

# Presidential Election Inequality

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*The Electoral College in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*



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FairVote – is a non-partisan, non-profit that seeks equal voting power and competitive choices through bold reforms to transform American politics. We act to fulfill the American dream of equal democratic citizenship for all. Achieving our goals rests upon a constitutionally protected right to vote, direct election of the president, majority voting for executive elections and proportional voting for legislative elections. As a reform catalyst, we develop and promote innovative proposals to improve elections for local, state and national leaders.

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## FOREWORD

The Electoral College is more than just an antiquated anachronism that can misfire and elect the candidate who loses the national vote; it has come to establish and entrench political inequality. When Hurricane Katrina struck Louisiana in 2005, President Bush and Vice-President Cheney were slow to go to the scene. The 2004 campaign certainly hadn't helped them know the way; in the last five weeks of the campaign, the major party presidential and vice-presidential candidates traveled a whopping 61 times to Florida, but not once to Louisiana and 25 other states.

As proven definitively in FairVote's new reports *The Shrinking Battleground* and *Who Picks the President?*, the Electoral College system will, if not reformed, relegate two-thirds of Americans to the sidelines during presidential elections for years to come. Today, record-setting campaign resources are targeted at just a handful of states. Voter mobilization money, advertising dollars, campaign energy, candidate visits and almost certainly policy decisions are all spent to sway voters in roughly a dozen states. That number of competitive states is far smaller – and more consistent election to election – than it was just two decades ago. The result is rapidly growing inequality in voter turnout, especially among young people. Racial fairness is undermined because these states are disproportionately white.

The American people have reliably supported a national popular vote for president, but public support has not led to change. Reform efforts have started and ended in Congress as Constitutional Amendments. Even in 1969, when more than 80% of House Members voted for direct election and backers included the NAACP, AFL-CIO, Chamber of Commerce, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, Senate opponents were able to kill direct election with a filibuster.

The problems the Electoral College created in the 1960s were real, but nothing like what it does to democracy today. Still, reformers' despair about the potential to abolish the Electoral College has severely limited debate about what the Electoral College does to our modern democracy. To correct this failure, in 2005 FairVote established our Presidential Elections Reform program. We have helped show that our talk of a national vote for president is not just an intellectual exercise. The program has helped develop a coalition of groups and individuals to support the National Popular Vote campaign designed to achieve a national popular vote for president through action in the states. The program's major reports *The Shrinking Battleground* and *Who Picks the President?* have established with clarity and power that electing the president state by state rather than nationally hurts our democracy.

This publication collects these reports and other fact sheets and writings from the Presidential Elections Reform program. We believe it will be an essential resource for those seeking to base American democracy on every American having an equal and meaningful vote.





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| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*The Shrinking Battleground* was produced by FairVote's Presidential Elections Reform Program, headed by Christopher Pearson. The report was produced by Pearson and his FairVote colleagues Rob Richie, Adam Johnson, and Jeff Rezmovic.



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**Summary | THE SHRINKING BATTLEGROUND**

*The Shrinking Battleground* uses a model of “state partisanship” to explain why the United States has experienced a decrease in the number of competitive battleground states in presidential elections, how these partisan divisions are hardening and what impact they have on American democracy. The fundamental reality is that fewer and fewer Americans play a meaningful role in electing the president – and that the major party campaigns act on that understanding with utter disregard for the interests and views of most voters outside of swing states. The result is a two-tiered system for voters, with damaging impact on voter turnout, racial fairness, political equality and the future of American democracy. The mounting evidence makes it clear that the solution is to establish a direct election of the president so all votes count equally and the principles of majority rule and one person, one vote are respected. Among the report’s key findings:

***A shrinking battleground***

- In 1960, 24 states with a total of 327 electoral votes were battlegrounds. In 2004, only 13 states with 159 electoral votes were similarly competitive.
- Of potential battleground states, five (Louisiana, Maine, Oregon, Tennessee, West Virginia) grew much less competitive. One (Colorado) grew more competitive.
- Our partisanship model predicted state results within a 2% margin in 32 states. Only two states changed their partisanship by more than 3.9%.

***Partisan consequences***

- George Bush would have lost the 2004 election if he had won the national popular vote by less than 425,000 votes.
- John Kerry and Democrats did relatively better in battleground states than the nation as a whole and are better positioned if the election is close in 2008.
- 48 of 51 presidential contests went to the same party as in 2000. A shift of just 18,774 votes would have meant an exact repeat of the 2000 state-by-state results.

***Civic consequences***

- In the 12 most competitive states in 2004, voter turnout rose 9% to 63%. In the 12 least competitive states, voter turnout rose only 2% to 53%.
- Voter turnout among 18-29 year-olds was 64.4% in the 10 most competitive states and 47.6% in the remaining states – a gap of 17%.
- More than 30% of whites live in battlegrounds, in contrast to only 21% of African Americans and Native Americans, 18% of Latinos and 14% of Asian Americans.
- A shift of just 20,417 votes would have given the country an Electoral College tie. An even smaller shift would have thrown the 2000 elections into the U.S. House.

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*Overview* | THE SHRINKING BATTLEGROUND

No elected office in the United States captures the public's imagination like the presidency. The White House represents this nation's elected royalty, providing a human face to our government and the inspiration for one key element of the American dream—belief that any young person, anywhere in the nation, can proudly announce to their friends, “Someday I will be president.” The vast majority of Americans with that dream must settle for other opportunities in life, but in a nation founded on the principle that all men and women are created equal, all Americans should have the right to a meaningful vote in presidential elections.

This principle, however, is violated by our use of the Electoral College, a convoluted and capricious electoral process that weighs Americans' votes differently based on where they live and allows a candidate to win election despite receiving fewer votes than another candidate – a perverse result that happened in 2000 and would have happened again in 2004 if George Bush had won the popular vote by less than 425,000 votes.

Inequality in our presidential election system is taking on disturbing new dimensions. The combination of the Electoral College, hardening partisan voting patterns, sophisticated campaign techniques and high-tech tools are creating a two-tier class structure in our democracy—second class citizens disregarded as irrelevant in presidential elections and the fortunate few who receive increasing care and attention by virtue of living in one of the dwindling number of competitive battleground states like Florida and Ohio.

In 1960, for example, when John Kennedy narrowly defeated Richard Nixon, two-thirds of states were competitive. Fully 24 states in 1960 were genuine political battlegrounds, together representing 327 electoral votes. Fast forward to 2004. The number of competitive races plunged to barely a third of the states, and the number of comparable battlegrounds dwindled to only 13, representing just 159 electoral votes. At the same time, the number of completely non-competitive states (those where one party would win by more than 16% in a nationally even race) increased from nine states representing 64 electoral votes in 1960 to 20 states with 163 electoral votes in 2004.

These changes have a direct impact on candidate behavior and voter participation, particularly with the modern era's precise methods of polling and marketing that allow campaigns to focus on narrow slices of the electorate. In August 2004, President George W. Bush's campaign strategist Matthew Dowd remarked that the campaign had not polled outside of the 18 closest states in more than two years. Despite having more resources than any campaign in history, Dowd knew his candidate didn't need to waste a dime on learning the views of most Americans. A cursory look at John Kerry's campaign itinerary during the general election suggests that his campaign also focused exclusively on the same battleground states. As a result, the interests and opinions of the bulk of “second-class” Americans living in what this report terms “spectator states” were only addressed if they happened to coincide with those of the “first-class” Americans living in the states where their participation may affect the outcome of the election.

The trends behind this two-tier democracy show every indication of continuing to exacerbate these divisions. Many Americans would like to see the parties break out of their

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narrow focus on a handful of swing states and instead build national unity by seeking votes around the nation, in “red” and “blue” states alike. But unless we establish a national vote for president, those hopes are in vain. The partisan realignment responsible for increasing the division between first-class Americans in battleground states and second-class Americans in spectator states shows few signs of changing any time soon, and the stakes in winning the presidency are too high for major party candidates to “waste” resources on states that are simply not going to matter in a competitive election.

Indeed voting patterns across the country show less variation from election to election today than just 20 years ago, and majorities in most states are growing more solidly partisan. In a competitive election in 2008, therefore, the percentage of Americans likely to gain attention from presidential candidates in the general election almost certainly will be the lowest in the modern era.

As disturbing as this conclusion is in the short-term, there are even more serious long-term implications of our nation’s hardening partisan patterns and decreasing numbers of competitive states. New voter turnout analyses by scholars such as Trinity College’s Mark Franklin provide convincing evidence that the voting behavior of most citizens is established for life during the first three or four elections when they are eligible to vote.

