



Unit 2: Political Beliefs and Behaviors

Session 2: Political Participation

Learning Targets

- How do Americans participate politically?
- How have voting rights been suppressed within the United States
- How have voting rights been expanded?
- Explain why Americans don't vote?



Unit 2: Political Beliefs and Behaviors

Session 2: Participation

Voting Age Populations

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

- **Voting Age Population-**
Citizens who are eligible to vote after reaching the minimum age.
 - Includes those who are ineligible to vote, i.e. felons, resident aliens.
- **Voting Eligible Population-**
measures those who are legally permitted to cast a ballot
- In 2008 the VAP was 231 million but the VEP was 18 million less

Year	Voting-Age Population (VAP)	Voting-Eligible Population (VEP)
1948	51.1%	52.2%
1952	61.6	62.3
1956	59.3	60.2
1960	62.8	63.8
1964	61.9	62.8
1968	60.9	61.5
1972	55.2	56.2
1976	53.5	54.8
1980	52.8	54.7
1984	53.3	57.2
1988	50.3	54.2
1992	55.0	60.6
1996	48.9	52.6
2000	51.2	55.6
2004	55.0	60.0
2008	56.8	61.7

Political Participation

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

- Political participation refers to the many different ways the people take part in politics and government.
 - Political party
 - Debate
 - Giving money to a candidate
 - Writing letters
 - Voting #1
- Participation in government only included white males with property at first, but gradually increased over time
- National Laws, amendments to the constitution have lead for greater participation in politics



Political Participation

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

- Political participation encompasses the many activities used by citizens to influence the selection of political leaders or the policies they pursue.
- Paradoxically, the United States has a *participatory political culture*, but only 60 percent of Americans voted in the 2004 presidential election, and only 40 percent voted in the 2006 mid-term elections
- Throughout American history, individuals and groups have sometimes used **civil disobedience**, in which they consciously break laws that they think are unjust.



Political Participation

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

- Unconventional participation includes activities that are often dramatic, such as protesting, civil disobedience, and even violence.
- Protest is a form of political participation designed to achieve policy change through dramatic and unconventional tactics, and protests today are often orchestrated to provide television cameras with vivid images.
- In the United States, participation is a *class-biased activity*, with citizens of higher socioeconomic status participating more than others. Minority groups like Hispanics and African Americans are below average in terms of political participation.



Suppression of Voting Right

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

WHITE SUPREMACY!

Attention, White Men!

Grand Torch-Light Procession

At JACKSON,

On the Night of the

Fourth of January, 1890.

**The Final Settlement of Democratic Rule
and White Supremacy in Mississippi.**

GRAND PYROTECHNIC DISPLAY!
Transparencies and Torches Free for all.

All in Sympathy with the Grand Cause
are Cordially and Earnestly Invited to be
on hand, to aid in the Final Overthrow of
Radical Rule in our State.

Come on foot or on horse-back; come any way, but
be sure to get there.

Brass Bands, Cannon, Flambeau Torches, Trans-
parencies, Sky-rockets, Etc.

A GRAND DISPLAY FOR A GRAND CAUSE.

- Literacy Tests- A requirement that citizens show that they can read before registering to vote
- Poll Tax- A requirement that citizens pay a tax in order to register to vote
- Grandfather Clause- A clause in registration laws that banned any person from voting if their ancestors did not vote before 1867
- White primary- the practice of preventing voting for black citizens through intimidation.

Suppression of Voter Right

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent

Voter ID Acts (Argument Against)
Voting rights are under “attack” in this country as state legislatures nationwide pass voter suppression laws under the pretext of preventing voter fraud and safeguarding election integrity.

These voter suppression laws take many forms, and collectively lead to significant burdens for eligible voters trying to exercise their most fundamental constitutional right.



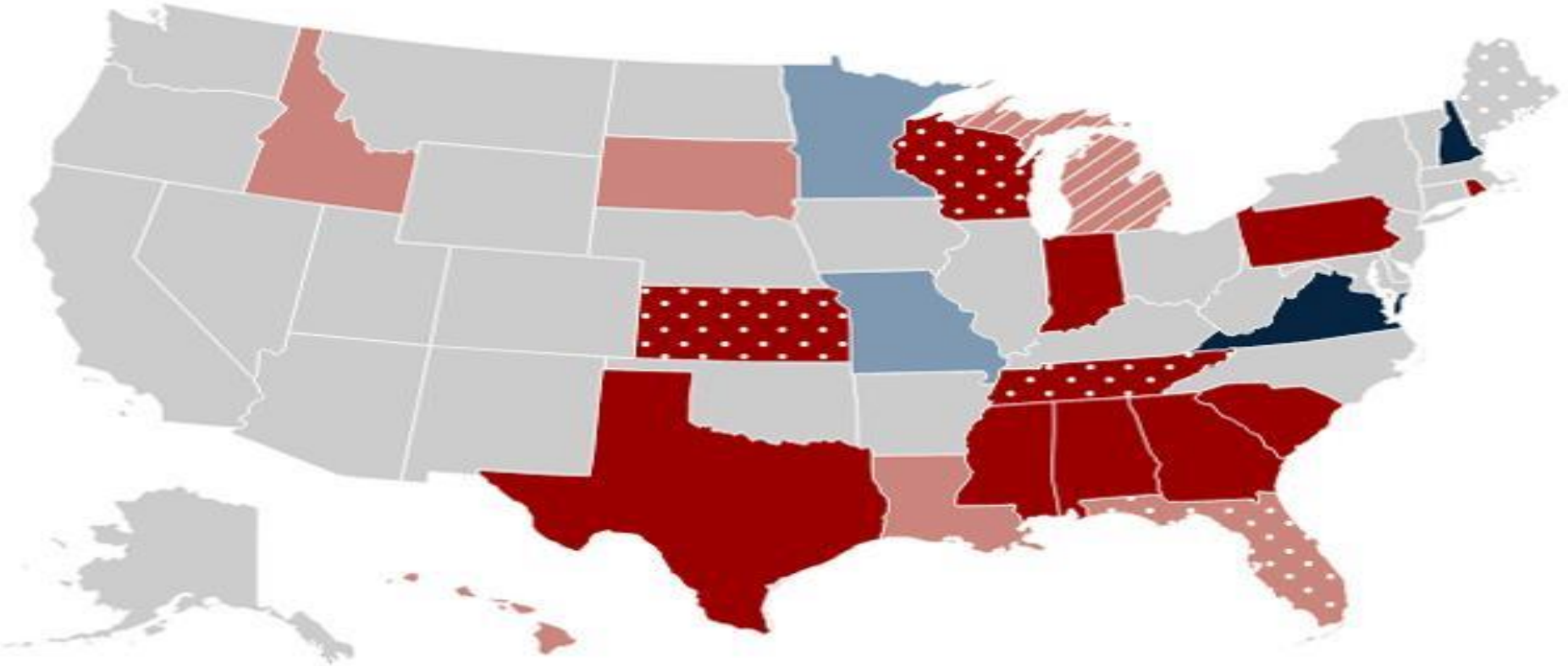
Voter Suppression Laws

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Spreading suppression

The proliferation of voter suppression laws (as of March 29, 2012)



