

Noncitizen Voting in the 2020 Election, A Beginning Analysis

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The U.S. Census Bureau has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data used to produce this product
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INTRODUCTION¹

For the study of the population of the United States, the U.S. Census Bureau curates the executive branch's most comprehensive library of administrative records. Many of these records are collected directly by the Census Bureau, such as during the Decennial Census. Others are contributed by partner government agencies, including the Internal Revenue Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and the Social Security Administration.² The Census Bureau also procures data, such as DataClear's record of federal-election voters and registrants reported by Secretaries of State around the country.

¹ The team conducting this beginning analysis did not have access to the names of the population analyzed or any other identifying information. Record linkages were provided by the Census Bureau's high-probability Person Identification Validation System. See, e.g., Layne, Wagner, and Rothhaas (2014).

² See Appendix 1 on Administrative Records and Other Data Sources for a compendium of this brief's sources.

Since President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Permanent Census Office Act in 1902, crime has been a focus of the Census Bureau's population studies. In 1931 and 1954, later Congresses and Presidents affirmed the Census Bureau's unique capability to compile and publish information on crime.³

This brief examines noncitizen voting in the general election held on November 3, 2020.⁴ Nearly 160 million voters cast ballots in the 2020 general election. The Census Bureau's beginning analysis readily determined with high confidence that over 128 million of these voter records represented citizens, and that over 24,000 of these voter records represented noncitizens at the time of the election. Over 32 million voter records remain to be analyzed.

Initial Noncitizen Voters

Of the voters who can be readily analyzed by the Census Bureau, over 24,000 are linked to administrative records that indicate with high confidence noncitizen status. Table 1, below, presents initial noncitizen voters by state.

³ Act of Mar. 6, 1902, ch. 139, 32 Stat. 51; Act of Mar. 4, 1931, ch. 490, 46 Stat. 1517; Act of Aug. 31, 1954, ch. 1158, 68 Stat. 1012. The authority is codified today at 13 U.S.C. § 101.

⁴ See Appendix 2 on Methodology for an overview of the brief's technical approach.

Table 1.

Initial Noncitizen Voters by State⁵

State	Initial Noncitizen Voters	State	Initial Noncitizen Voters
California	4,300	Kentucky	200
Texas	2,500	Alabama	200
Florida	1,800	Louisiana	150
New York	1,700	New Mexico	150
Arizona	1,100	Hawaii	150
Illinois	1,000	Oklahoma	100
Pennsylvania	1,000	Utah	100
Washington	1,000	Arkansas	100
New Jersey	1,000	Kansas	100
Michigan	600	Rhode Island	100
North Carolina	550	Iowa	90
Maryland	500	District of Columbia	90
Massachusetts	500	Mississippi	80
Wisconsin	500	Nebraska	80
Minnesota	400	Maine	70
Georgia	400	New Hampshire	70
Virginia	400	Montana	70
Colorado	400	Idaho	60
Ohio	350	Alaska	60
Connecticut	300	Delaware	60
Indiana	300	West Virginia	40
Nevada	250	Vermont	30
Oregon	250	North Dakota	30
Missouri	250	South Dakota	20
Tennessee	200	Wyoming	N < 15
South Carolina	200		
		Total	24,000

⁵ Counts are rounded for disclosure avoidance following the Census Bureau's unweighted-count rounding rules; cells of 1 to 14 are shown as "N < 15," and rounded cells may not sum to the rounded total. The District of Columbia is not a state.

Initial Noncitizen Voters by Country of Birth

Among the initial noncitizen 2020 voters, 71.2 percent were linked to a USCIS person-level record reporting country of birth. Table 2 below presents these voters by country of birth. Nearly 7,000 noncitizen voters carry no country of birth in the linked records and appear as “Country not reported.”

Table 2. Initial Noncitizen Voters by Country of Birth ⁶	
Country of Birth	Initial Noncitizen Voters
Mexico	3,800
Canada	950
Jamaica	900
Philippines	900
Germany	700
United Kingdom	650
Cuba	450
Haiti	400
Vietnam	400
South Korea	350
Italy	300
China	250
Dominican Republic	250
El Salvador	250
Guatemala	250
India	250
Russia	250
Trinidad and Tobago	250
Nigeria	200
Bahamas	150
Colombia	150
Guyana	150
Honduras	150
Panama	150
Poland	150
Thailand	150
Brazil	100
Japan	100
Liberia	100
Peru	100
All other countries	3,900
Country not reported	6,900
Total	24,000

⁶ Counts are rounded for disclosure avoidance following the Census Bureau's unweighted-count rounding rules; cells of 1 to 14 are shown as “N < 15,” and rounded cells may not sum to the rounded total.