With hundreds of millions of dollars for voter registration and mobilization now targeted on battleground states and virtually nothing on spectator states, a sharp difference in turnout based on where one lives all too easily could continue for the rest of this young generation’s lives. Improving turnout in presidential elections is like changing the direction of the Titanic – it happens all too slowly. A clear rift is already evident in the voting patterns of citizens in battleground and spectator states, with those in spectator states being much less likely to go to the polls. Without changes in this division of battleground and spectator states, the principle of equality will be undercut for decades. Second-class status will become entrenched for millions of young Americans who have the misfortune to live in one of the two-thirds of states that aren’t battlegrounds in presidential elections.

| THE 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: ACCURACY, TRENDS AND PARTISAN IMPLICATIONS

As detailed in our explanation of this report’s methodology (see next page), *The Shrinking Battleground* provides a valuable means to better understand the 2004 presidential election. Nationally, Republican George W. Bush won 50.73% of the popular vote to Democrat John Kerry’s 48.27%. After losing the popular vote by more a half-million votes in 2000 with 47.87%, Bush raised his vote share by nearly three percent in 2004 and defeated Kerry by more than three million votes in an election with the highest national election turnout since the 1960s.

But just because the 2004 elections escaped sustained national attention on a state’s controversial ballot count on the order of Florida in the 2000 elections should not disguise the fact that this election again was historically close, that the Ohio election process caused

#### A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY: UNDERSTANDING “STATE PARTISANSHIP”

*The Shrinking Battleground* bases its analysis on a state’s “partisanship,” which measures the degree to which a state’s division of votes between the two major parties is likely to deviate from the national partisan division. A state’s “Republican partisanship” is equal to the vote percentage that a Republican presidential candidate would likely receive in that state when the national popular vote was dead even.

The formula used to derive partisanship is straightforward, and can allow us to determine what would have happened if the national results in an election had been divided 50-50 – even if the election was in fact won by a landslide. For each major party candidate, we subtract the candidate’s national vote share from the candidate’s vote share in a particular state, and then find the average of those two numbers. A state’s partisanship based on the vote for one party’s results is follows this formula:

$$\textit{Partisanship} = [\textit{Candidate's \% of vote in state}] - [\textit{Candidate's \% of national vote}] + 50\%$$

Note that we present partisanship in this report on a scale of 0 to 100% from the perspective of the Republican Party, meaning that a state where no votes were cast for Republicans would have a partisanship of 0% and a state where all votes were cast for Republicans would have a partisanship of 100%. The Democratic Party’s partisanship in a given state would simply be the mirror of the Republican partisanship. A state listed as having a partisanship of 55% in this report has a Democratic partisanship of 45%.

For example, suppose the national vote was 51% Republican to 47% Democrat during a year in which the Republican won West Virginia 55%- 44%. The partisan advantage based on the Republican’s relative performance would be 4% Republican (55% minus 51%). The partisan advantage based on the Democratic candidate’s relative performance would be 3% Republican (44% minus 47%). The average of these two numbers gives the state a 3.5% Republican advantage and a partisanship of 53.5% Republican. In the next presidential race in West Virginia, we would expect the Republican to run 3.5% ahead of his or her national percentage. If the national vote were even, that would mean a West Virginia vote of 53.5% for the Republican. If the Republican won 57% nationally, he or she would likely win 60.5% in West Virginia.

Note that our model of partisanship does not provide a means to predict the national division between the major parties; rather, it is a relative measure of what is likely to happen in different states once we know the national results. Our partisanship measure has come to be a very reliable predictor of what will happen in any given state relative to the national average. Of the 51 contests in 2004, only two states were outside 4% of their projected partisanship: Alaska

and Vermont. (Both are small states where Green Party candidate Ralph Nader ran relatively well in 2000.) The great majority of states were within 2% of their 2000 partisanship.

Partisanship, of course, is not fixed permanently. Long-term changes in the distribution of the American population can affect the partisan balance in specific regions. Changes in platforms and stances of the major parties over time can increase or decrease their appeal in given areas of the country. Events specific to a given election (Bill Clinton doing relatively well in his home state of Arkansas in 1992, for example) can have an effect on partisanship.

But partisanship generally is stable over time, gradually evolving with the political outlook of the national electorate. In fact, partisan stability has increased in recent elections. Our conclusion from recent projection trends is that a century-long partisan realignment in the United States is nearing completion, with the red-blue map nearly perfectly reversed from the late-19th century. The parties seem to be settling deeper into their new bases of majority support, and the small partisanship shifts in recent elections have yet to indicate patterns of how these partisan divisions may change in the years ahead.