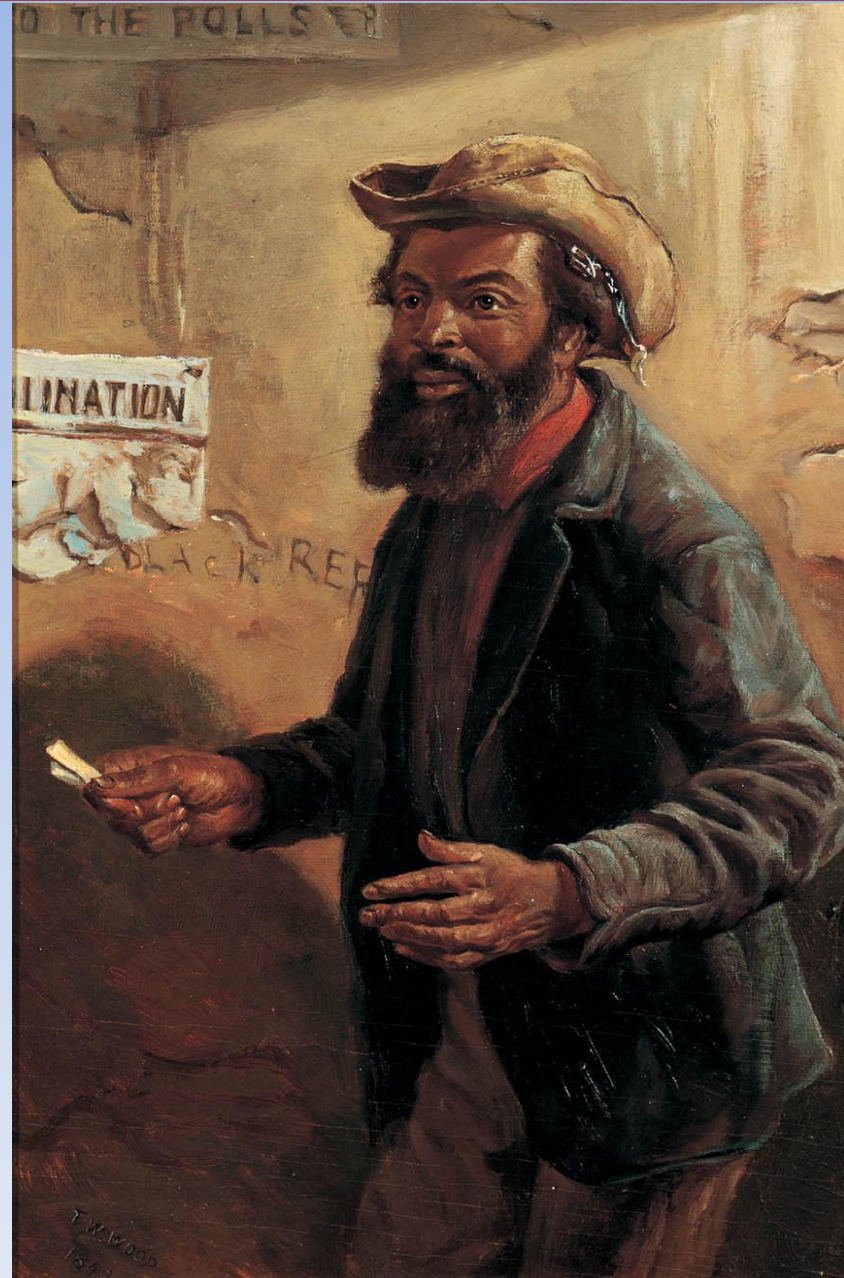
-  States that passed a law requiring photo ID to vote
-  States that passed a law requiring photo ID to vote (with non-photo safety net)
-  States at risk for passing photo ID in 2012
-  States with photo ID on the ballot
-  States at risk for passing other voter suppression legislation in 2012

Expansion of Voting Rights

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

- Federal laws and constitutional amendments have eliminated restrictions on the right to vote
- Federal laws and constitutional amendments have significantly reduced the power of individual states over a citizen's right to vote
- Originally about 1 in 15 white males were able to vote in 1789
- Andrew Jackson and his supporters eliminated property qualifications of voting. This gave the U.S. the “Age of the Common Man”



- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent

Expansion of Voting Rights

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent




On November 4 **YES** on Nov. 4

Vote YES 18 For **Vote 18**

On Public Question No. 2

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	YES	What Article 6, paragraph 1 of the Constitution says: 'No state shall ... grant ... the privilege and immunities of a state ...' It says, 'No ...'.
<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	



"I go for all sharing the privileges of the government who assist in bearing its burdens."
Abraham Lincoln

Voting Rights of 1965

- By 1965, efforts to break the grip of state disfranchisement had been under way, but had achieved only modest success overall and in some areas had proved almost entirely ineffectual.
- Attacks in Selma on peaceful marchers along with the murders in Mississippi finally brought change.
- **Voting Rights Act of 1965-** Prohibited any government from using voting procedures that denied a person the vote on the basis of race or color



Preclearance

- The Civil Rights Act of 1965 was enacted as a response to the nearly century-long history of voting discrimination.
- Section 5 prohibits eligible districts from enacting changes to their election laws and procedures without gaining official authorization.
- States and local jurisdictions covered under the Act must submit all changes affecting voting and elections for preapproval by the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division or the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.



Shelby County v. Holder

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

- **Holding:** Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act is unconstitutional; its formula can no longer be used as a basis for subjecting jurisdictions to preclearance.
- The Court held that Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act imposes current burdens that are no longer responsive to the current conditions in the voting districts in question.
- Section 4(b) defines the eligible districts as ones that had a voting test in place as of November 1, 1964 and less



Factors influencing Voting

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

- **Age-** older people are more likely to vote than younger people. Historically younger people will support democrats
- **Income-** People with more income are more likely to vote. Historically those with lower income will vote democratic
- **Education-** People with more education are more likely to vote.
 - Historically as level of voters' education increases the percentage voting republican increases, however 2008 proved



Factors influencing voter turnout

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

- **Gender-** Women vote at a higher rate than men. In 2008 54% of all votes came from women
- **Religion-** Jews and Catholics are more likely to vote than protestants
 - Historically, a majority of protestants have supported Republican candidates. majority of Jewish and Catholic voters side with Democratic candidates
- **Race-** Whites tend to have higher turnout rates compared to other groups in the US. Note when you remove income and education, blacks vote at a higher rate.

