



The  
Early Voting  
Information

# The Secretary of State's Guidebook to the Early Voting Obstacle Course

**Prepared for the Voter Participation Committee of the  
National Association of Secretaries of State**

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Copies of the presentation will be  
available at the EVIC website

# Early Voting Information and Resources

## The Early Voting Information Center Website and Blog

<http://www.earlyvoting.net>

**EVIC Absentee and Early Voting Laws Database** *This site, maintained by EVIC, provides information on the voting laws of all fifty states.*

<http://earlyvoting.net/states/abslaws.php>

## NASS Surveys on Early/Absentee Voting Laws

[http://nass.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=71&Itemid=217](http://nass.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=71&Itemid=217)

## Election Administration Information at the Pew Center on the States

[http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/electionline\\_info.aspx?category=admin](http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/electionline_info.aspx?category=admin)

**Election Updates** *This blog provides new research, analysis and commentary on election reform, voting technology, and election administration.*

<http://electionupdates.caltech.edu>

## EVIC Publications on Early Voting

Gronke, Paul. 2009 (forthcoming). "Early Voting Reforms and American Elections." *William and Mary Law Review*.

Gronke, Paul, Eva Galanes-Rosenbaum and Peter Miller. 2008. "Convenience Voting." *Annual Review of Political Science*. Volume 11: 437-455.

Gronke, Paul and Daniel Krantz Toffey. 2008. "The Psychological and Institutional Determinants of Early Voting." *Journal of Social Issues*. 64(3): 503-524.

Gronke, Paul, Eva Galanes-Rosenbaum, and Peter A. Miller. 2008. "From Ballot Box to Mail Box: Early Voting and Turnout." In *Democracy in the States: Experiments in Elections Reform*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute Press.

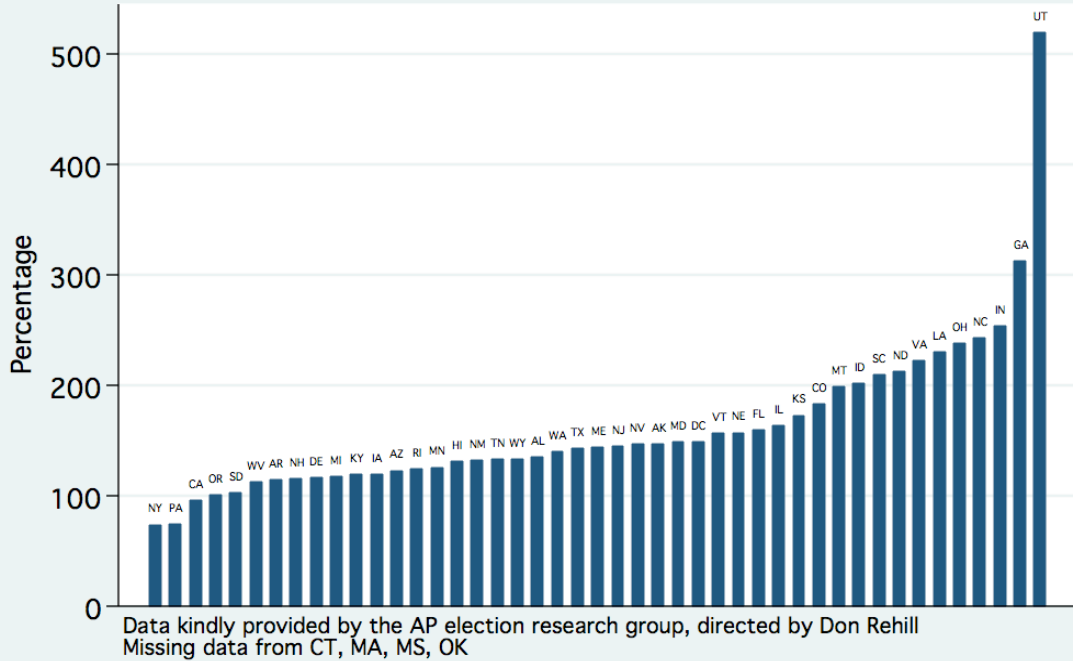
Gronke, Paul and Eva Galanes-Rosenbaum. 2008. "The Growth of Early and Non-Precinct Place Balloting: When, Why, and Prospects for the Future." In Ben Griffith (ed), *America Votes! A Guide to Election Law and Voting Rights*. Cleveland, OH: Lachina Publishing.

Gronke, Paul, Eva Galanes-Rosenbaum, and Peter Miller. 2007. "Early Voting and Turnout." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 40(4): 639-645.