PARTISANSHIP BY STATE 1960-2004\*

State	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004
AL	43.0%	80.8%	47.3%	61.9%	44.4%	45.8%	52.0%	55.8%	56.2%	57.7%	57.7%	61.6%
AK	51.0%	47.3%	51.0%	50.2%	62.1%	59.1%	59.3%	57.8%	57.4%	63.0%	65.7%	61.5%
AZ	55.7%	51.0%	59.5%	54.1%	59.3%	61.3%	57.8%	56.7%	53.8%	53.1%	53.4%	54.0%
AR	46.5%	59.5%	50.0%	57.5%	36.0%	45.4%	52.0%	53.2%	43.9%	45.8%	53.0%	53.6%
CA	50.4%	50.0%	51.2%	45.2%	51.9%	53.5%	49.0%	47.9%	46.1%	47.8%	44.4%	43.8%
CO	54.9%	51.2%	54.2%	52.4%	56.7%	57.1%	55.1%	50.0%	50.7%	54.9%	54.4%	51.1%
CT	46.4%	54.2%	47.1%	47.6%	53.6%	50.0%	51.8%	48.7%	49.6%	45.2%	41.5%	43.6%
DE	49.3%	47.1%	51.4%	48.6%	48.3%	46.3%	50.8%	52.3%	48.7%	46.6%	43.7%	45.0%
DC	--	51.4%	17.8%	10.2%	18.4%	14.4%	5.1%	12.0%	15.0%	16.3%	12.2%	8.8%
FL	51.6%	17.8%	54.4%	60.5%	48.4%	53.6%	56.2%	57.3%	53.7%	51.4%	50.3%	51.3%
GA	37.5%	54.4%	51.5%	63.6%	34.1%	37.7%	51.1%	56.3%	52.5%	54.8%	56.1%	57.1%
HI	50.1%	51.5%	39.1%	50.9%	49.7%	44.2%	46.5%	41.4%	47.1%	41.6%	41.1%	44.4%
ID	53.9%	39.1%	62.7%	57.5%	62.4%	65.8%	63.9%	59.2%	59.6%	63.5%	70.0%	67.8%
IL	50.0%	62.7%	51.1%	47.7%	52.0%	49.1%	47.3%	47.2%	45.7%	45.5%	44.3%	43.6%
IN	55.3%	51.1%	55.8%	54.8%	54.8%	54.3%	52.9%	56.2%	55.8%	57.1%	58.1%	59.1%
IA	56.8%	55.8%	55.7%	47.0%	51.5%	51.5%	44.6%	41.0%	49.8%	49.1%	50.1%	49.1%
KS	60.8%	55.7%	59.7%	57.5%	54.8%	57.4%	57.7%	52.8%	55.4%	63.4%	60.7%	61.5%
KY	53.7%	59.7%	52.7%	52.7%	47.4%	45.9%	51.2%	52.0%	51.2%	53.8%	57.8%	58.7%
LA	39.2%	52.7%	47.3%	56.9%	48.1%	47.9%	52.2%	51.2%	50.5%	48.2%	54.1%	56.0%
ME	57.1%	47.3%	43.5%	49.9%	51.4%	46.8%	51.9%	51.9%	48.6%	43.8%	47.7%	44.3%
MD	46.5%	43.5%	48.8%	50.4%	48.0%	43.7%	43.6%	47.6%	45.7%	46.3%	42.1%	42.3%
MA	39.8%	48.8%	34.6%	33.9%	43.2%	45.2%	42.3%	42.2%	43.5%	37.6%	36.6%	36.2%
MI	49.1%	34.6%	46.3%	45.6%	53.7%	48.4%	50.4%	50.1%	49.1%	47.7%	47.7%	47.1%
MN	49.4%	46.3%	43.4%	41.2%	44.6%	43.2%	40.8%	42.6%	47.0%	46.2%	49.1%	47.0%
MS	44.2%	43.4%	44.9%	67.7%	50.1%	45.8%	53.1%	56.6%	57.2%	56.8%	58.7%	58.6%
MO	49.8%	44.9%	50.2%	50.7%	49.2%	48.5%	50.9%	48.1%	47.7%	51.1%	51.9%	52.4%
MT	51.3%	50.2%	54.2%	48.5%	54.7%	57.3%	52.0%	49.1%	51.5%	55.7%	62.8%	59.0%
NB	62.2%	54.2%	63.7%	58.9%	61.4%	64.9%	61.8%	56.6%	61.4%	63.6%	64.8%	65.4%
NV	48.9%	63.7%	53.7%	52.1%	53.2%	63.0%	57.8%	56.6%	51.5%	53.8%	52.0%	50.1%
NH	53.5%	53.7%	53.7%	53.0%	56.6%	59.8%	59.7%	59.2%	52.2%	49.3%	50.9%	48.1%
NJ	49.7%	53.7%	50.7%	50.8%	52.1%	51.8%	51.3%	53.0%	51.6%	45.3%	42.3%	45.4%
NM	49.7%	50.7%	55.7%	50.7%	52.2%	54.2%	51.1%	48.6%	48.5%	50.6%	50.2%	49.2%
NY	47.5%	55.7%	46.9%	47.1%	48.8%	46.5%	44.9%	44.1%	44.9%	39.8%	37.8%	39.6%
NC	48.0%	46.9%	54.8%	58.7%	45.5%	46.2%	52.9%	54.3%	53.2%	56.6%	56.7%	55.0%
ND	55.5%	54.8%	58.5%	51.6%	53.9%	64.1%	56.4%	52.7%	58.8%	57.7%	64.1%	62.5%
OH	53.4%	58.5%	50.8%	49.2%	50.9%	50.4%	50.3%	51.6%	51.9%	51.1%	52.0%	49.8%
OK	59.1%	50.8%	57.5%	63.3%	51.6%	57.9%	59.9%	54.5%	57.1%	58.2%	61.2%	64.3%
OR	52.7%	57.5%	52.7%	43.5%	51.1%	50.0%	47.0%	43.8%	47.8%	50.2%	50.0%	46.7%
PA	48.9%	52.7%	47.9%	48.4%	49.7%	48.7%	44.6%	47.3%	48.3%	49.7%	48.2%	47.5%
RI	36.5%	47.9%	33.5%	41.5%	45.4%	39.9%	42.7%	40.3%	43.8%	37.8%	35.7%	38.4%
SC	48.8%	33.5%	53.9%	59.8%	44.5%	45.9%	54.9%	58.1%	56.9%	57.3%	58.2%	57.3%
SD	58.3%	53.9%	55.3%	42.7%	51.7%	59.6%	54.1%	49.3%	54.5%	56.0%	61.6%	59.5%
TN	53.7%	55.3%	54.5%	57.4%	44.5%	45.3%	49.0%	54.3%	50.5%	53.1%	52.2%	55.9%
TX	49.1%	54.5%	49.0%	54.9%	49.4%	52.1%	54.6%	52.4%	54.5%	56.7%	60.9%	60.2%
UT	54.9%	49.0%	59.4%	59.0%	65.4%	71.2%	65.8%	63.2%	62.1%	64.8%	70.5%	71.5%
VT	58.7%	59.4%	54.3%	51.5%	56.6%	48.1%	49.5%	47.9%	44.9%	43.1%	45.3%	38.7%
VA	52.8%	54.3%	55.1%	57.3%	51.7%	51.5%	53.5%	56.4%	55.0%	55.2%	54.3%	52.9%
WA	51.3%	55.1%	48.6%	47.6%	52.9%	51.3%	47.4%	45.3%	47.1%	48.0%	47.5%	45.2%
WV	47.4%	48.6%	45.2%	52.0%	42.9%	42.9%	46.2%	43.8%	46.3%	46.9%	53.4%	55.2%
WI	51.9%	45.2%	51.5%	43.3%	50.2%	47.5%	45.5%	44.3%	50.6%	49.1%	50.2%	48.6%
WY	55.1%	51.5%	59.8%	57.7%	60.7%	62.5%	62.0%	57.4%	55.6%	60.7%	70.3%	68.7%

\*Partisanship is based on projected performance of a Republican presidential candidate in a dead-even national election

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS AND STATE PARTISANSHIP, 2000-2004

State	2000 - Bush 47.87% Gore 48.38%					2004 - Bush 50.73% Kerry 48.27%				
	Bush %	Gore %	Partisan-ship*	Expected '04 Based on '00	Deviation	Bush%	Kerry%	Partisanship*	Status**†	Partisanship change '00-'04
AL	56.5%	41.6%	57.7%	58.4%	4.0%	62.5%	36.8%	61.6%	Landslide R	3.9%
AK	58.6%	27.7%	65.7%	66.5%	-5.4%	61.1%	35.5%	61.5%	Landslide R	-4.2%
AZ	51.0%	44.7%	53.4%	54.1%	0.7%	54.9%	44.4%	54.0%	Lean R	0.6%
AR	51.3%	45.9%	53.0%	53.7%	0.6%	54.3%	44.5%	53.6%	Lean R	0.7%
CA	41.7%	53.4%	44.4%	44.1%	-0.7%	44.4%	54.3%	43.8%	Comfortable D	-0.6%
CO	50.8%	42.4%	54.4%	55.2%	-3.5%	51.7%	47.0%	51.1%	Toss-up R	-3.3%
CT	38.4%	55.9%	41.5%	42.3%	1.7%	43.9%	54.3%	43.6%	Comfortable D	2.1%
DE	41.9%	55.0%	43.7%	44.5%	1.3%	45.8%	53.3%	45.0%	Comfortable D	1.2%
DC	9.0%	85.2%	12.2%	12.9%	-3.5%	9.3%	89.2%	8.8%	Landslide D	-3.3%
FL	48.8%	48.8%	50.3%	51.0%	1.1%	52.1%	47.1%	51.3%	Toss-up R	1.0%
GA	54.7%	43.0%	56.1%	56.8%	1.1%	58.0%	41.4%	57.1%	Comfortable R	1.0%
HI	37.5%	55.8%	41.1%	41.8%	3.4%	45.3%	54.0%	44.4%	Comfortable D	3.3%
ID	67.2%	27.6%	70.0%	70.8%	-2.4%	68.4%	30.3%	67.8%	Landslide R	-2.2%
IL	42.6%	54.6%	44.3%	45.0%	-0.5%	44.5%	54.8%	43.6%	Comfortable D	-0.7%
IN	56.6%	41.0%	58.1%	58.8%	1.1%	59.9%	39.3%	59.1%	Landslide R	1.0%
IA	48.2%	48.5%	50.1%	50.8%	-0.9%	49.9%	49.2%	49.1%	Toss-up D	-1.0%
KS	58.0%	37.2%	60.7%	61.4%	0.6%	62.0%	36.6%	61.5%	Landslide R	0.8%
KY	56.5%	41.4%	57.8%	58.6%	1.0%	59.6%	39.7%	58.7%	Landslide R	0.9%
LA	52.6%	44.9%	54.1%	54.8%	1.9%	56.7%	42.2%	56.0%	Comfortable R	1.9%
ME	44.0%	49.1%	47.7%	48.4%	-3.9%	44.6%	53.6%	44.3%	Comfortable D	-3.4%
MD	40.2%	56.6%	42.1%	42.8%	0.1%	42.9%	55.9%	42.3%	Comfortable D	0.2%
MA	32.5%	59.8%	36.6%	37.3%	-0.6%	36.8%	61.9%	36.2%	Comfortable D	-0.4%
MI	46.1%	51.3%	47.7%	48.4%	-0.6%	47.8%	51.2%	47.1%	Toss-up D	-0.6%
MN	45.5%	47.9%	49.1%	49.8%	-2.2%	47.6%	51.1%	47.0%	Toss-up D	-2.0%
MS	57.6%	40.7%	58.7%	59.5%	0.0%	59.5%	39.7%	58.6%	Landslide R	-0.1%
MO	50.4%	47.1%	51.9%	52.7%	0.6%	53.3%	46.1%	52.4%	Toss-up R	0.4%
MT	58.4%	33.4%	62.8%	63.5%	-4.5%	59.1%	38.6%	59.0%	Landslide R	-3.8%
NB	62.2%	33.3%	64.8%	65.5%	0.4%	65.9%	32.7%	65.4%	Landslide R	0.6%
NV	49.5%	46.0%	52.0%	52.8%	-2.3%	50.5%	47.9%	50.1%	Toss-up R	-2.0%
NH	48.1%	46.8%	50.9%	51.6%	-2.7%	48.9%	50.2%	48.1%	Toss-up D	-2.8%
NJ	40.3%	56.1%	42.3%	43.1%	3.2%	46.2%	52.9%	45.4%	Lean D	3.1%
NM	47.8%	47.9%	50.2%	51.0%	-1.1%	49.8%	49.0%	49.2%	Toss-up D	-1.1%
NY	55.2%	60.2%	37.8%	38.5%	1.6%	40.1%	58.4%	39.6%	Landslide D	1.9%
NC	56.0%	43.2%	56.7%	57.4%	-1.4%	56.0%	43.6%	55.0%	Comfortable R	-1.7%
ND	60.7%	33.1%	64.1%	64.8%	-1.9%	62.9%	35.5%	62.5%	Landslide R	-1.6%
OH	50.0%	46.5%	52.0%	52.7%	-1.9%	50.8%	48.7%	49.8%	Toss-up D	-2.2%
OK	60.3%	38.4%	61.2%	61.9%	3.6%	65.6%	34.4%	64.3%	Landslide R	3.1%
OR	46.5%	47.0%	50.0%	50.8%	-3.6%	47.2%	51.3%	46.7%	Lean D	-3.3%
PA	46.4%	50.6%	48.2%	48.9%	-0.5%	48.4%	50.9%	47.5%	Toss-up D	-0.7%
RI	31.9%	61.0%	35.7%	36.5%	2.2%	38.7%	59.4%	38.4%	Landslide D	2.7%
SC	56.8%	40.9%	58.2%	59.0%	-1.0%	58.0%	40.9%	57.3%	Comfortable R	-0.9%
SD	60.3%	37.6%	61.6%	62.4%	-2.4%	59.9%	38.4%	59.5%	Landslide R	-2.1%
TN	51.1%	47.3%	52.2%	52.9%	3.9%	56.8%	42.5%	55.9%	Comfortable R	3.7%
TX	59.3%	38.0%	60.9%	61.6%	-0.6%	61.1%	38.2%	60.2%	Landslide R	-0.7%
UT	66.8%	26.3%	70.5%	71.2%	0.3%	71.5%	26.0%	71.5%	Landslide R	1.0%
VT	40.7%	50.6%	45.3%	46.0%	-7.2%	38.8%	58.9%	38.7%	Landslide D	-6.6%
VA	52.5%	44.4%	54.3%	55.0%	-1.3%	53.7%	45.5%	52.9%	Toss-up R	-1.4%
WA	44.6%	50.2%	47.5%	48.2%	-2.6%	45.6%	52.8%	45.2%	Lean D	-2.3%
WV	51.9%	45.6%	53.4%	54.2%	1.9%	56.1%	43.2%	55.2%	Comfortable R	1.8%
WI	47.6%	47.8%	50.2%	50.9%	-1.6%	49.3%	49.7%	48.6%	Toss-up D	-1.6%
WY	67.8%	27.7%	70.3%	71.0%	-2.2%	68.9%	29.1%	68.7%	Landslide R	-1.6%