Election Issue	Voters Prevented or Discouraged from Voting
Voter Registration Issues	3 million (+)
Disenfranchisement of Ex-Offenders*	1 million
Election Equipment and Ballot Design	3-500,000
Unnecessarily Long Lines and other Fixable Poll Procedures	250,000 (+)
Voters with Disabilities	1 – 1.5 million
Low Literacy/Limited Language	1 million (+)
Inconvenience/ Election on Workday (including lack of convenient early voting options)	1 million (+)
Problems with Receiving, Returning or Counting Mail-in Ballots	200,000 (+)
TOTAL "LOST" VOTES	Over 8 million

Voter Turnout Statistics

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent



- At the present time there are approximately 230 million people of voting age in the United States
- Only about 60% of eligible voters voted in the 2008 presidential election
- The voter turnout rate in the United states is slower than in most other Western Democracies.

Fig. 1.1 Percent of American Citizens Who Voted in Presidential Elections

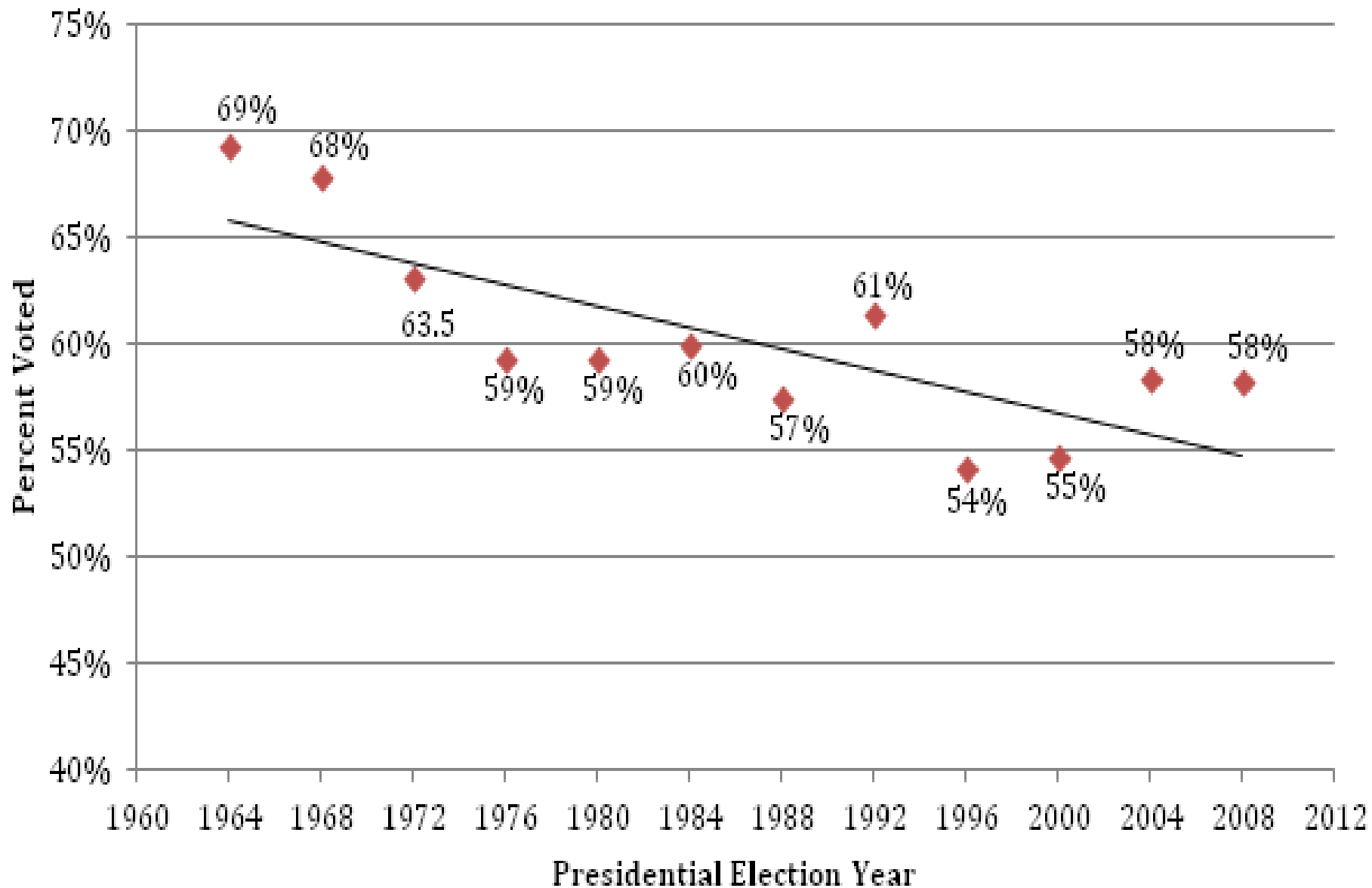


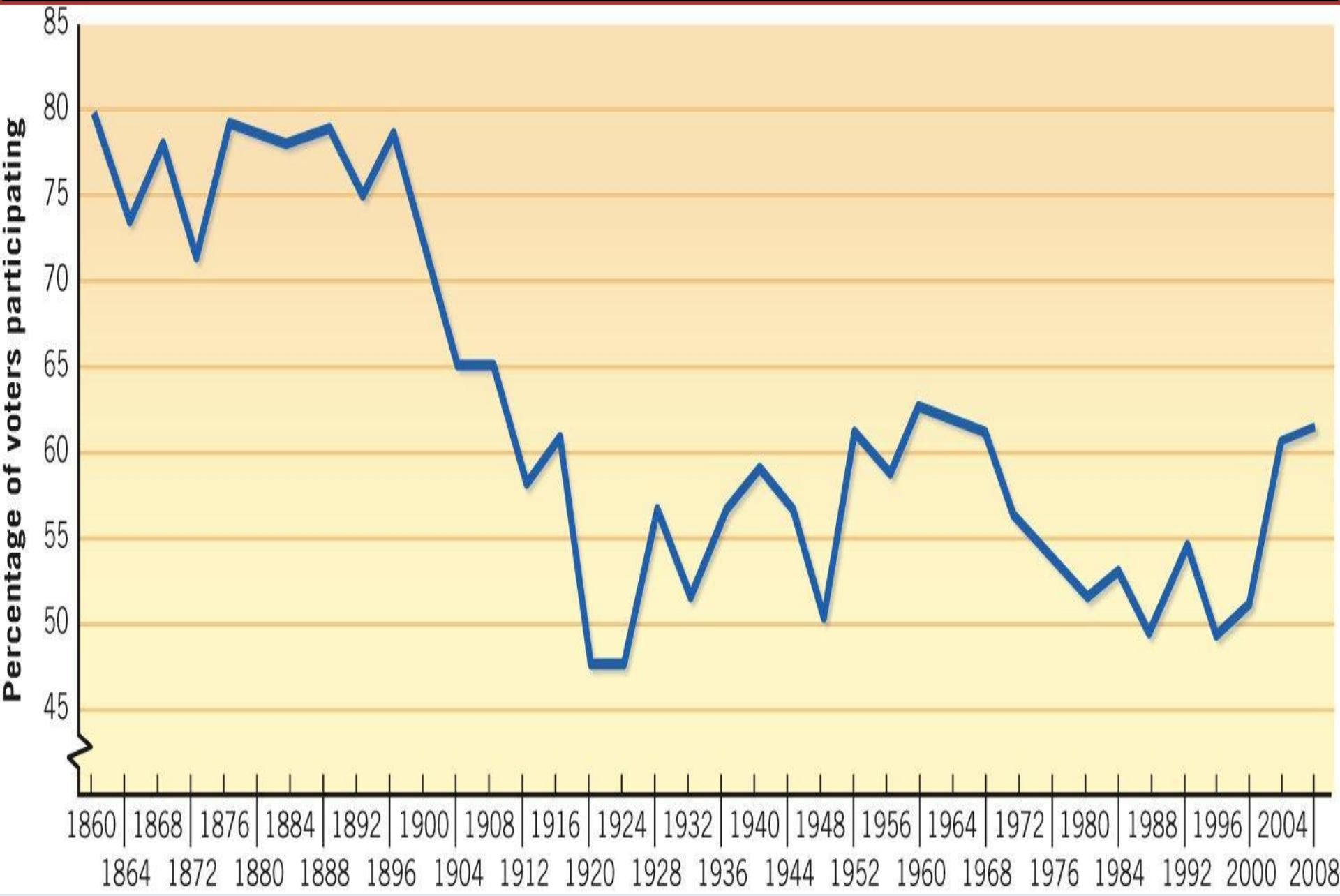
Table 8.2 Two Ways of Calculating Voting Turnout, Here and Abroad

A		B	
	Turnout as Percentage of Voting-Age Population		Turnout as Percentage of Registered Voters
Italy	92.0%	Australia	94.5%
New Zealand	86.0	Belgium	92.5
Belgium	84.8	Austria	83.1
Austria	84.4	New Zealand	90.8
Australia	84.2	Italy	89.8
Sweden	84.1	Netherlands	87.5
Netherlands	83.8	Sweden	87.1
Denmark	83.6	Denmark	85.9
Canada	82.6	Germany	85.4
Germany	80.2	Norway	80.4
Norway	79.2	United Kingdom	75.2
United Kingdom	73.8	Canada	73.9
France	67.3	France	73.8
Switzerland	51.9	United States	66.5
United States	47.7	Switzerland	56.5