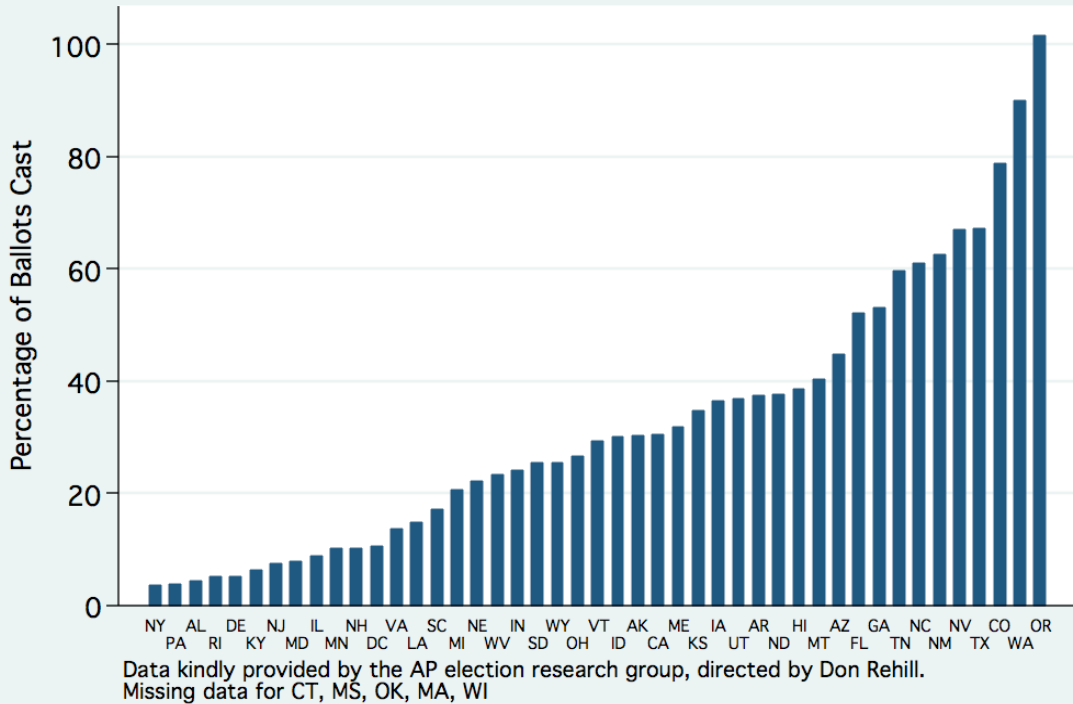
*Most available in PDF format at [earlyvoting.net](http://earlyvoting.net)*

# Early Voting Rate Changes The 2004 and 2008 Elections

## Changing Rates of Early Voting 2008 Early Voting Rate as Percentage of 2004



## Rates of Early Voting in 2008





## **Early Voting Laws and Language: Variation Across States**

The following excerpts provide an example of how much early voting legislation can vary across states. The bill from New York requires that early voting be made available to the public but is relatively vague about instruction and procedure. The excerpt from the Texas Election Code provides an example of legislation that is more specific and direct in its requirements.

### **New York Bill No. A03315**

1. No sooner than seven business days and up to and including the day prior to any general, primary or special election for any public or party office, persons duly registered to vote for candidates for such office may vote by paper ballot for a candidate for such office, and such early voting practice shall take place at person`s county board of elections, or an alternative location or locations as otherwise designated by and through a county board of elections under the powers granted pursuant to this section on or before the effective date of this section.
  
2. Such voting procedure shall be monitored and administered by two duly designated persons, one from each major political party, and such voting shall follow and conform to all other procedures, measures and requirements of casting a vote by a voting machine as prescribed pursuant to this chapter. All votes cast within the early voting period shall be counted within twenty-four hours of the polls closing on election day and in the same manner as prescribed in article nine of this chapter. The results or tabulation of votes cast during an early voting period shall not be made before the close of all polling places on election day and results shall be reported by precinct. Ballots used in early voting shall be, as nearly as practicable, the same form as those used on election day.