\*Partisanship based on projected Republican Performance \*\*Deviation from 50% - Landslide > 8%, Comfortable 5-8%, Toss-up 3-0%, Lean 5-3%, Toss-up 3-0%, † italicized reflects a change from '00

partisan bitterness, and that the narrow national division that has existed between the major parties since the end of the Cold War shows every indication of continuing. One measure of current partisan consistency was how closely the partisanship of states in 2000 tracked state partisanship in 2004. Of the presidential contests in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, only two states (the low-population states of Vermont and Alaska) changed their partisanship by more than 3.9%. Partisanship in 32 states stayed nearly the same, changing by 2% or less.

The summary charts on the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections and partisanship trends by state from 1960 to 2004 (see preceding pages) are important building blocks for our analysis. They reveal that the generally modest changes in partisanship (Democratic gains in 29 contests, Republicans in 22) had little impact on the results.

Of the changes affecting which states are or may become battlegrounds, most moved the affected state in the direction of being less competitive, rather than more. For example, the table below lists the 10 states where partisanship shifted the most for each party. Of those changes that had any impact on battleground status, five states (Louisiana, Maine, Oregon Tennessee, West Virginia) became notably less competitive. Only Colorado grew more competitive.

**TABLE 1: BIGGEST PRO-REPUBLICAN PARTISAN SHIFTS IN 2004 ELECTION**

<i>State</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>Gain</i>	<i>Analysis</i>
Alabama	57.72%	61.58%	3.86%	Shift from comfortable R to landslide R
Tennessee	52.19%	55.91%	3.71%	Shift from lean R to comfortable R
Hawaii	41.10%	44.40%	3.30%	Remains comfortable D
Oklahoma	61.20%	64.34%	3.14%	Remains landslide R
New Jersey	42.34%	45.43%	3.08%	Remains comfortable D
Rhode Island	35.72%	38.39%	2.67%	Remains landslide D
Connecticut	41.53%	43.59%	2.06%	Remain comfortable D
Louisiana	54.10%	56.02%	1.93%	Secures state as comfortable R
New York	37.77%	39.63%	1.86%	Remains landslide D
West Virginia	53.42%	55.20%	1.78%	Secures state as comfortable R

**TABLE 2: BIGGEST PRO-DEMOCRATIC PARTISAN SHIFTS IN 2004 ELECTION**

<i>State</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>Gain</i>	<i>Analysis</i>
Vermont	45.29%	38.70%	6.59%	Shifts from comfortable D to landslide D
Alaska	65.74%	61.54%	4.19%	Remains landslide R
Montana	62.80%	59.02%	3.78%	Remains comfortable R
Maine	47.70%	44.27%	3.43%	Shift from lean D to comfortable D
Oregon	50.04%	46.69%	3.35%	Shift from toss-up to comfortable D
Colorado	54.44%	51.11%	3.33%	Shift from comfortable D to toss-up R
Dist. of Columbia	12.16%	8.85%	3.31%	Exaggerates existing landslide D
New Hampshire	50.89%	48.09%	2.81%	Remains toss-up, now favoring D
Idaho	70.03%	67.83%	2.20%	Remains landslide R
Ohio	52.01%	49.82%	2.19%	Remains toss-up, now favoring D



In partisan terms, a close inspection of the 2004 elections provides one conclusion that may be counter-intuitive given the national results. In the most hotly contested battleground states, John Kerry's campaign did relatively well. While George Bush won the presidency in 2000 even though he lost the national popular vote by more than 500,000, our analysis suggests that he would have lost the 2004 election even if winning the national popular vote by as many as 425,000 votes. A reduction in Bush's national victory margin from 2.46% to 0.35% likely would have tipped Ohio toward John Kerry, along with Iowa and New Mexico, giving Kerry a 284 – 254 electoral vote victory.

Here is an analysis of the 13 closest states in 2004 and their partisan shifts:

**TABLE 3: SHIFTS IN GOP PARTISANSHIP IN 2004 ELECTION'S 13 CLOSEST STATES (WITHIN 47%- 53%)**

<i>State</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>Dem. gains</i>	<i>Rep. Gains</i>
Colorado	54.44%	51.11%	-3.33%	3.33%	
Florida	50.26%	51.27%	1.01%		1.01%
Iowa	50.10%	49.10%	-1.00%	1.00%	
Michigan	47.69%	47.06%	-0.63%	0.63%	
Minnesota	49.06%	47.03%	-2.03%	2.03%	
Missouri	51.93%	52.37%	0.44%		0.44%
Nevada	52.03%	50.07%	-1.97%	1.97%	
New Hampshire	50.89%	48.09%	-2.81%	2.81%	
New Mexico	50.23%	49.17%	-1.06%	1.06%	
Ohio	52.01%	49.82%	-2.19%	2.19%	
Pennsylvania	48.18%	47.52%	-0.66%	0.66%	
Virginia	54.28%	52.87%	-1.41%	1.41%	
Wisconsin	50.15%	48.58%	-1.57%	1.57%	
<b>Average</b>	<b>50.87%</b>	<b>49.54%</b>	<b>-1.33%</b>		

In these battlegrounds, Democrats improved their performance by 1.33%, on a per-state average, with gains in 11 of 13 states. This slight shift toward Democrats could have an impact on the 2008 elections. George Bush would have won 10 of these 13 hotly contested states in 2000 had the election been tied in the national popular vote, but in 2004 he would have won only five of these states in a nationally even election. The fact that Democrats did relatively better in battlegrounds than in the rest of the country suggests that the Democrats' campaign efforts centered on swing states were slightly more effective than those of the Republicans. It was George Bush's national advantage in voter preference that carried him to victory.