Voter Turnout USA

Democrat
Republican
Independent

Democrat
Republican
Independent

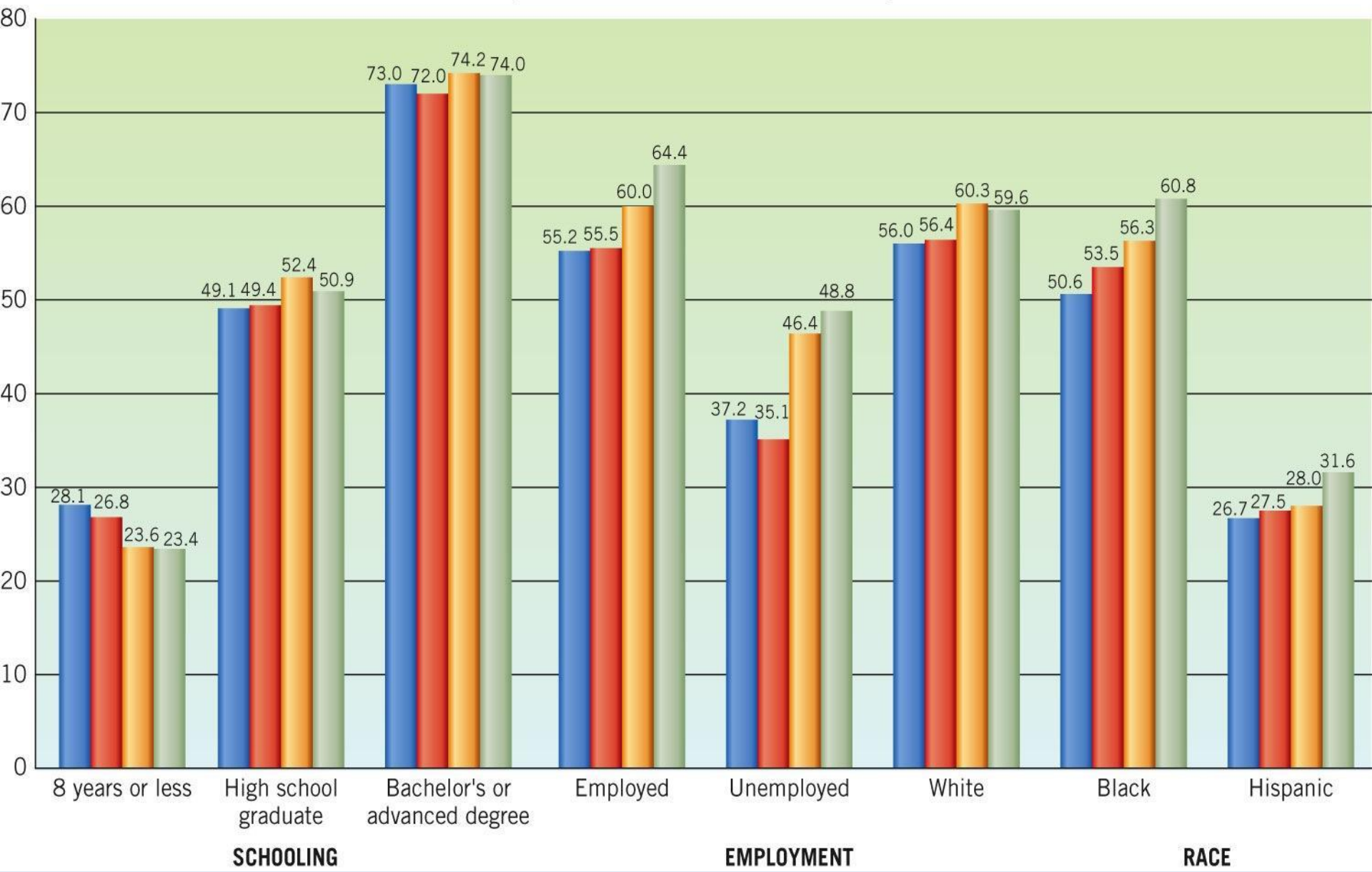


Voter Turnout Statistics

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

■ 1996 ■ 2000 ■ 2004 ■ 2008

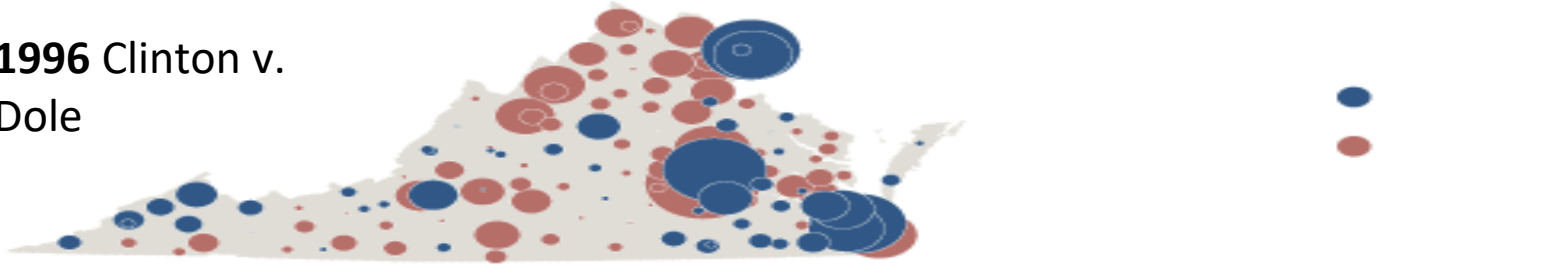


Voter Turnout Virginia

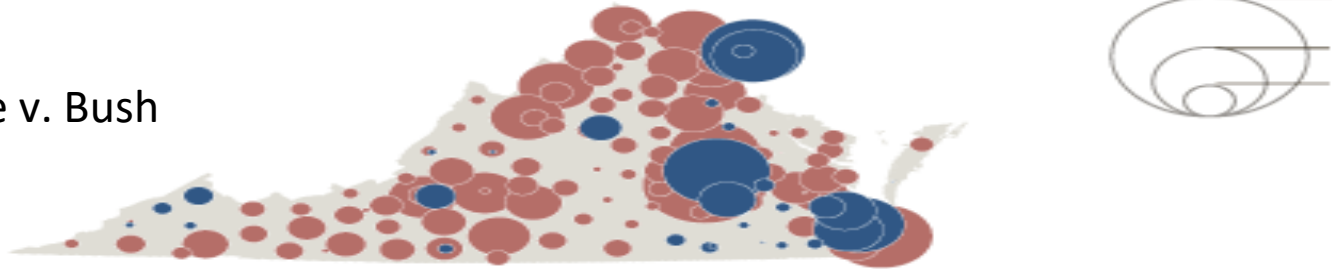
- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent

