

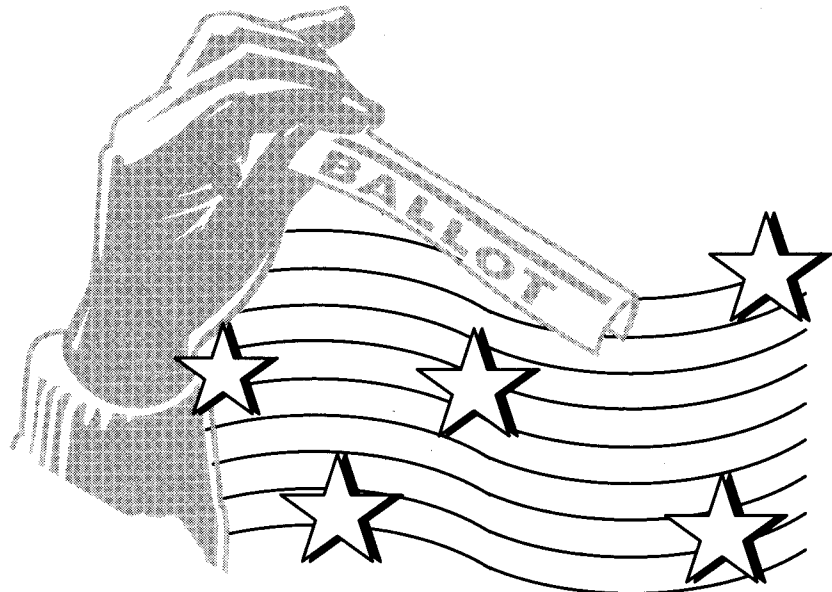


CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS

Population Characteristics

P20-466

Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1992



by Jerry T. Jennings

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Acknowledgments

This report was prepared under the general supervision of **Martin O'Connell**, Chief, Fertility Statistics Branch, Population Division. Overall direction was provided by **Arthur J. Norton**, Assistant Chief for Social and Demographic Statistics, Population Division. Content was reviewed by **Kristin A. Hansen** and **Rosalind R. Bruno**, Population Division. Programming of the detailed tables was provided by **Randy Gardner** and survey operations were coordinated by **James H. Warden**, Demographic Surveys Division. Statistical review of the text was provided by **Don Keathley**, Demographic Statistical Methods Division. Data collection was conducted by the Bureau of the Census interviewers under the overall direction of **Paula J. Schneider**, Chief, Field Division. Publications planning, design, composition, editorial review, and printing planning and procurement were performed by the staff of Administrative and Publications Services Division, **Walter C. Odom**, Chief; **Nelsa D. Brown** edited and coordinated the publication.

U.S. Bureau of the Census User Questionnaire

Dear user:

In an effort to improve the quality of this report, the following questionnaire has been included for your comments so we may direct our efforts to providing the information most needed by you, the user. Please take a few moments to fill out this form, fold A to A and fold B to B, then tape and drop it in the mail, postage paid. Thank you for your suggestions and cooperation.

Current Population Reports, P20-466, "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1992"

1. What is your organizational affiliation?

☐ Federal Government

☐ State/local government

☐ Educational institution *Mark (X) one*

☐ Student

☐ Faculty

☐ Administration

☐ Private organization *Mark (X) one*

☐ Media/information service

☐ Trade association

☐ Marketing research

☐ Other - Please specify *Z*

☐ Legal firm

☐ Professional association

☐ Research institution

(A) Fold here first

(V)

2. Are you a frequent user of reports issued in this series?

☐ First time user

☐ Infrequent

☐ Frequent/routine user

3. Are you a user of similar data from:

Mark (X) all that apply.

☐ Other Census Bureau reports

☐ Reports issued by other government agencies - *Please specify organization and report title*

☐ Reports issued by private, nongovernmental organizations

Please specify organization and report title Z

4. The following asks two questions about specific sections of the report.

Was the section useful to you? (Did it contain information you were looking for?)

Was the section easy to understand and use?

Please answer each question using the scale provided. Four (4) indicates useful or easy to understand; one (1) indicates not useful or hard to understand.

Fold here

(B)

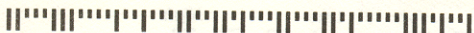
| | | Usefulness | | | | Easy to understand | | | | Not used or not applicable |
|--|------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | Low | | | High | Low | | | High | |
| Analytical: | Text - Introduction | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Charts | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Text tables | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Appendixes: | Definitions or Explanations | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Sampling or Statistical Statements | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Facsimiles of Questionnaires | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Detailed or reference tables | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Introductory sections: (e.g., content and use) | | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please turn form over for user comments.