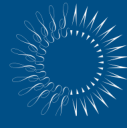
<http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?bn=A03315>

### **Excerpt from Texas Statutes: Election Code Sec. 85.062**

In a primary election, the general election for state and county officers, or a special election to fill a vacancy in the legislature or in congress:

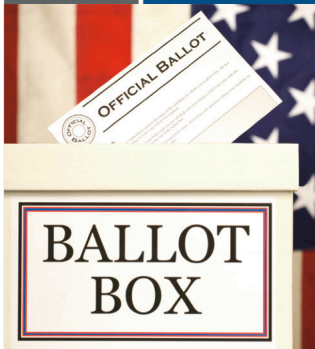
- (1) The commissioners court of a county with a population of 400,000 or more shall establish one or more early voting polling places other than the main early voting polling place in each state representative district containing territory covered by the election, except that the polling place or places shall be established in the state senatorial or congressional district, as applicable, in a special election to fill a vacancy in the office of state senator or United States representative;
- (2) The commissioners court of a county with a population of 120,000 or more but less than 400,000 shall establish one or more early voting polling places other than the main early voting polling place in each commissioners precinct containing territory covered by the election; and
- (3) The commissioners court of a county with a population of 100,000 or more but less than 120,000 shall establish one or more early voting polling places as described by Subdivision (2) in each precinct for which the commissioners court receives in time to enable compliance with Section 85.067 a written request for that action submitted by at least 15 registered voters of that precinct.

For the full text of the Code see <http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/el.toc.htm> (Sec. 85)



# Why did 40 million people vote before Election Day?

Pre-Election Day Voting: Alternatives to voting on Election Day

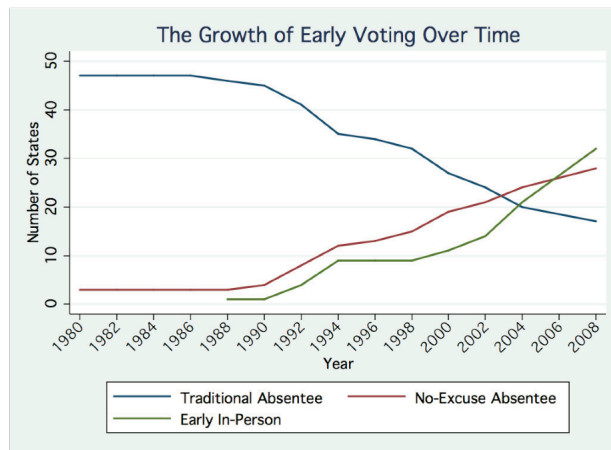


**Election returns indicate that almost 40 million people, thirty percent of those that voted in the 2008 general election, did so prior to Election Day.**

States and localities have been experimenting with a wide array of early in-person, absentee voting, and vote by mail systems in order to reduce the administrative demands and costs of elections, provide convenient alternatives to voters and release pressure on Election Day. Yet with an anemic base of independent analysis, little is known about whether these alternative modes of voting achieve these goals.

In partnership with the JEHT Foundation, Make Voting Work funded six studies to evaluate the effects of alternatives to traditional precinct place voting on turnout, voter convenience and satisfaction, election integrity, administrative efficiency and cost. Make Voting Work will continue this work by commissioning additional studies in 2009 to deepen the evidence-base available to policymakers.

- **Encouraging Early Voting** - Researchers at the University of Georgia are partnering with state and local election officials to determine the degree to which efforts to encourage non-precinct place voting by those tasked with administering Georgia's elections were a success. They are conducting a telephone survey of 2,500 voters in Forsyth, Lee and Muscogee Counties as well as a mail survey to all 159 county election administrators in the state of Georgia.
- **Expectations and Reality About Early Voting** - Christopher Mann at Yale University, Rachel Sondheimer at the US Military Academy and Colorado election officials will assess the impacts that differing non-precinct place voting systems and approaches adopted by county election officials have on voter participation. The analysis will rely on official voter turnout data and a pre- and post-election survey of Colorado election officials.
- **Voter Errors Using Vote by Mail** - Building on a partnership between local election officials in San Joaquin County, California and the University of the Pacific, researchers examine whether citizens make more errors when voting by mail than at the precinct place, including an analysis of the differential impact of vote by mail on demographically distinct groups.



- **Mandatory Voting By Mail** - To assess the impact on voter turnout, researchers at California State University, East Bay will compare voters who can vote at a traditional precinct with neighboring voters who are forced to switch to voting by mail as a result of a change in California state election law.
- **The Turnout Effects of New Voting Systems** - Jonathan Nagler at New York University and Jan Leighley at the University of Arizona will compile comprehensive data on voter turnout and a dataset on electoral laws from 1972-2008, taking advantage of the varied timing of adoption of early voting and no-fault absentee voting by different states to assess their impact on turnout.
- **Early Voting and Election Day Registration in Wisconsin and Beyond** - Working together, the University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board will determine whether non-precinct place voting increases turnout when combined with election day registration, evaluating whether the combined effect increases turnout more than same day registration alone.