The Kerry campaign's relative success in battlegrounds thus helps explain why there were so few shifts in the Electoral College map. Indeed 47, of the 50 states and the District of Columbia awarded their electoral votes to parties exactly as they had done in 2000. The three states that shifted – New Hampshire (to Democrat), Iowa and New Mexico (to Republican) – were among the five most closely contested states in the 2000 election. A shift of just 18,774 votes in those states would have meant an exact repeat of the 2000 state-by-state election results. A shift of just 20,417 votes in Iowa, New Mexico and Nevada would have given the country an Electoral College tie and thrown the outcome of the race to the U.S. House of Representatives.

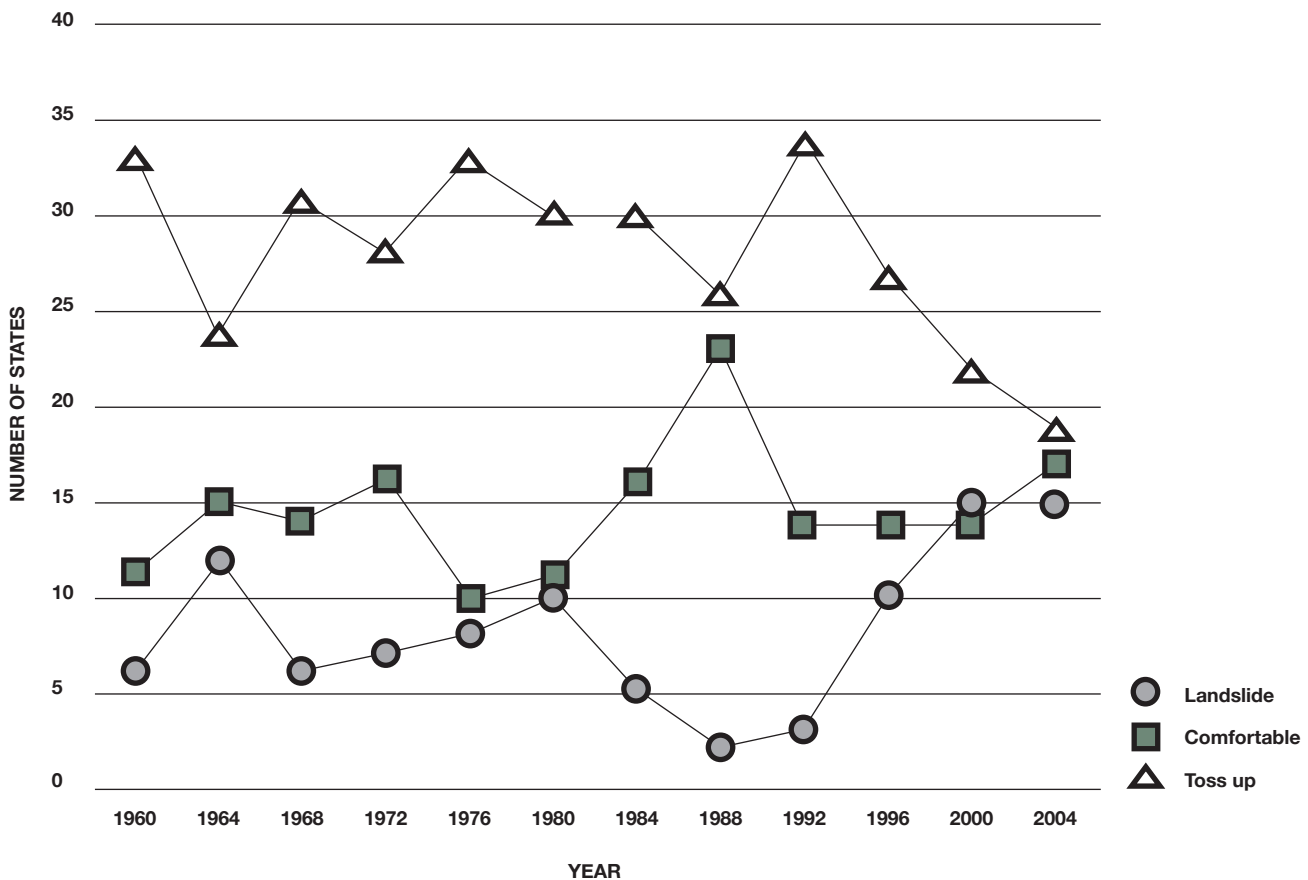
| SHRINKING BATTLEFIELDS AND THE HARDENING OF THE PARTISAN DIVIDE:  
*Elections 1960-2004*

On average, the last five electoral cycles have seen a deepening schism between Democratic and Republican states. This schism can be measured both by the number of states that have shifted from being relatively competitive to safe for one party and by the number of highly partisan states that have now become extremely different from the national average.

For the last four and a half decades, the difference in partisanship between the 10 most Republican and the 10 most Democratic states ranged between 18% and 22%. As recently as 1988, this disparity was only 16%. The past two elections, however, have seen an average spread of 27.5% in 2000, and 26.6% in 2004.

The rise in partisanship has been particularly pronounced for Republican states. In 1988, the 10 most Republican states had an average partisan bias of 58.2%. By 2004, the 10 most Republican states had average partisanship of 64.5%, with all 10 of these states having partisanship scores over 60%.

INCREASING PARTISANSHIP OF STATES OVER TIME



**TABLE 4: NUMBER OF STATES WITHIN PARTISANSHIP BRACKETS, 1960 TO 2004**

*(Note steady decline in competitive bracket 45-55)*

<i>Partisanship Scores</i>	<i>1960</i>	<i>1964</i>	<i>1968</i>	<i>1972</i>	<i>1976</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>1988</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>Average</i>
60-100	2	8	2	5	5	7	4	1	2	6	11	10	5
55-60	9	9	11	11	4	7	9	14	9	11	7	10	9
55-50	16	9	20	16	21	10	21	15	17	11	16	8	15
50-45	17	15	11	12	12	20	9	11	17	16	6	11	13
45-40	2	6	3	5	6	4	7	9	5	3	7	7	5
40-0	4	4	4	2	3	3	1	1	1	4	4	5	3

The result of this growing division is that less and less of the population lives in competitive states in a nationally competitive election. While at least half the states were within five percent of even partisanship in every election between 1960 and 1996, this number of potentially competitive states dropped to 22 in 2000 and to only 19 in 2004.

Between 1960 and 1992 an average of 20 states could be fairly classified as likely to be highly competitive in a nationally close election (meaning that a candidate from either major party could expect to win between 47% and 53%, as shown on the next page). Among these states typically were almost all of the nation’s most populous states and enough total states to represent a majority of American citizens.

In the last three elections cycles, however, there was a marked reduction in the number of competitive states, even as the national electorate as a whole has become more evenly divided. Whereas 22 states were competitive in the 1992 election, only 13 states were up for grabs when Clinton ran against Bob Dole in 1996. The number of contested states rebounded somewhat to 16 states in 2000 – still well below the number common in previous close elections without an incumbent candidate – then returned to 13 in 2004.

This represents the smallest number of battleground states in the entire course of our analysis since 1960. While no fewer than 319 electoral votes were located in battleground states in 1960 (more than enough to elect a President), only 159 electoral votes could reasonably be considered up for grabs in 2004. While a majority of electoral votes were located in swing states as recently as 1988, the total number of competitive electoral votes began to drop in 1992 to the point where the elections in 2000 and 2004 saw the number of competitive electoral votes fall below 200 for the first time in the post-1960 period of our analysis.

At the same time, the number of spectator states (ones where one party enjoys a partisanship advantage of at least 58%) has risen to unprecedented levels. Only five states with a total of 20 electoral votes were completely out of reach in 1992. The number of uncontested electoral votes skyrocketed to 20 states with 166 electoral votes in 2000 and 163 electoral votes in 2004. From 1960 to 1996, the total number of uncompetitive electoral votes had never exceeded 100. In 2004, for the first time, the number of completely uncompetitive electoral votes exceeded the number of electoral votes in competitive states.