USER COMMENTS:

How could we improve this publication to meet your needs?

Other comments?

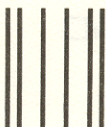


**BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
POP DIVISION/FERTILITY BRANCH
WASHINGTON DC 20277-6081**

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 16081 WASHINGTON, DC

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

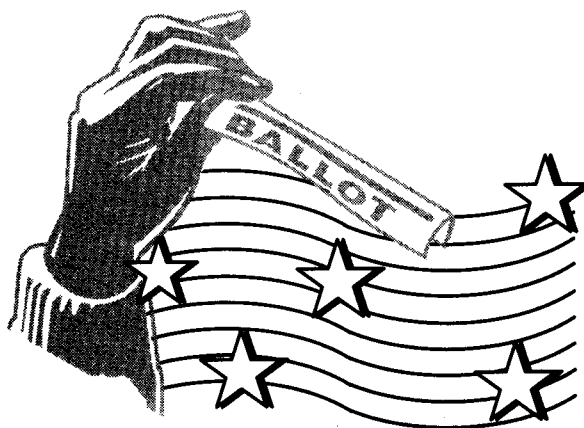


**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Bureau of the Census**
Washington, DC 20233-3400
OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use, \$300

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

Issued April 1993

Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1992



by Jerry T. Jennings



U.S. Department of Commerce

Ronald H. Brown, Secretary

John Rollwagen, Deputy Secretary

Economics and Statistics Administration

**Jeffrey Mayer, Acting Under Secretary
for Economic Affairs**

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Harry A. Scarr, Acting Director



**Economics and Statistics
Administration**

Jeffrey Mayer, Acting Under Secretary
for Economic Affairs



BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Harry A. Scarr, Acting Director

William P. Butz, Associate Director
for Demographic Programs

POPULATION DIVISION

William P. Butz, Acting Chief

SUGGESTED CITATION

U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, P20—466,
Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1992
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1993.

Contents

Page

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction..... | v |
| Registration | vi |
| Evaluation of the Accuracy of the Data | vii |
| Related Reports | x |
| Tapes and Unpublished Data | x |
| User Comments..... | xi |

TEXT TABLES

| | |
|--|------|
| A. Percent Reported Voted in Presidential Election Years, by Region, Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, and Age: November 1964 to 1992..... | v |
| B. Reported Registration, by Region, Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, and Age: November 1968 to 1992..... | vi |
| C. Characteristics of the Voting-Age Population Reported Registered or Voting: November 1992 and 1988 | vii |
| D. Comparison of CPS Voting Estimates and Official Counts of Votes Cast: November 1964 to 1992..... | viii |
| E. Comparison of Proxy Reports and Self Reports on Voter Turnout in the November 1984 Election | ix |

DETAILED TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Reported Voting and Registration, by Single Years of Age and Sex | 1 |
| 2. Reported Voting and Registration, by Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, and Age, for the United States and Regions..... | 4 |
| 3. Reported Voting and Registration, by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Age, for Divisions .. | 14 |
| 4. Reported Voting and Registration, by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin, for States | 23 |
| 5. Reported Voting and Registration, by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Metropolitan-Nonmetropolitan Residence..... | 31 |
| 6. Reported Voting and Registration of Persons 18 to 24 Years Old, by Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, Age, and Enrollment Status..... | 32 |
| 7. Reported Voting and Registration, by Age, Sex, and Years of School Completed | 34 |
| 8. Reported Voting and Registration, by Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, and Years of School Completed | 39 |
| 9. Reported Voting and Registration, by Age, Sex, Employment Status, and Class of Worker..... | 41 |
| 10. Reported Voting and Registration, by Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, Employment Status, and Class of Worker | 47 |
| 11. Reported Voting and Registration of Employed Persons, by Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, and Major Occupation Group | 51 |
| 12. Reported Voting and Registration of Family Members, by Age and Family Income... | 55 |
| 13. Reported Voting and Registration of Family Members, by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Family Income | 56 |
| 14. Reported Voting and Registration, by Race, Hispanic Origin, Age, Duration of Residence, and Tenure..... | 57 |

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 15. | Reported Time of Day and Method of Voting, by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Age.... | 67 |
| 16. | Reported Voting and Registration, by Race, Hispanic Origin, Type of Respondent, and Sex..... | 70 |
| 17. | Reported Voting and Registration, for Asian or Pacific Islanders, by Selected Characteristics | 71 |