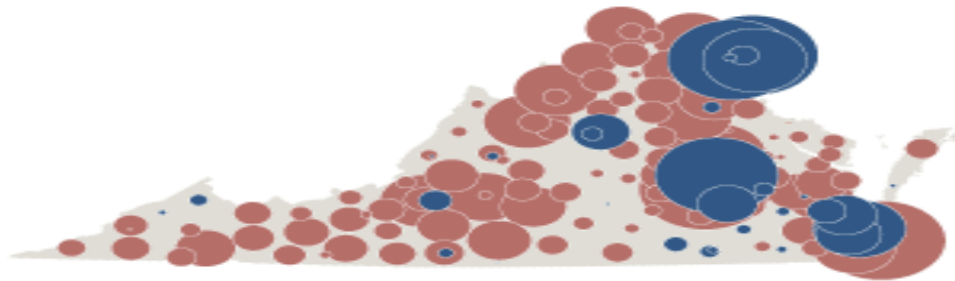
1996 Clinton v.
Dole



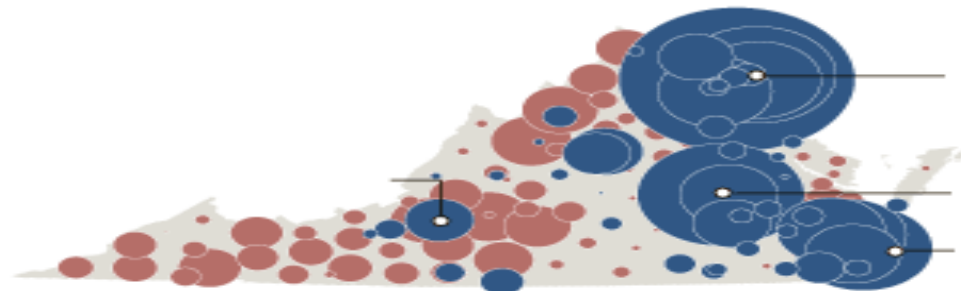
2000 Gore v. Bush



2004:Bush v. Kerry



2008:Obama v. McCain

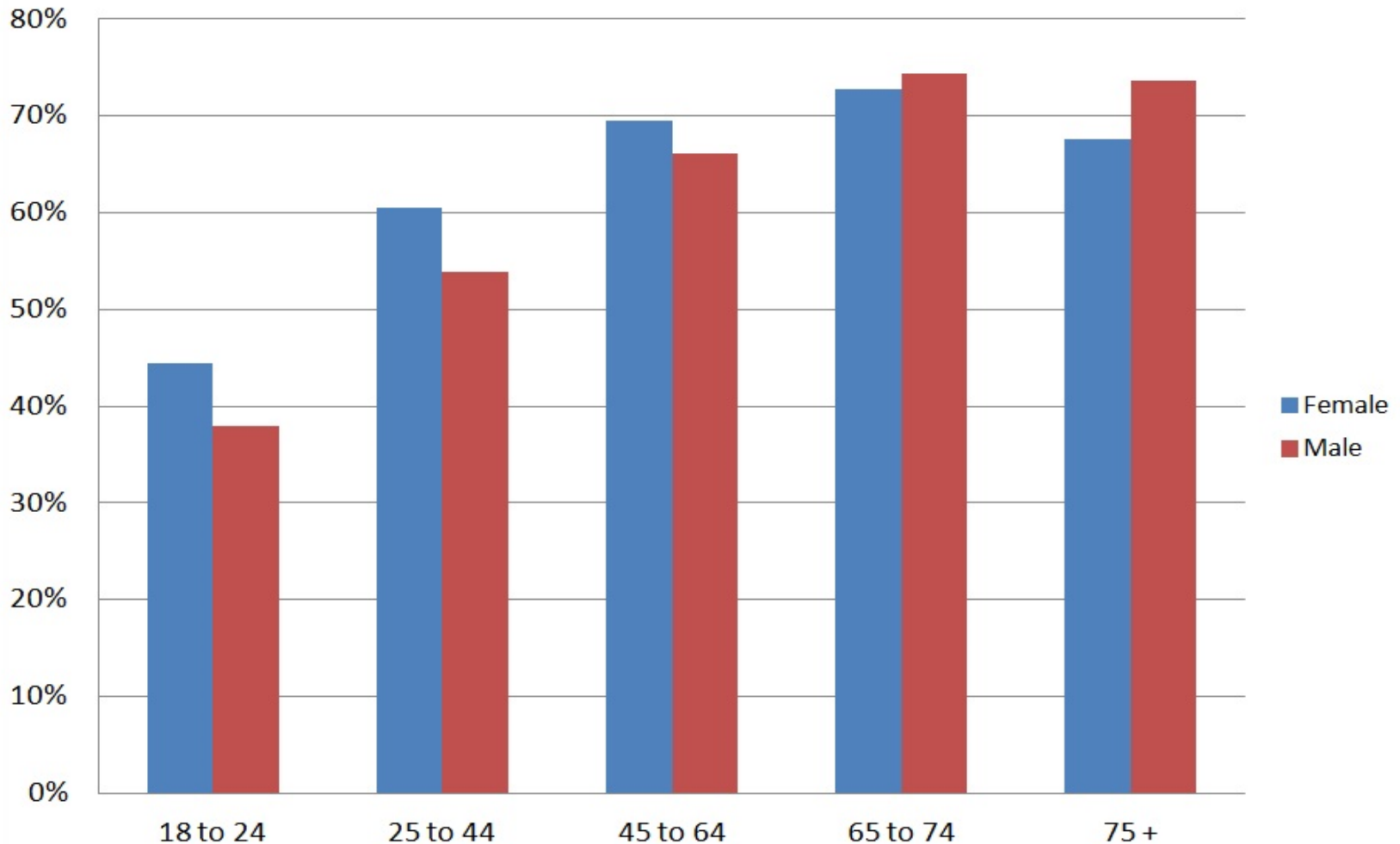




Voter Turnout by Gender



Voter Turnout by Age and Gender, 2012 Election



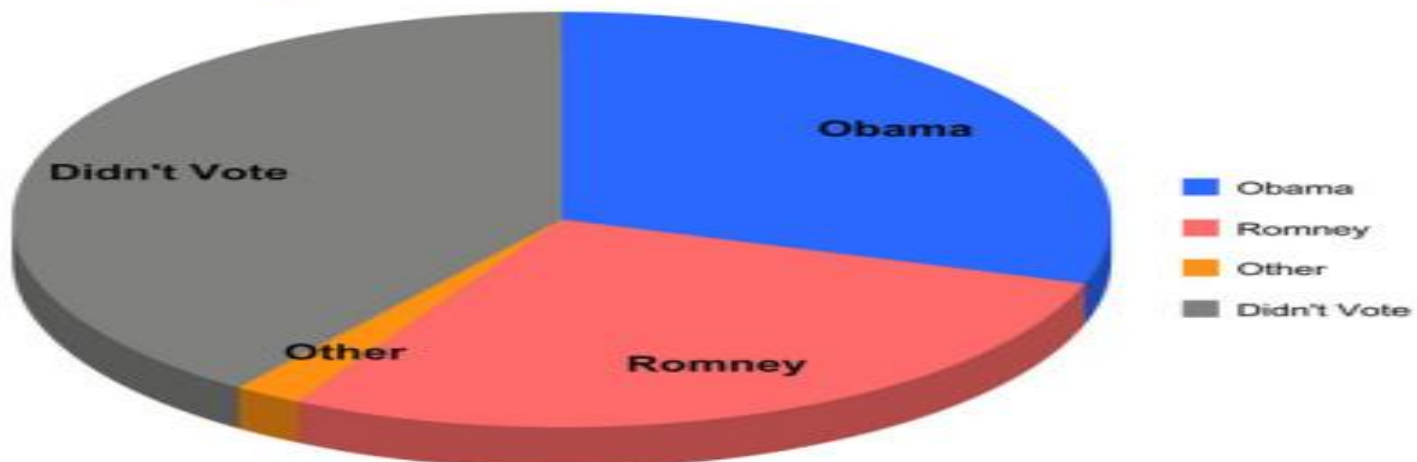
Voter Turnout Statistics

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent

- Democrat
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- Independent

2012 US ELECTIONS

The People Have Spoken - **NO CONFIDENCE**



Sources: USA Today "This year's voter turnout may fall short of 2008" & CNN "Election 2012: Results"

"But turnout is always bad..." Then it's about time to fix it.



Source: George Mason University, 2012 General Election Turnout Rates

Out of 10 eligible voters, only about 3 will have picked the US president. Only about 3 will have given approval to the wars & policies carried out in America's name.