**TABLE 5: SHIFTS IN NUMBERS OF SWING STATES AND UNCOMPETITIVE STATES, 1960 – 2004**  
*(Swing states are within 3.0% of a 50% partisanship; uncompetitive states are more than 8.0% from a 50% partisanship.)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Swing States</b>	<b>Electoral Votes</b>	<b>Uncompetitive States</b>	<b>Electoral Votes</b>
2004	13	159	20	163
2000	16	167	20	166
1996	13	206	13	90
1992	22	207	5	20
1988	21	272	8	40
1984	21	260	9	44
1980	15	221	13	58
1976	24	345	9	46
1972	22	235	9	46
1968	19	273	11	57
1964	17	204	13	100
1960	23	319	9	64

What’s behind this growth in the number of spectator states? Our research supports the common perception that our country is becoming more starkly divided along “red” and “blue” political lines, with Democrats becoming more clearly a party of the coasts and big cities and with Republicans dominating the interior. As these battle lines become increasingly well defined, the populations of rural states become less likely to vote Democrat while urban dwellers become equally less likely to vote Republican. This leaves a small minority of states, with a balance of rural and urban voters, as the true “toss-up” regions of the country.

It also appears likely that the number of competitive states will stabilize at present levels for the next several electoral cycles. While the exact number of battleground and spectator states varies from election to election, it typically takes a significant change in partisan makeup of a state’s population to have a substantial impact on its partisanship. Major changes can happen, but almost always over time – the South, for example, has nearly completely shifted from Democratic majorities to Republican majorities over the past 40 years – but there is no indication of comparable shifts currently underway. During the coming years, we are likely to continue to see a fairly deep, regional-based partisan schism between the major parties in which few states will be truly up for grabs in any election that is close nationally.

| PARTISAN IMPLICATIONS FOR THE 2008 ELECTIONS

Looking toward the 2008 presidential election, FairVote’s electoral model allows us to broadly project state-by-state voting outcomes based on historic voter behavior and the nationwide appeal of the major party candidates. While it is impossible to guess the exact popular vote total in the next election, we can build scenarios based on theoretical vote outcomes.

We base our 2008 election analysis on state partisanship and trends in the 2004 election. If John Kerry had captured exactly half of the popular vote in 2004, he would likely have become president. With three million more votes, Kerry would have slightly improved his performance in all the states, allowing him to narrowly carry Iowa, New Mexico, and Ohio, in addition to the states he already won. This would have given Democrats a 284-254 victory in the Electoral College. Under this scenario, Ohio would have remained the critical race of the election, with Kerry likely winning the statewide vote by 0.36 percentage points, slightly more than 20,000 votes.

We recognize that factors beyond party control have the capacity to move the electorate away from a 50%-50% division. But using our partisanship model and applying it to likely outcomes of the popular vote demonstrates a slight Electoral College bias to Democrats in tight elections while Republicans gain a larger Electoral College majority in comfortable wins.

<i>Republican with 52% of the Popular Vote Wins Electoral College 300-238</i>	<i>Republican with 55% of the Popular Vote Wins Electoral College 384-154</i>
<i>Democrat wins 52% of the Popular Vote Wins Electoral College 321-217</i>	<i>Democrat wins 55% of the Popular Vote Wins Electoral College 376-162</i>

Assuming another close presidential contest in 2008 – a plausible assumption, but one that our analytical model of partisanship does not address – our analysis suggests that the “big three states” of 2004 may well be reduced to “the big two”: Ohio and Florida. Pennsylvania might stay highly competitive, but no other big state appears likely to have a chance to be in play, and far more 2004 battleground states will move away from being toss-ups. If a Republican carries both Ohio and Florida, therefore, that candidate almost certainly will win. If a Democrat wins just one of these two states, that Democrat likely will win. Given that the major parties almost certainly have come to this same conclusion, how they position themselves to win those two states may well determine the presidency in 2008.

There are a handful of other states that will matter, although there likely will be fewer than 10 true battlegrounds in 2008. More than ever, the vast majority of Americans will be reduced to spectator status in the next election, looking on as candidates shower all their attention and money on a narrow slice of the American electorate.

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| REFORM IMPLICATIONS OF THE SHRINKING BATTLEGROUND: VOTER TURNOUT,  
ELECTION ADMINISTRATION, CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

The implications of our analysis of the shrinking battleground in American presidential elections go beyond which party might win the 2008 election – they go to the heart of American democracy. Consider its impact in four areas: voter participation, controversies over election administration, racial fairness and the Electoral College.

| *Voter Turnout Now and Over Time*

The current two-tier system of electing the president is creating a culture of political haves and have-nots that will likely affect voter participation rates in battleground states and spectator states for generations to come. With only a small number of battleground states, and a closely divided electorate, it becomes increasingly likely that future elections will be decided by some combination of the same states that decided the 2004 election.

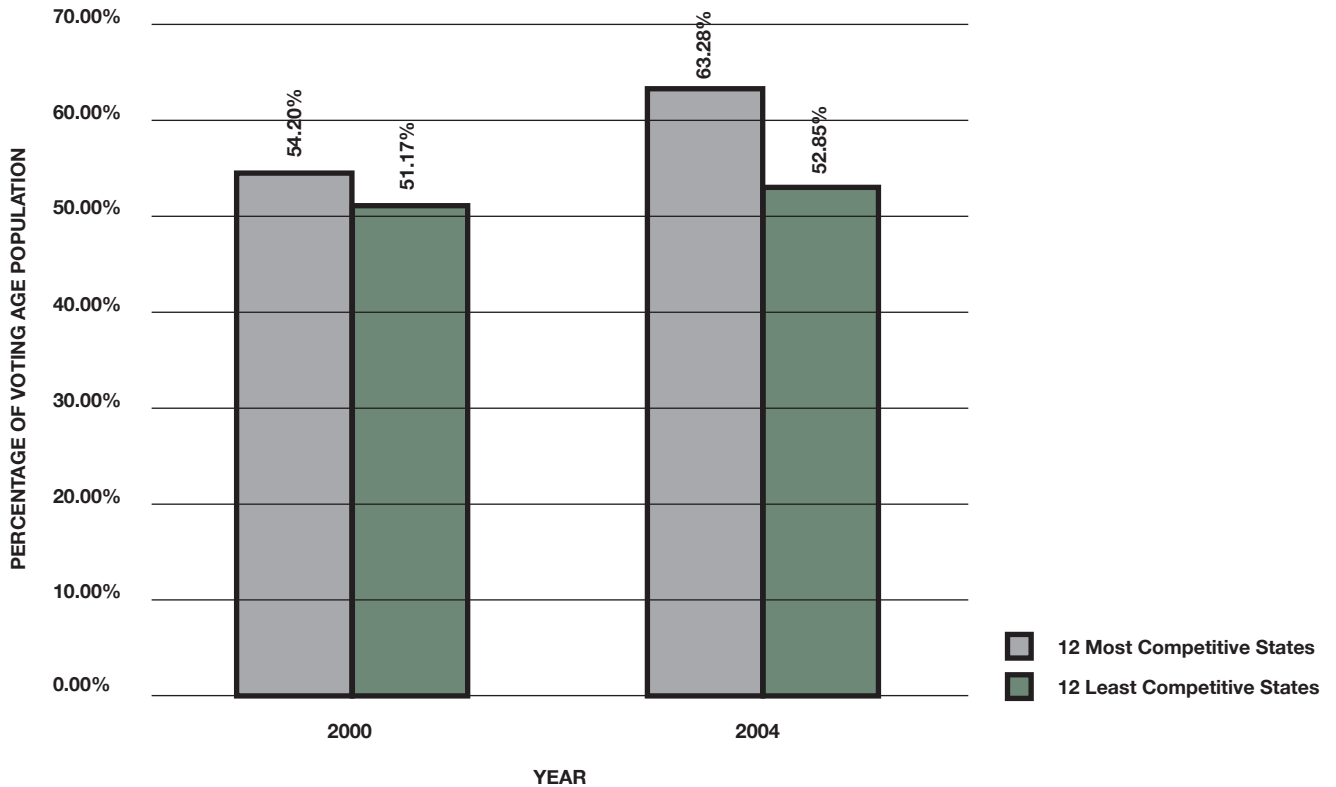
Thus, meaningful suffrage – the ability to cast a vote for a candidate without effective foreknowledge of the electoral outcome in that state – will be restricted to citizens in a small number of highly contentious states that represent perhaps a quarter of the nation’s electorate. The parties and their backers will spend hundreds of millions of dollars to register and mobilize these voters. The rest of the nation will be spectators to the election, ignored by the campaigns.