APPENDIXES

| | | |
|----|---|-----|
| A. | Historical Tables..... | A-1 |
| B. | Definitions and Explanations | B-1 |
| C. | Source and Accuracy of Estimates | C-1 |
| | Source of Data | C-1 |
| | Accuracy of the Estimates..... | C-1 |
| D. | Facsimile of November 1992 Supplemental Questionnaire | D-1 |

APPENDIX TABLES

| | | |
|-------|---|-----|
| A-1. | Voting and Registration: November 1988 | A-1 |
| A-2. | Voting and Registration: November 1984 | A-2 |
| A-3. | Voting and Registration: November 1980 | A-3 |
| A-4. | Voting and Registration: November 1976 | A-4 |
| A-5. | Voting and Registration: November 1972 | A-5 |
| A-6. | Voting and Registration: November 1968 | A-6 |
| A-7. | Voting and Registration: November 1964 | A-7 |
| C-1. | Standard Errors of Estimated Numbers of Persons..... | C-3 |
| C-2. | Standard Errors of Estimated Percentages for Total or White Persons | C-4 |
| C-3. | Standard Errors of Estimated Percentages for Black and Asian Persons..... | C-4 |
| C-4. | Standard Errors of Estimated Percentages for Hispanic Persons | C-5 |
| C-5. | "a" and "b" Parameters for Characteristics of Total or White Persons..... | C-5 |
| C-6. | "a" and "b" Parameters for Characteristics of Black Persons..... | C-6 |
| C-7. | "a" and "b" Parameters for Characteristics of Hispanic Persons | C-6 |
| C-8. | "a" and "b" Parameters for Characteristics of Asian Persons..... | C-7 |
| C-9. | State Voting Parameters..... | C-8 |
| C-10. | Census Division and Region Voting Parameters | C-8 |

SYMBOLS USED IN TABLES

| | |
|----|------------------------------------|
| — | Represents zero or rounds to zero. |
| X | Not applicable. |
| NA | Not available. |
| B | Base less than 75,000. |

Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1992

(The estimates for 1992 in this report are inflated to national population controls by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. The population controls are based on results of the 1980 census carried forward to 1992. The estimates in this report, therefore, may differ from estimates that would have been obtained using 1990 census results brought forward to the survey date. Population controls incorporating 1990 census results will be used for survey estimation beginning in 1993.)

INTRODUCTION

(The figures in parentheses denote the 90-percent confidence interval of the estimate.)

According to results from the November 1992 Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the Bureau of the Census, 61 (± 0.3) percent of the voting-age population reported that they voted in the 1992 general election.¹ This figure represents an increase of 4 (± 0.3) percentage points over the rate in the elections of 1988

and is the highest turnout recorded in CPS since the elections of 1972. The 1988 turnout rate of 57 (± 0.4) percent was the lowest recorded in the CPS for a Presidential election since the survey on voting and registration first began in 1964 (table A).

In the 1992 Presidential election, as in the 1988 elections, turnout among women exceeded that among men by about 2 percentage points, 62 (± 0.4) for women versus 60 (± 0.5) for men. These figures represent a 4 percentage point increase in turnout for both groups since 1988.

Turnout increased for most age groups, but the increase was greatest among younger persons. For persons 18 to 24 years and 25 to 44 years, turnout rose

¹ This compares with 55 percent actually voting, as reported by the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate. See the section below on Evaluation of the Accuracy of the Data.

Table A. Percent Reported Voted in Presidential Election Years, by Region, Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex and Age: November 1964 to 1992

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population)