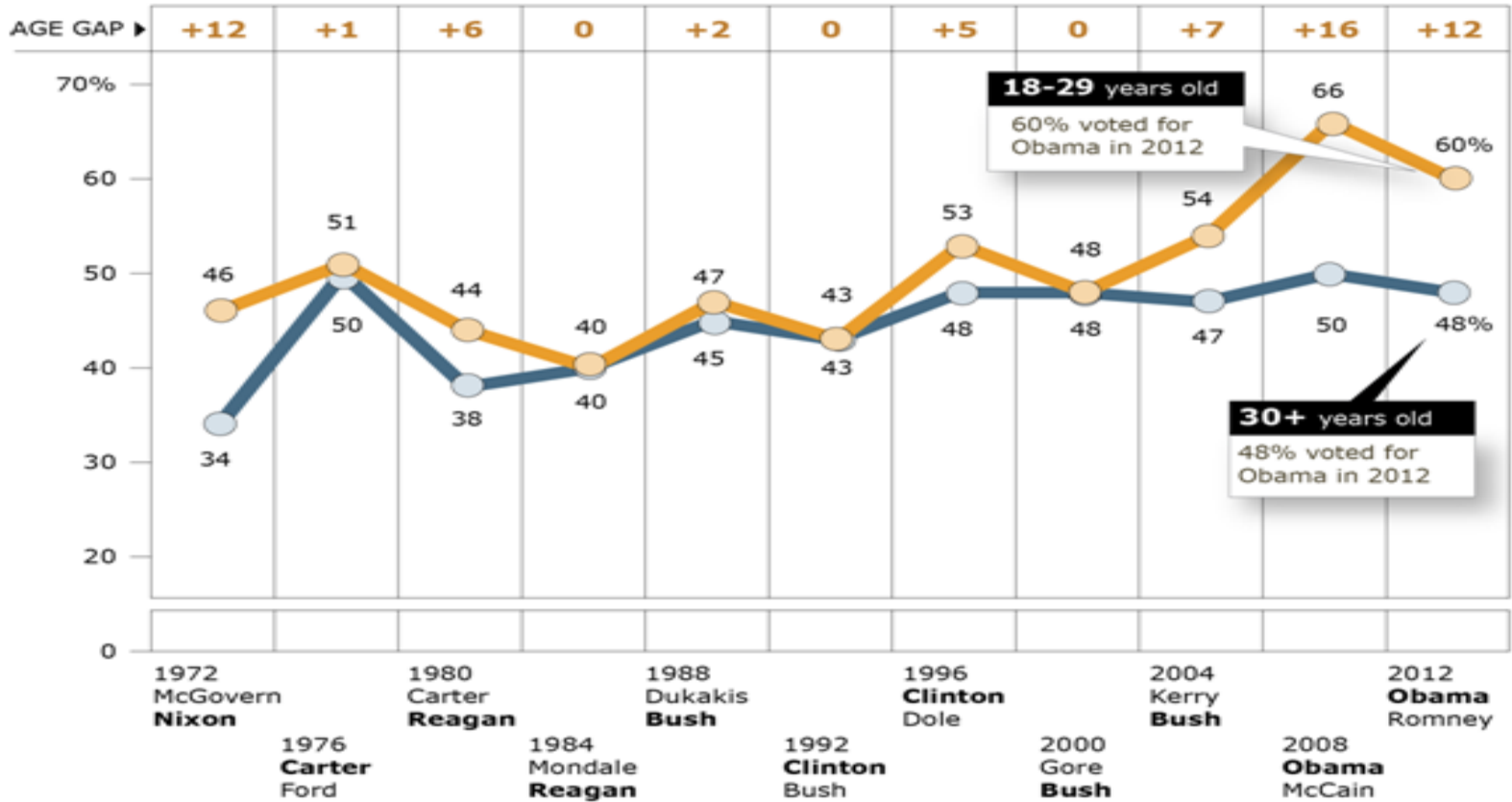


Age Gap in Voting



Age Gap in Voting Preferences

Percent voting for Democratic candidate



PEW RESEARCH CENTER. Based on exit poll data from the National Election Pool.

Youth Turnout

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent

Youth Turnout in Battleground States

State Designation
Prior to Election

Estimated Youth
Voter Turnout Rate

Leaning