The impact on voter turnout is already pronounced. In the 12 most competitive states in 2004, turnout was 63%, up from 54% in 2000. In the 12 most lopsided states, turnout was 53%, up from 51% in 2000. The gap in turnout between these two state groupings soared from 3% to 10%. Given the financial resources certain to be targeted on mobilization in 2008 battlegrounds, expect this gap to widen.

Indeed the effect on turnout will likely go beyond just one or two elections. Young Americans becoming eligible to vote will be treated quite differently based on where they live, with far more intense efforts to register and mobilize newly eligible voters in battleground states. Mark Franklin’s recent seminal work on voter participation (*Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies Since 1945*) provides an analysis of voter turnout and factors affecting it in more than two dozen nations over several generations. One of his findings is that voting behavior is often established by what a person does in the first elections after becoming eligible to vote. The “imprint” of whether one votes in these elections typically lasts a lifetime.

We already can see dramatic evidence of the impact of our two-tiered system in youth participation rates. According to the University of Maryland-based organization CIRCLE, in 2000 a slim majority (51%) of young voters (age 18-29) turned out in battleground states, while only 38% of young voters in the rest of the country went to the polls. In 2004, the gap between youth turnout in battleground and non-competitive states widened. CIRCLE found that 64.4% of young people voted in 10 battleground states. Their turnout was only slightly less than the average swing state turnout of 66.1%, showing that young adults were mobilized

VOTER TURNOUT MUCH HIGHER IN BATTLEGROUND STATES



to vote where their votes clearly mattered. (Note that CIRCLE’s numbers are based on survey data. Surveys slightly inflate turnout numbers for all groups.)

The story was very different in the rest of the country. Only 47.6% of 18-29 year olds voted in the other 40 states and the District of Columbia. This is fully 17% below the turnout rates of youth voters in battleground states and much farther below the average turnout for older voters (58.9%) in these non-battleground states. Another election or two with this disparity will make it very likely that turnout in current non-battleground states will stay below turnout in current battleground states for decades. CIRCLE also provides information on the change in young voter turnout in each state since 18-year olds were first allowed to vote in 1972. While overall there was a 5% decrease in young voter (age 18-24) participation between 1972 and 2004, despite an upward blip in 2004, every one of the 10 states with the sharpest decrease is a solid spectator state, with five firmly Republican and five firmly Democrat in presidential elections (see table 6, next page).

TABLE 6. THE TEN STATES WITH THE SHARPEST DECLINE IN VOTER PARTICIPATION FROM 1972 TO 2004 FOR VOTERS AGE 18 TO 24.

<i>State</i>	<i>Change in youth turnout, 1972-2004</i>	<i>Partisan status, 2004</i>
California	-18% points	Comfortable D
Connecticut	-16% points	Comfortable D
Idaho	-17% points	Landslide R
Illinois	-17% points	Comfortable D
Indiana	-14% points	Landslide R
Kansas	-19% points	Landslide R
Massachusetts	-14% points	Landslide D
Nebraska	-19% points	Landslide R
New York	-12% points	Landslide D
Utah	-19% points	Landslide R
<b>National average</b>	<b>-5% points</b>	–

Even if by 2016 we were to get rid of the Electoral College and provide a fair, one-person, one-vote presidential election there will be a lot of catching up to do before we have equality in voter participation across state lines.

| *Election Administration Controversies*

The 2000 presidential election exposed just how antiquated and underfunded our system of registering voters, counting ballots and running elections had become in most states. In our dangerously decentralized system of protecting the right to vote, states typically delegate the conduct of elections to localities – meaning most important decisions about presidential elections are made separately by more than 13,000 local governments. In the wake of Florida’s election fiasco, Congress, for the first time in history, helped fund elections and established a national commission to set national standards. But the United States still falls short of establishing the kind of predictable election administration found in most democracies.

In an era of close presidential elections with continued use of the Electoral College, this kind of election administration is highly problematic. A national election would almost never be so close that the results wouldn’t be definitive. But with 51 separate contests deciding the presidency, the odds are increased that in every close election there will be narrow votes in enough states that the conduct of election will be controversial – and end up in courts. Even in 2004, in an election where George Bush won the popular vote by more than three million votes, the serious problems with Ohio’s elections – featuring battles over voter registration, provisional ballots, partisan observers in polling places and the shockingly long lines experienced by many voters – led to expensive litigation and suspicions that the election was not decided fairly. Given today’s hardening partisan divisions, expect even more controversy and litigation in our elections until we take the right to vote more seriously, increase funding for elections, and establish stronger national standards and clearer pre-election and post-election accountability.

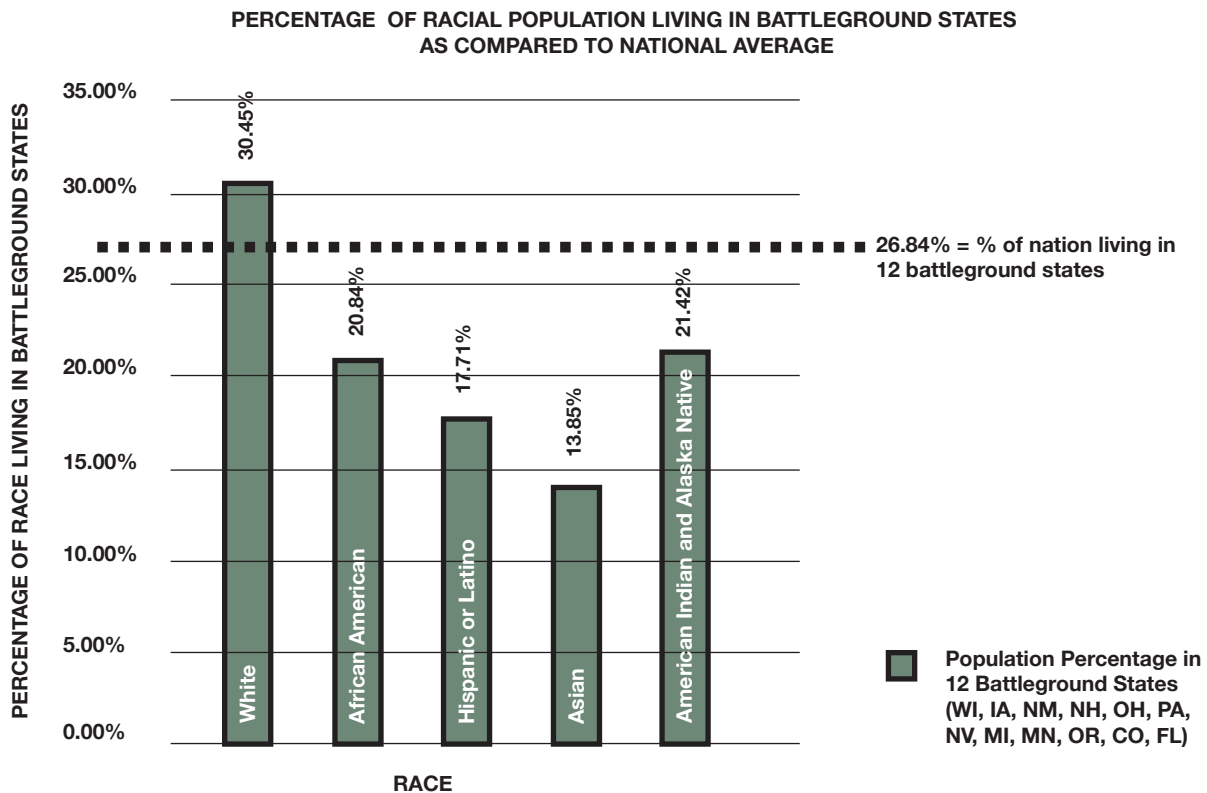


| *Racial Fairness*

The United States has a disturbing history of policy on race relations, from slavery to Jim Crow laws to having an Electoral College in the first place. Race remains a powder keg, regularly ignited in political battles and policy debates. With that history, it is essential we have a presidential election system that encourages fairness and does away with discrimination at the polls.

The current breakdown of battlegrounds and spectator states does the opposite. Consider that 27% of the nation's population lived in the twelve closest battleground states in the 2004 elections. If all racial groups were distributed evenly throughout the country, therefore, 27% of each of the nation's racial and ethnic groups would live in these states.

The reality is far different. Racial minorities are more likely to live in spectator states than white voters. While more than 30% of the nation's white population lives in the battleground states, just 21% of African Americans and Native Americans, 18% of Latinos and 14% of Asian Americans live in these states. In other words, three out of every 10 white Americans live in a battleground state, but less than two of every ten people of color share this opportunity.