CONCLUSION

The Census Bureau's library of administrative records makes it uniquely capable of compiling and publishing statistics on election crime and other forms of fraud. The number of noncitizen voters indicated by a beginning analysis of the Census Bureau's administrative records library is above 24,000. The Census Bureau has over 32 million additional records yet to analyze.

Appendix 1. Administrative Records and Other Data Sources

This beginning brief draws on the DataClear 2020 commercial voter file and a set of federal administrative records, all resolved to a single anonymous person identifier, the Census Bureau's Protected Identification Key (PIK).

The voter file. The DataClear 2020 commercial voter file supplies both the registration universe and the 2020 vote history. It is a national compilation of state registration rolls and vote-history extracts. Voting is tied to the November 3, 2020 general election through the file's vote-history flag. Every federal record reaches a voter only through a match to this file.

External validation of the voter file. Because this beginning brief rests on the DataClear file, the file is checked against an independent official benchmark: the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) for 2020, the federal government's compilation of turnout counts certified by state election offices (U.S. Election Assistance Commission 2023). The comparison is one of magnitude, not of individuals. DataClear's count of people flagged as having voted in 2020 is a count of ballots cast, which is what the EAVS item F1a measures, and the brief compares the two directly. Nationally, DataClear captures 146,700,000 of the 159,934,200 ballots the states reported to the EAVS across the fifty states and the District of Columbia, or 91.7 percent. The match is close and stable: most states fall between 87 and 94 percent of certified ballots cast, with no state exceeding the official count, though a few sit lower (Utah at 74.5 percent, the District of Columbia at 83.1 percent). Table A reports the comparison by state.

Table A. DataClear Turnout Coverage Against the Official EAVS Benchmark by State ⁷			
State	DataClear Voters	EAVS Ballots	Percent Coverage
Alabama	2,176,000	2,329,047	93.4%
Alaska	317,000	361,400	87.7%
Arizona	3,021,000	3,420,481	88.3%
Arkansas	1,121,000	1,209,997	92.6%
California	16,220,000	17,720,746	91.5%
Colorado	2,908,000	3,320,607	87.6%
Connecticut	1,678,000	1,863,479	90.0%
Delaware	462,000	514,656	89.8%
District of Columbia	288,000	346,491	83.1%
Florida	10,090,000	11,137,676	90.6%
Georgia	4,716,000	5,023,812	93.9%
Hawaii	530,000	580,098	91.4%
Idaho	813,000	878,527	92.5%
Illinois	5,609,000	6,140,545	91.3%

⁷ DataClear counts are rounded for disclosure avoidance following the Census Bureau's unweighted-count rounding rules. EAVS ballot totals are an external benchmark and are shown unrounded; coverage percentages are computed from the rounded DataClear counts. The District of Columbia is not a state.

Table A.
**DataClear Turnout Coverage Against the Official EAVS
Benchmark by State⁸**—Continued

State	DataClear Voters	EAVS Ballots	Percent Coverage
Kansas	1,276,000	1,379,623	92.5%
Kentucky	1,990,000	2,149,444	92.6%
Louisiana	2,019,000	2,169,354	93.1%
Maine	758,000	822,534	92.2%
Maryland	2,827,000	3,059,603	92.4%
Massachusetts	3,353,000	3,658,005	91.7%
Michigan	5,176,000	5,579,317	92.8%
Minnesota	3,032,000	3,290,013	92.2%
Mississippi	1,226,000	1,334,155	91.9%
Missouri	2,810,000	3,201,458	87.8%
Montana	557,000	612,141	91.0%
Nebraska	887,000	966,786	91.7%
Nevada	1,236,000	1,407,761	87.8%
New Hampshire	757,000	814,499	92.9%
New Jersey	4,363,000	4,494,659	97.1%
New Mexico	844,000	928,230	90.9%
New York	8,089,000	8,701,749	93.0%
North Carolina	5,070,000	5,543,405	91.5%
North Dakota	341,000	364,499	93.6%
Ohio	5,583,000	5,974,121	93.5%
Oklahoma	1,433,000	1,564,886	91.6%
Oregon	2,186,000	2,396,123	91.2%
Pennsylvania	6,449,000	6,973,951	92.5%
Rhode Island	479,000	519,412	92.2%
South Carolina	2,327,000	2,523,856	92.2%
South Dakota	388,000	427,406	90.8%
Tennessee	2,793,000	3,074,692	90.8%
Texas	10,610,000	11,449,044	92.7%
Utah	1,149,000	1,542,529	74.5%
Vermont	337,000	368,075	91.6%
Virginia	4,110,000	4,487,338	91.6%
Washington	3,760,000	4,116,055	91.3%
West Virginia	739,000	801,667	92.2%
Wisconsin	3,093,000	3,308,331	93.5%
Wyoming	247,000	278,503	88.7%
U.S.	146,700,000	159,934,200	91.7%