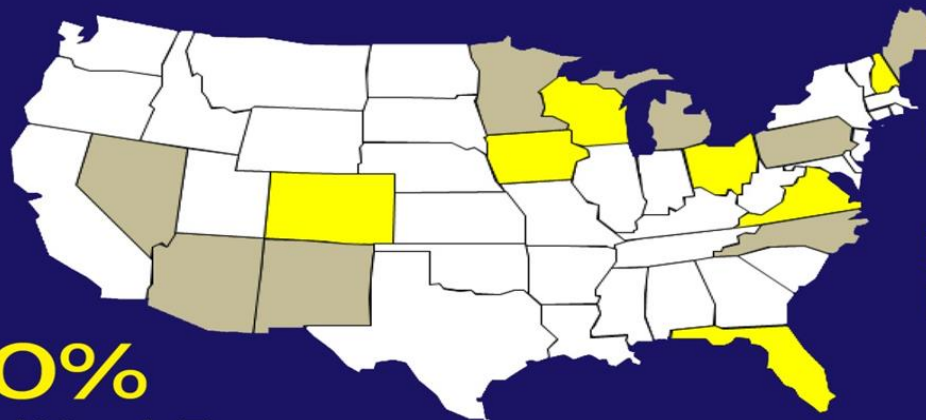
55%

Toss-Up

58%

Non-Battleground

47%



- States Leaning Democrat or Republican
- Toss-Up States
- Non-Battleground States

50%

2012 National Youth Turnout

#YouthTruth

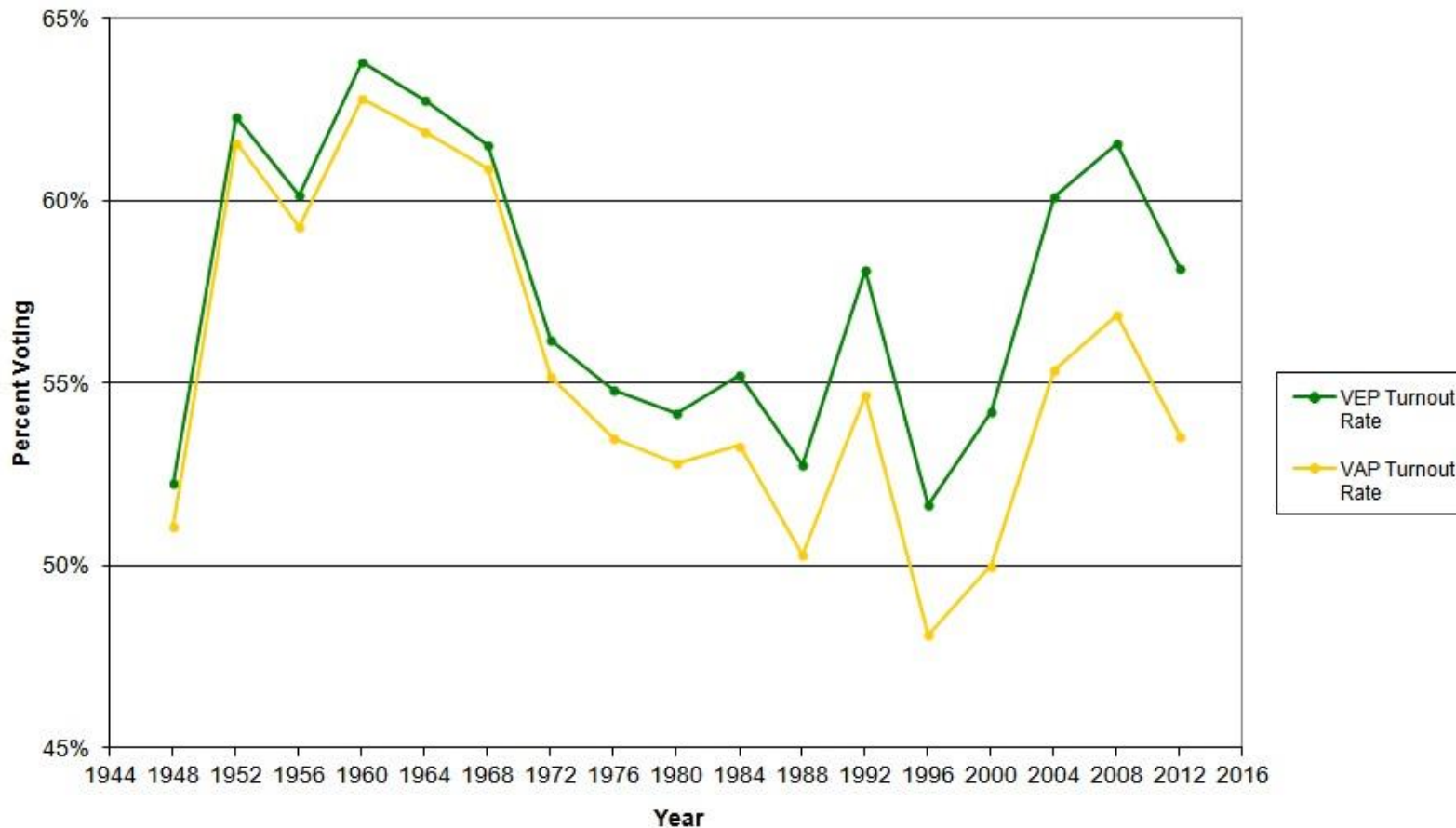
*Source: CIRCLE analysis of 2012 National Exit Poll (estimated turnout), Battleground Designation from pre-election polls from <http://elections.nytimes.com/2012/electoral-map>