| Region, race, Hispanic origin, sex, and age | Presidential elections of— | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 1992 | 1988 | 1984 | 1980 | 1976 | 1972 | 1968 | 1964 |
| UNITED STATES | | | | | | | | |
| Total, voting age | 185,684 | 178,098 | 169,963 | 157,085 | 146,548 | 136,203 | 116,535 | 110,604 |
| Percent voted | 61.3 | 57.4 | 59.9 | 59.2 | 59.2 | 63.0 | 67.8 | 69.3 |
| White | 63.6 | 59.1 | 61.4 | 60.9 | 60.9 | 64.5 | 69.1 | 70.7 |
| Black | 54.0 | 51.5 | 55.8 | 50.5 | 48.7 | 52.1 | 57.6 | ² 58.5 |
| Hispanic origin ¹ | 28.9 | 28.8 | 32.6 | 29.9 | 31.8 | 37.5 | (NA) | (NA) |
| Male | 60.2 | 56.4 | 59.0 | 59.1 | 59.6 | 64.1 | 69.8 | 71.9 |
| Female | 62.3 | 58.3 | 60.8 | 59.4 | 58.8 | 62.0 | 66.0 | 67.0 |
| 18 to 24 years | 42.8 | 36.2 | 40.8 | 39.9 | 42.2 | 49.6 | ³ 50.4 | ³ 50.9 |
| 25 to 44 years | 58.3 | 54.0 | 58.4 | 58.7 | 58.7 | 62.7 | 66.6 | 69.0 |
| 45 to 64 years | 70.0 | 67.9 | 69.8 | 69.3 | 68.7 | 70.8 | 74.9 | 75.9 |
| 65 years and over | 70.1 | 68.8 | 67.7 | 65.1 | 62.2 | 63.5 | 65.8 | 66.3 |
| NORTH AND WEST | | | | | | | | |
| Total, voting age | 122,025 | 117,373 | 112,376 | 106,524 | 99,403 | 93,653 | 81,594 | 78,174 |
| Percent voted | 62.5 | 58.9 | 61.6 | 61.0 | 61.2 | 66.4 | 71.0 | 74.6 |
| White | 64.9 | 60.4 | 63.0 | 62.4 | 62.6 | 67.5 | 71.8 | 74.7 |
| Black | 53.8 | 55.6 | 58.9 | 52.8 | 52.2 | 56.7 | 64.8 | ² 72.0 |
| SOUTH | | | | | | | | |
| Total, voting age | 63,659 | 60,725 | 57,587 | 50,561 | 47,145 | 42,550 | 34,941 | 32,429 |
| Percent voted | 59.0 | 54.5 | 56.8 | 55.6 | 54.9 | 55.4 | 60.1 | 56.7 |
| White | 60.8 | 56.4 | 58.1 | 57.4 | 57.1 | 57.0 | 61.9 | 59.5 |
| Black | 54.3 | 48.0 | 53.2 | 48.2 | 45.7 | 47.8 | 51.6 | ² 44.0 |

NA Not available

¹Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

²Black and other races in 1964.

³Prior to 1972, includes persons 18 to 20 years old in Georgia and Kentucky, 19 and 20 in Alaska, and 20 years old in Hawaii.

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-20, Nos. 174, 228, 293, 344, 383, 414, 440, and table 2 of this report. Note: See Appendix A for more detailed historical data.

7 points and 4 points, respectively between 1988 and 1992, to 43 percent for the 18-to 24-year olds and to 58 percent for the 25-to 44-year olds. The middle-aged group, those 45 to 64 years old, increased turnout about 2 points, to 70 percent in 1992. For the oldest age group, persons 65 years and over, turnout rose only 1 point in 1992 to 70 percent, not significantly different from the 2 point increase for the 45-to 64-year olds.

Black turnout also increased in 1992, from 52 to 54 percent, although this increase was not significantly greater than the Hispanic change over the same period.² Compared to Whites, however, the increase in Black turnout was about half as great as the increase for Whites, whose turnout rose from 59 percent in 1988 to 64 percent in 1992. Hispanic turnout was 29 percent in both 1988 and 1992. Hispanic turnout is deflated because a large proportion (about 40 percent in 1992) of Hispanics of voting age are not U.S. citizens (table 2). Omitting non-citizens from the population base would raise Hispanic turnout in 1992 to 48 percent.

² The Hispanic turnout in 1992 was not significantly different from the Hispanic turnout in 1988.

For the first time since the Bureau of the Census began collecting voting and registration data from the CPS, results were tabulated from the 1992 survey to show voting and registration among Asian and Pacific Islanders. Table 17 of this report shows that turnout among Asians and Pacific Islanders was 27 percent overall and registration 31 percent. However, 45 percent of this population group are not U.S. citizens, which lowered their turnout and registration considerably. Recomputed rates for citizens show 50 percent of Asian and Pacific Islanders voting and 57 percent registered in the 1992 election.

REGISTRATION

Increases in reported registration were less than increases in voting and occurred only among persons under 45 years old (table B). In the 1992 Presidential election, 68 percent of the voting-age population reported that they were registered, only about 1 percentage point

Table B. Reported Registration, by Region, Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, and Age: November 1968 to 1992