⁸ DataClear counts are rounded for disclosure avoidance following the Census Bureau's unweighted-count rounding rules. EAVS ballot totals are an external benchmark and are shown unrounded; coverage percentages are computed from the rounded DataClear counts.

Federal administrative sources. A person enters the noncitizen candidate universe by appearing in a federal noncitizen source, and the analysis resolves the sources into a single person-level pool. The sources are the USCIS immigration record system (green cards and lawful-permanent-resident status), State Department immigrant and nonimmigrant visa issuances, ICE records (foreign students, removals, and national-docket proceedings), USCIS DACA approvals, and the Social Security Administration's legal-alien citizenship codes. Most establish noncitizen status directly. The Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) is included on the same footing because an ITIN is issued only to persons who are ineligible for a Social Security Number, and so is treated as an affirmative noncitizen signal. That signal remains subject to the citizenship screen (see below): an ITIN holder who naturalized before the November 2020 general election or otherwise carries citizenship evidence is removed from the noncitizen pool.

The citizen electorate confirmed by the screen. Of the highest-confidence PIK-linked voters, 96.4 percent carry a documented citizenship record. U.S. birth alone accounts for 82.7 percent of the confirmed citizens, and two remaining sources, passports and naturalization oaths, cover almost all of the rest. Administrative records provide broader coverage of the noncitizen population than survey self-reports of citizenship, which carry known misreporting (Brown, Heggeness, and Murray-Close 2023).

Appendix 2. Methodology

Record linkage and the PIK. The Census Bureau's Person Identification Validation System matches each incoming record against a reference file built from the Social Security Administration's Numident and other files and assigns an anonymous person key, the PIK, in place of any direct identifier. When a record carries a usable Social Security number, PVS verifies it and confirms the identifying fields; when it does not, PVS searches on name, date of birth, sex, and address, scores the candidates, and assigns a PIK only when the evidence clears a threshold. This beginning brief uses only high-confidence classes of match.

The candidate pool. A person who appears in any federal noncitizen source is treated as a noncitizen at the time of a vote unless citizenship evidence establishes citizenship at or before that vote. This is paired with a monotonicity rule: citizenship moves in only one direction, from noncitizen to citizen through naturalization. A naturalization oath dated after a vote therefore confirms the person was a noncitizen when the vote occurred, and only undated citizenship or citizenship dated before a vote can exclude it.

The citizenship screen. The screen consults citizenship sources in a fixed precedence, taking the most precisely dated evidence first: a dated naturalization oath, then U.S. birth (SSA citizen code A combined with a U.S. place of birth, filtered for place-code collisions), then a dated U.S. passport. Undated citizenship signals (an SSA citizen code or a USCIS "U.S. Citizen" class of admission observed years after the vote) cannot be placed in time relative to the vote but are still used to clear a person.

Two examples. The following cases, drawn from the data, show how the screen separates citizens from noncitizens. They are illustrative composites; no individual's records are described.

Consider a lawful permanent resident who received a green card in 2005, registered to vote, took the oath of citizenship in 2015, and voted in 2020. This person appears in an immigration record as a noncitizen, which is why they enter the candidate pool. But the screen also finds a naturalization oath dated 2015, five years before the election. Because that oath establishes citizenship well before Election Day, the person was a U.S. citizen when they voted, and the screen removes them from the noncitizen count. In this beginning analysis, approximately 63,800 people who voted in 2020 fall into this category, a former green-card holder naturalized before the election, and none is counted here as a noncitizen voter.

Now consider a lawful permanent resident who received a green card in 2016 and voted in 2020, with no naturalization oath, no U.S. passport, no U.S. birth record, and no citizen code anywhere in the administrative records. Every record the government holds for this person is consistent with noncitizen status, and none rebuts it as of Election Day. This person is counted as a noncitizen voter. The determination does not rest on a single flag; it requires an affirmative noncitizen record and the absence of any citizenship evidence that would place the person inside citizenship at the time of the vote. Over 24,000 voters in the 2020 general election met that standard.

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