Presidential Turnout Rates



Presidential Turnout Rates 1948-2012



Factors that decrease turnout

- **Voter Registration**
 - Registration has caused another obstacle that discourages some people from registering to vote
 - National Voter Act or **Motor Voter Law**- made voter registration easier by allowing people to register to vote while applying for a drivers license
- **Weekday, Non Holiday Voting**
 - Many western democracies hold their elections on weekends or holidays
 - Most election in the United States are held on the first Tuesday after the First Monday in November
- **Decline in Efficacy**
 - The Decline in the belief that your vote matters
 - As discussed earlier, the more lack of trust in government lowers the voter turnout
- **Elections**
 - Americas electoral system has the most elections than any other Western democracy
 - The large number of elections, candidates, TV ads and the length of the election process turns voters off of participation
 - **Voter Fatigue**

Voter Apathy

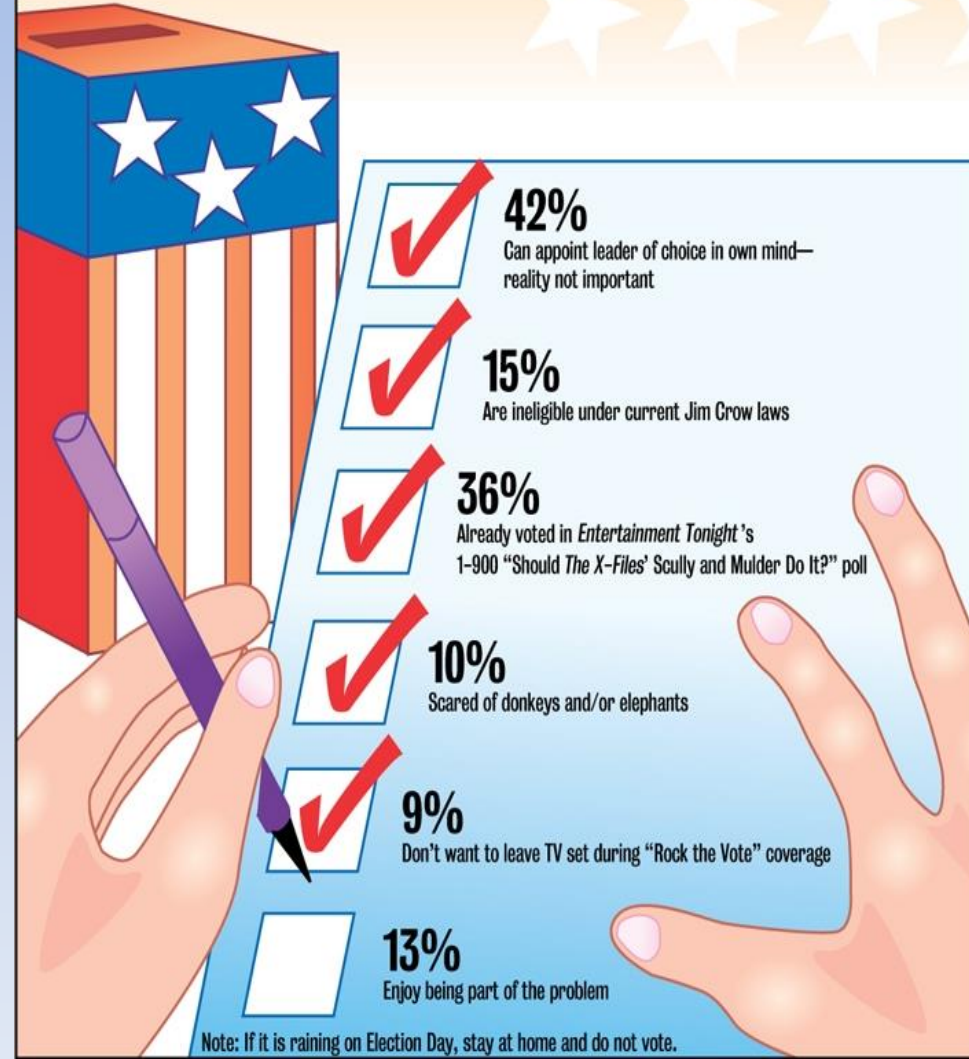
Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

- Although we vote at lower rates in the U.S., the meaning of our vote is different
- We elected more public officials than any other nation in the world
- There are more than a half a million elective offices in the United States
- U.S. citizens elect State Senators, Representatives, Governors, county officers, town officers court members, school board members, and county supervisors,

Voter Apathy

Despite many national campaigns to increase turnout, nearly half of all Americans eligible to vote are still staying home on Election Day. Why aren't we voting?



Compulsory Voting

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Democrat
 Republican
 Independent

Arguments For

- Compulsory voting ensures a large voter turnout
- Another important benefit is that compulsory voting prevents interference with access to the vote.
 - Weather, education, economic, cultural or racial factors do not affect turnout
- If voters do not want to support any given choice, they may cast blank votes

Arguments Against

- Compulsory voting can be seen as infringing a basic freedom of the citizen
- it is essentially a compelled speech, act, which violates freedom of speech
- Some do not support the idea of compulsory voting, particularly if they have no interest in politics or no knowledge of the candidates. Others may be well-informed, but have no preference for any particular candidate