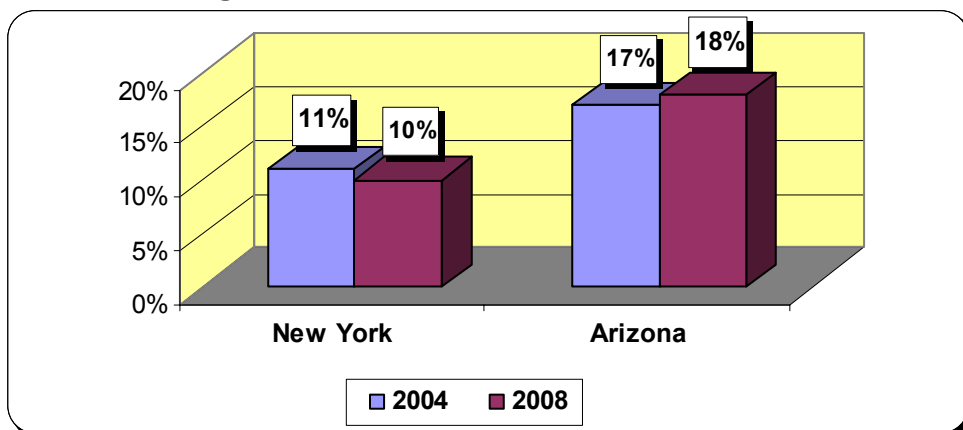
Latino voters –

- ⇒ Increased to about 9% of eligible voters in 2008, continuing their steady growth into a sizeable share of the U.S. electorate.
- ⇒ Made up over 30% of the voters in the Democratic contests in California, New Mexico and Texas.
- ⇒ Doubled in California and rose sharply in Texas. Turnout was uneven elsewhere, staying the same in Latino-dense New York and Arizona.

Latino Vote Up in Texas and California



No Change in Latino Vote in Arizona and New York



Appendices

States Holding Party Primaries in 2008

Democratic Primaries

Alabama	New Jersey
Arizona	New Mexico
Arkansas	New York
California	North Carolina
Connecticut	Ohio
Delaware	Oklahoma
Dist of Columbia	Oregon
Florida	Pennsylvania
Georgia	Rhode Island
Illinois	South Carolina
Indiana	South Dakota
Kentucky	Tennessee
Louisiana	Texas
Maryland	Utah
Massachusetts	Vermont
Michigan	Virginia
Mississippi	Washington*
Missouri	West Virginia
Montana	Wisconsin
New Hampshire	

Republican Primaries

Alabama	New Hampshire
Arizona	New Jersey
Arkansas	New Mexico
California	New York
Connecticut	North Carolina
Delaware	Ohio
Dist of Columbia	Oklahoma
Florida	Oregon
Georgia	Pennsylvania
Idaho	Rhode Island
Illinois	South Carolina
Indiana	South Dakota
Kentucky	Tennessee
Louisiana	Texas
Maryland	Utah
Massachusetts	Vermont
Michigan	Virginia
Mississippi	Washington*
Missouri	West Virginia
Montana	Wisconsin
Nebraska	

States Holding Party Caucuses in 2008

Democratic Caucuses

Alaska	Maine
Colorado	Minnesota
Hawaii	Nebraska
Idaho	Nevada
Iowa	North Dakota
Kansas	Wyoming
	Washington*

Republican Caucuses

Alaska	Maine
Colorado	Minnesota
Hawaii	Nevada
Iowa	North Dakota
Kansas	Wyoming
	Washington*

* In Washington, the major parties held caucuses to select delegates for the convention. There was also a popular preference primary where all voters could participate. As this report focuses on overall participation, we use the turnout numbers from the preference primary, also more comparable to prior years.

Voter Participation Change by State

- ⇒ For states with comparable primaries and caucuses over the most similar primary year.
- ⇒ In some states, change of date impacted turnout. In most others, the larger factors were levels of competition and mobilization, as well as issues of voter enfranchisement and access. Detailed information on dates and types of primaries or caucuses is at www.greenpapers.org.

Dem Primaries	Increase over 2004	Rep Primaries	Increase over 2000
Alabama	146%	Alabama	172%
Arizona	91%	Arizona	68%
Arkansas	18%	Arkansas	414%
California	63%	California	-29%
Connecticut	173%	Connecticut	-15%
Delaware	189%	Delaware	69%
District	192%	District	155%
Florida	132%	Florida	179%
Georgia	69%	Georgia	50%
Illinois	67%	Idaho	-21%
Indiana	302%	Illinois	22%
Kentucky	205%	Indiana	1%
Louisiana	138%	Kentucky	116%
Maryland	82%	Louisiana	57%
Massachusetts	105%	Maryland	-15%
Michigan	267%	Massachusetts	0%
Mississippi	466%	Michigan	-32%
Missouri	97%	Mississippi	26%
Montana	94%	Missouri	24%
New Hampshire	31%	Montana	-16%
New Jersey	431%	Nebraska	-26%
New Mexico	46%	New Hampshire	1%
New York	160%	New Jersey	135%
Ohio	93%	New Mexico	46%
Oklahoma	38%	New York	-16%
Oregon	72%	North Carolina	60%
Pennsylvania	192%	Ohio	-22%
Rhode Island	422%	Oklahoma	168%
South Carolina	81%	Oregon	-1%
South Dakota	16%	Pennsylvania	23%
Tennessee	69%	Rhode Island	-25%
Texas	243%	South Carolina	-22%
Utah	277%	South Dakota	34%
Vermont	87%	Tennessee	121%
Virginia	149%	Texas	21%
West Virginia	41%	Utah	225%
Wisconsin	34%	Vermont	-51%
		Virginia	-26%
		Washington	8%
		West Virginia	8%
		Wisconsin	-17%
Dem Caucuses	Increase over 2000	Rep Caucuses	Increase over 2000
Colorado	1522%	Alaska	168%
Hawaii	820%	Iowa	37%
Idaho	333%	Minnesota	240%
Iowa	86%	North Dakota	8%
Kansas	1737%		
Maine	140%		
Minnesota	288%		
Nevada	208%		
North Dakota	80%		
Wyoming	1253%		