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population)

| Region, race, Hispanic origin, sex, and age | Presidential elections of— | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|
| | 1992 | 1988 | 1984 | 1980 | 1976 | 1972 | 1968 |
| UNITED STATES | | | | | | | |
| Total, voting age | 185,684 | 178,098 | 169,963 | 157,085 | 146,548 | 136,203 | 116,535 |
| Percent registered | 68.2 | 66.6 | 68.3 | 66.9 | 66.7 | 72.3 | 74.3 |
| White | 70.1 | 67.9 | 69.6 | 68.4 | 68.3 | 73.4 | 75.4 |
| Black | 63.9 | 64.5 | 66.3 | 60.0 | 58.5 | 65.5 | 66.2 |
| Hispanic origin ¹ | 35.0 | 35.5 | 40.1 | 36.3 | 37.8 | 44.4 | (NA) |
| Male | 66.9 | 65.2 | 67.3 | 66.6 | 67.1 | 73.1 | 76.0 |
| Female | 69.3 | 67.8 | 69.3 | 67.1 | 66.4 | 71.6 | 72.8 |
| 18 to 24 years | 52.5 | 48.2 | 51.3 | 49.2 | 51.3 | 58.9 | ² 56.0 |
| 25 to 44 years | 64.8 | 63.0 | 66.6 | 65.6 | 65.5 | 71.3 | 72.4 |
| 45 to 64 years | 75.3 | 75.5 | 76.6 | 75.8 | 75.5 | 79.7 | 81.1 |
| 65 years and over | 78.0 | 78.4 | 76.9 | 74.6 | 71.4 | 75.6 | 75.6 |
| NORTH AND WEST | | | | | | | |
| Total, voting age | 122,025 | 117,373 | 112,376 | 106,524 | 99,403 | 93,653 | 81,594 |
| Percent registered | 68.7 | 67.1 | 69.0 | 67.9 | 67.7 | 73.9 | 76.5 |
| White | 70.9 | 68.5 | 70.5 | 69.3 | 69.0 | 74.9 | 77.2 |
| Black | 63.0 | 65.9 | 67.2 | 60.6 | 60.9 | 67.0 | 71.8 |
| SOUTH | | | | | | | |
| Total, voting age | 63,659 | 60,725 | 57,587 | 50,561 | 47,145 | 42,550 | 34,941 |
| Percent registered | 67.2 | 65.6 | 66.9 | 64.8 | 64.6 | 68.7 | 69.2 |
| White | 68.5 | 66.6 | 67.8 | 66.2 | 66.7 | 69.8 | 70.8 |
| Black | 64.7 | 63.3 | 65.6 | 59.3 | 56.4 | 64.0 | 61.6 |

NA Not available.

¹Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

²Prior to 1972, includes persons 18 to 20 years old in Georgia and Kentucky, 19 and 20 in Alaska, and 20 years old in Hawaii.

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-20, Nos. 192, 253, 293, 322, 344, 370, 383, 405, 414, 440, and table 2 of this report.

higher than the 67 percent reported in 1988. For Hispanics and Blacks, there was no significant change in registration between 1988 and 1992; registration for Hispanics was 35 percent and for Blacks 64 percent.³

Sixty-nine percent of women were registered to vote in 1992, compared with 67 percent of men. These figures represent only a 2 percentage point increase in registration among men and women, substantially less than the 4 point increase in voting recorded by these groups.

This larger increase in turnout than in registration in 1992 is confirmed by comparing the percent of registered persons who voted in 1988 and 1992 (tables 2 and A-1). In 1992, 90 percent of all persons who reported that they were registered also reported that they had voted. In 1988, only 86 percent of registered persons reported having voted. These results from the 1992 survey strongly suggest that the increase in turnout in 1992 occurred more because of increased voted among registered persons than because of increased registration.

³The 1 percent increase in total registration was not significantly greater than the slight fluctuation in Hispanic registration.

Data in table C indicate that despite increases in level of turnout, the typical voter profile remained similar between 1988 and 1992.⁴ People in the Midwest reported the highest regional voter turnout rate (67 percent in 1992), and persons with 4 years or more of college reported the highest turnout among education groups (81 percent). In addition, persons who own their own homes voted at a much higher rate (69 percent) than did persons who rent (44 percent). And, while in both 1988 and 1992 employed persons reported considerably higher turnout rates than those who were unemployed, turnout for each group increased in 1992, to 64 percent for employed persons and 46 percent for unemployed persons.

EVALUATION OF THE ACCURACY OF THE DATA

In the November 1992 Current Population Survey, supplement on voting, 113.9 million of the 185.7 million persons of voting age in the civilian noninstitutional population were reported as having voted in the November 1992 election. Preliminary counts from the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate indicate

⁴ Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 440.

Table C. Characteristics of the Voting-Age Population Reported Registered or Voting: November 1992 and 1988

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population)

| Characteristic | 1992 | | | 1988 | | |
|--|---------|--------------------|---------------|---------|--------------------|---------------|
| | Number | Percent registered | Percent voted | Number | Percent registered | Percent voted |
| Total, 18 years and over | 185,684 | 68.2 | 61.3 | 178,098 | 66.6 | 57.4 |
| Region: | | | | | | |
| Northeast | 38,329 | 67.0 | 61.2 | 37,874 | 64.8 | 57.4 |
| Midwest | 44,410 | 74.6 | 67.2 | 43,309 | 72.5 | 62.9 |
| South | 63,659 | 67.2 | 59.0 | 60,725 | 65.6 | 54.5 |
| West | 39,286 | 63.6 | 58.5 | 36,190 | 63.0 | 55.6 |
| Years of school completed: | | | | | | |
| Less than 8th grade | 15,391 | 43.9 | 35.1 | 19,145 | 47.5 | 36.7 |
| Some high school, no diploma | 20,970 | 50.4 | 41.2 | 21,052 | 52.8 | 41.3 |
| High school graduate | 65,281 | 64.9 | 57.5 | 70,003 | 64.6 | 54.7 |
| Some college, including associate degree | 46,691 | 75.4 | 68.7 | 34,264 | 73.5 | 64.5 |
| Bachelor or higher degree | 37,351 | 84.8 | 81.0 | 33,604 | 83.1 | 77.6 |
| Labor force status: | | | | | | |
| In civilian labor force | 124,553 | 68.8 | 62.6 | 119,645 | 66.3 | 57.5 |
| Employed | 116,290 | 69.9 | 63.8 | 113,836 | 67.1 | 58.4 |
| Unemployed | 8,263 | 53.7 | 46.2 | 5,809 | 50.4 | 38.6 |
| Not in labor force | 61,131 | 66.8 | 58.7 | 58,453 | 67.2 | 57.3 |
| Tenure ¹ : | | | | | | |
| Owner occupied | 128,545 | 75.4 | 69.1 | 47,540 | 78.1 | 70.0 |
| Renter occupied | 54,323 | 51.8 | 43.6 | 17,352 | 49.7 | 39.8 |

¹Restricted to family householders in 1988.

Source of 1988 data: Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 440.

104.4 million votes cast or a difference of 9.5 million votes between the two sources. This difference is greater than can be accounted for by sampling variability (table D).

The population covered in the survey excluded members of the Armed Forces and institutionalized persons.⁵ Since the proportion of voters in these population groups is somewhat lower than in the rest of the population, their omission leads to an additional overstatement in the estimated percentage voting.

The difference between survey results and actual vote counts has been noted in other surveys of voting, but both the methods of measuring it and estimates of its size have varied considerably. On balance, the overstatement in Presidential election years varies between 5 and 12 percent of the total number of persons reported as having voted. Here is a summary of possible reasons for the differences:⁶

1. *Understatement of total votes cast.* The only uniform count of the total number of voters available on a nationwide basis is the number of votes cast for President. This number is smaller than the total number of persons who voted because (a) a number of ballots are invalidated in the counting and (b) there are a number of valid ballots for which there was no vote cast for President. Precise estimates of

the size of these sources of error are not available. Although the office of the President usually attracts the largest number of votes, not everyone who goes to the polls casts a vote for President. Some persons may, for example, vote for a U.S. Senator or member of the U.S. Congress but not for President. A tally of the data from the 39 States which report information on the total number of votes cast shows that for 1988 about 1.3 percent fewer votes were cast for President than the total number of votes counted in the election. This "dropoff" between the number of votes cast for candidates for representative and the total number of votes cast is much greater. In 1988, in these same States, votes for candidates for the House were 10.6 percent lower than the total number of votes cast, according to the Nonvoter Study '88-'89 of the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, Washington, D.C.

2. *Overreporting of voting in the survey.* Some persons who actually did not vote were reluctant to so report, perhaps because they felt it was a lapse in civic responsibility. Since voting and registration were more likely to be reported by a proxy respondent for young people (only about a quarter of the 18-to 20-year old age group reported for themselves), the household respondent may have assumed that they had voted when in fact they had not. This latter problem was more likely to occur among young people away at college whose parents almost certainly reported for them.

In the 1964 survey, as a check on the work of the interviewers, a subsample of households was reinterviewed by the supervisory staff. This reinterview showed overall consistency in reporting on voting.

⁵In the November 1988 Presidential election, the Department of Defense reported a total voting rate for the Armed Forces of 63.5 percent, compared with 57.4 percent for the civilian noninstitutional population. Federal Voting Assistance, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 14th Report, 1988.

⁶For a discussion of geographical differences in estimating voter turnout, changes in overestimation in recent Presidential elections, and a multivariate analysis of the relationship between race, education, and per capita income of states and their rates of net overestimation, see Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 168.

Table D. Comparison of CPS Voting Estimates and Official Counts of Votes Cast: November 1964 to 1992

(Numbers in millions)

| Year | CPS estimate voters | Official vote for President | Percent difference | Year | CPS estimate of voters | Official vote for U.S. Representative or highest office | Percent difference |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1992..... | 113.9 | 104.4 | 9.1 | 1990..... | 82.0 | ² 69.0 | 18.8 |
| 1988..... | 102.2 | 91.6 | 11.6 | 1986..... | 80.0 | ² 64.8 | 23.4 |
| 1984..... | 101.9 | 92.7 | 9.9 | 1982..... | 80.3 | ² 67.6 | 18.8 |
| 1980..... | 93.1 | 86.5 | 7.6 | 1978..... | 69.6 | ² 59.5 | 17.0 |
| 1976..... | ¹ 85.9 | 81.7 | 5.1 | 1974..... | 63.2 | ² 56.0 | 12.9 |
| 1972..... | ¹ 84.6 | 77.6 | 9.0 | 1970..... | ³ 65.9 | ² 58.0 | 13.6 |
| 1968..... | ¹ 78.5 | 73.0 | 7.5 | 1966..... | ³ 57.6 | ³ 52.9 | 8.9 |
| 1964..... | 76.7 | 70.6 | 8.6 | | | | |

¹CPS estimates of votes cast for President.

²The "Official" vote was obtained by summing the number of votes cast for U.S. Senator, Representative, or Governor in each State, depending on which office received the highest number of votes.

³Refers only to votes cast for U.S. Representative.

However, since the reinterviewer usually talked with the same household respondent (or respondents) as originally interviewed the previous week, it is likely that an original reporting error of this type would go undetected during a reinterview.

A test was conducted in conjunction with the December 1972 Current Population Survey to examine another facet of the overreporting problem. The hypothesis was that by asking the presumably less sensitive question on registration first, the tendency to overreport on voting might be lessened. The results of this test were somewhat confounded by a nonreporting rate in December that was twice as high as that in November, 4.2 percent compared with 1.9 percent. However, when the comparison was restricted to those who reported on voting, the study indicated that reversing the question order does not reduce the proportion of persons who report that they had voted.

3. *Nonreports on voting.* In 1966, a "do not know" category in each question of the voting supplement was introduced (and retained in all subsequent surveys) on the theory that forcing people into a "yes-no" alternative might have been responsible for increasing the number of persons reported as voting. The introduction of the "do not know" category increased the overall proportion of those for whom a report on voting was not obtained from 1 percent in 1964 to 3 percent in 1966. Among Blacks, the figure rose to almost 6 percent. The lower nonresponse figure from the 1964 report may have resulted in part from the fact that the "yes-no" alternative forced respondents to give answers which more properly should have been classified as "do not know."

4. *CPS coverage.* An additional factor that increases the estimate of voters derives from the coverage of the CPS sample. There is evidence that the sample is less successful in representing certain groups in the population in which nonvoting may be expected to be high, for example, Black-and-other-races males

21 to 24 years of age. In addition, the CPS results are adjusted to independent population estimates based on the decennial census. Insofar as the census was also subject to net undercounts in selected age groups, this source of error will be reflected in estimates from the CPS.

5. *Household respondent.* A portion of the difference between the official count and survey results might be attributable to the use of a household respondent to report on the registration and voting of all eligible household members. An experiment was conducted in conjunction with the November 1974 CPS to assess the effects of proxy respondents on the voting rate. In approximately one-eighth of the sample households, interviewers were instructed to obtain the voting supplement information from each individual directly. For the entire sample, 57 percent of all interviewed persons reported for themselves, as compared with about 76 percent for the test group. The differences in voter turnout between groups reporting for themselves (47 percent) or by someone else (48 percent) were not significant.⁷ Thus, there was no evidence from this test that proxy reporting of voting and registration information accounts for any part of the overestimates of voters obtained in household surveys.

The 1984 survey included a more rigorous test for the effects of proxy responses on CPS estimates of the number of persons who vote.⁸ In the two outgoing rotation groups of the November survey (approximately one-fourth of the total sample), respondents whose voting and registration had been previously reported by another household member were followed up by the interviewer and asked the voting and registration questions directly. Table E summarizes the results of this test. Among persons for whom re-interviews were obtained, 99 percent of the respondents who had been reported for by another household member as having voted

⁷Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 293.

⁸Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 405.

Table E. Comparison of Proxy Reports and Self Reports on Voter Turnout in the November 1984 Election
(Numbers in thousands. Citizens 18 years and over. Data are weighted to national estimates)

| Proxy responses | Self responses | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------|--------------|-----------|
| | Total | Voted | Did not vote | No report |
| Total | 56,727 | 24,958 | 13,453 | 18,316 |
| Reported voted | 34,620 | 24,481 | 290 | 9,849 |
| Reported did not vote | 19,664 | 180 | 12,676 | 6,808 |
| Reported do not know | 2,271 | 290 | 464 | 1,517 |
| No report | 172 | 7 | 23 | 142 |

Note: Data are based on the special follow-up supplement administered to two rotation groups.

also reported for themselves that they voted; in addition, 99 percent of the followup interviews which initially reported that the respondent did not vote confirmed a previous report of not voting. Proxy respondents incorrectly reported an estimated 477,000 persons as either not voting or giving no report on voting, when in fact the persons in question reported having actually voted. However, overreports on voting by proxy respondents only amount to about 290,000 persons.

A comparison of the voting rates for the two test groups within the one-quarter subsample shows a voting rate of 63.8 percent for respondents reported by proxy (excluding don't know and no responses) and a rate of 65 percent when respondents reported for themselves. This difference in voter turnout rates for self and proxy respondents is not statistically significant, but the rates are higher for both groups than for the total CPS sample (60 percent), indicating that turnout for persons successfully followed up is higher than for those not found for direct interview.

In sum, results of this proxy verification test confirm the previous finding that misreports by proxy respondents do not account for the discrepancy between CPS estimates of voter turnout and the official count of the number of ballots cast.

Although there is no evidence that answers by proxy respondents account for the overreporting on voting, the value of asking people about their own behavior on such matters as voting and registering to vote can be shown by comparing the effect of self reports and reports by others on the "do not know" rate for whether registered to vote (table 16). For self-respondents, the "do not know"/"no report" responses were negligible. At the other extreme, 4.5 percent of respondents who reported on the voting behavior of other household members could not answer whether or not the other person had voted.

RELATED REPORTS

Current Population Reports. Data on voter participation by social and economic characteristics of the population of voting age in the Presidential elections of 1964 through 1988 were published in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, Nos. 143, 192, 253, 322, 370, 405, and 440 respectively, and in the Congressional elections of 1966 through 1990 in Series P-20, Nos. 174, 228, 293, 344, 383, 414, and 453, respectively.

A summary of results from the Current Population Survey supplements for Presidential election years 1964 to 1980 was published in Current Population Reports,

Series P-23, No. 131 and also in Series P-20, No. 405. Similar summary data for Congressional election years from 1966 to 1986 were published in Series P-20, No. 453.

Data on the social and economic characteristics of persons 18 to 24 years old who became eligible to vote on the basis of age in 1972 were published in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 230.

Projections of the resident population of voting age for the United States, regions, divisions, and States, by age, sex, and race for November 1, 1992 were published in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1085.

Data on reported voter participation by social and economic characteristics of the population of voting age in the 1966 and 1964 elections and estimates of the population of voting age for the United States, regions, divisions, and States, as of November 1, 1968, were published in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 172.

The number of persons of voting age in 1960 and the votes cast for President in the elections of 1964 and 1960 for the United States, by States and counties, are contained in Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 14.

An analysis of turnout estimation problems in the CPS was published in Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 168.

TAPES AND UNPUBLISHED DATA

Users wishing to obtain copies of the November Current Population Survey data tape should contact:

Data User Services Division
Customer Services (Tape)
Bureau of the Census
Washington, D. C. 20233
Telephone: (301) 763-4100

Voting and registration statistics by State summarized in table 4, detailed by age, race, Hispanic origin, and sex categories, can be obtained for \$20.00 (Checks payable to Commerce—Census). This "Current Voting Indicators: November 1992" tabulation package, or similar tabulations from the November 1988 and 1984 CPS, consists of approximately 60 pages each. To place an order for either of these packages of tabulations, contact:

Martin O'Connell
Population Division
Bureau of the Census
Washington, D. C. 20233
Telephone: (301) 763-5303

USER COMMENTS

We are interested in the reaction of users to the usefulness of the information presented in this report, and on the content of the questions used to provide the results contained in this report. (Appendix D contains a

facsimile of the questionnaire.) We welcome your recommendations for improving our survey work. If you have suggestions or comments, please fill out the enclosed Comments Questionnaire at the front of this report and mail in as indicated.