The evolving Electoral College landscape represents a particularly dramatic shift for African American voters. In the 1976 presidential election, 73% of African Americans were in a classic swing voter position: they lived in highly competitive states (where the partisanship is 47.5 – 52.5%) in which African Americans made up at least 5% of the population. By 2000, that percentage of potential swing voters declined to 24%. In 2004, it fell to just 17%, with little suggesting an increase any time soon. While one could argue the Electoral College once created influence for African Americans, that clearly is not the case today (see table 7).

**TABLE 7. AFRICAN AMERICAN VOTERS LOSE INFLUENCE DRAMATICALLY AS BATTLEGROUND STATES DECLINE**

<i>1976</i>			
<i>State</i>	<i>State Pop</i>	<i>Black Pop</i>	<i>Black%</i>
CA	21,934,604	1,654,519	7.5
DE	592,753	90,895	15.3
FL	8,695,198	1,227,319	14.1
IL	11,360,331	1,578,579	13.9
LA	3,951,506	1,158,835	29.3
MD	4,172,112	866,374	20.8
MO	4,823,715	491,907	10.2
MS	2,430,110	861,428	35.4
NJ	7,344,079	877,071	12.2
NY	17,974,781	2,368,029	13.2
OH	10,752,843	1,026,052	9.5
PA	11,887,569	1,024,505	8.6
TX	12,903,392	1,556,091	12.1
VA	5,132,519	959,253	18.7
Diverse Swing State Total	123,955,512	15,740,857	<b>72.85%</b> of Black US Pop

<i>2004</i>			
<i>State</i>	<i>State Pop</i>	<i>Black Pop</i>	<i>Black%</i>
FL	4,738,509	624,165	15.1
MO	1,785,490	158,510	11.2
OH	9,438,648	1,304,888	11.7
PA	10,140,722	1,198,054	10.0
WI	4,713,705	307,042	5.7
Diverse Swing State Total	51,038,661	5,999,084	<b>17.25%</b> of Black US Pop

FairVote is unambiguous in its support for abolishing the Electoral College and establishing direct election of the president by majority vote, with elections decided according to the fundamental democratic principles of majority rule and one person, one vote.

But direct election is not the only constitutional amendment that a responsible Congress would be debating. Even Electoral College defenders have little excuse to maintain certain elements within the current structure that have every chance of causing major problems in the years ahead. Consider two examples that demand attention all the more in this time of close national elections.

**Faithless electors:** Voters have every right to expect electors in their state to represent their state's popular will. However, there remains no federal law preventing electors from voting for someone other than a state's popular choice, and laws in some states that seek to shield voters against such "faithless electors" may not be constitutional.

On a regular basis, some electors indeed disregard the will of their state's voters. In 2000, an elector from Washington, D.C. refused to vote for Al Gore. In 2004, an elector in Minnesota mistakenly voted for John Edwards instead of John Kerry, and a West Virginian Republican elector publicly considered not voting for George Bush. In the modern era, it is hard to imagine why we should risk the possibility that one elector could unilaterally reverse the outcome of a Presidential election. In this era of close elections, backers of the Electoral College are flirting with disaster if they do not pursue constitutional change to either bind electors or eliminate the office of electors and have electoral votes awarded automatically according to a state's rules.

**The method of choosing the president when the Electoral College deadlocks:** As long as the U.S. House of Representatives has an uneven number of Representatives or does not give the citizens of Washington, D.C. representation in the House, the total number of electoral votes will be even. An even number of electoral votes makes a tie in the Electoral College possible. When no candidate wins an Electoral College majority, the election is decided by the U.S. House of Representatives, with each state's delegation casting one vote.

Indeed we narrowly missed ties in the Electoral College in our two most recent elections. In 2004, a change of 18,776 votes (just 0.015% of national total) in Iowa, New Mexico, and Nevada would have resulted in a tie. In 2000, a change of 5,381 votes (0.0051% of national total) in four states (Florida, New Mexico, Wisconsin, and Iowa) would have resulted in a tie.

Third party and independent candidates also periodically tend to run well in the United States. In 2008, it will have been 16 years since Ross Perot won nearly a fifth of the national vote and 40 years since George Wallace won several southern states. In this era of tightly contested elections, comparable success by a third party or independent candidate in winning just a handful of electoral votes could deny any candidate an Electoral College majority.

Having an election decided in the House would likely be fiercely contested by whichever party lost, particularly if its candidate won the popular vote. There is simply no 21st century

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justification for the Constitution's provision that each state's House delegation casts one vote regardless of population. Thus, when Congress picks the president, 36 million Californians and 22 million Texans would have no more voice in the selection of the president than the less than half a million people of Wyoming. States with evenly divided partisan delegations would somehow need to choose a candidate. Consider what might have happened in 2000, when Al Gore won the popular vote, but Republicans controlled a majority of state delegations. Partisan bitterness in the wake of such a vote would likely dwarf anything this nation has experienced since the Civil War.

This rule for picking presidential winners is even harder to defend than faithless electors, yet may well come into play in upcoming elections given our nation's partisan division and potential third party candidacies. Electoral College defenders have every reason to develop a more equitable process to prevent such a constitutional crisis.

**Ensuring states allocate electors based on the people's vote:** Many Americans believe that the right to vote is established in the U.S. Constitution. However, the Constitution only provides for non-discrimination in voting on the basis of race, sex, and age in the 15th, 19th and 26th Amendments respectively. The Supreme Court majority in *Bush vs. Gore* underlined this point when stating: "The individual citizen has no federal constitutional right to vote for electors for the President of the United States." In early presidential elections, most states in fact did not hold presidential elections, instead allowing their state legislature to decide. As recently as 1876, Colorado's legislature awarded all of its electors to Rutherford B. Hayes without holding an election, helping to overturn Samuel Tilden's comfortable win in the national popular vote.

Even supporters of the Electoral College should be uncomfortable with the prospect of state legislators canceling elections or ignoring the votes of the people. They should support a constitutional amendment requiring states to establish clear rules governing how electoral votes are allocated and requiring those rules to be based on popular votes cast in that state or in the nation as a whole.

#### | A NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE

FairVote's analysis in *The Shrinking Battleground* provides powerful evidence that the time has come for a renewal of the movement for direct popular election of the president that came so close to success in Congress in the late 1960's. In every election in this country we adhere to the principle of one person, one vote, except when it comes to the presidency. The Electoral College already has elected four second-place finishers, and a shift of less than 1% of the vote in several additional elections would have handed the presidency to candidates losing the popular vote.

The United States calls for spreading democracy throughout the world, yet our presidential system at home is terribly flawed. It undercuts basic democratic principles and entrenches a two-tier democracy with a minority of first-class citizens and a majority of second-class

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citizens. It leaves a majority of our young adults and a disproportionate share of our people of color shut out of opportunities to meaningfully engage in electing their national leader – a dangerous and divisive precedent for the future.

For more than fifty years the Gallup poll has shown that a large majority of Americans wants to abolish the Electoral College and adopt a straight, one-person, one-vote system of electing the president. A national popular vote for president, particularly one held under Australian-style instant runoff voting rules that ensure a majority winner in every election, would ensure that every vote is equally important, that candidates address regional issues everywhere, that campaigns reach for support into every corner of this vast country and that winners reflect the will of the people.

We call on Congress to address this report's disturbing findings and to prove that basic principles of democracy like equality, majority rule, and one-person, one-vote are as important to Americans as they should be to emerging democracies. Abolishing the Electoral College will help make the United States a modern democracy ready for today's complex times. The integrity and health of our democracy depend upon it.





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| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Who Picks the President?* was produced by FairVote's Presidential Elections Reform Program, headed by Christopher Pearson. The report was produced by Pearson and his FairVote colleagues Rob Richie and Adam Johnson.



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*Executive Summary* | WHO PICKS THE PRESIDENT?

*Who Picks the President?* provides information on where major party presidential campaigns and allied groups spent money on television ads and where the major party candidates for president and vice-president traveled in the peak season of the 2004 campaign. This data is combined into an “attention index” that measures a state’s relative attention on a per capita basis. The results show that voters in seven states received the bulk of the attention, receiving more than four times the attention they would have received if every voter were treated equally. Voters in an additional seven states received more attention than the national average, while voters in 37 states (counting the District of Columbia) received less attention than the national average, including 19 states that received no attention at all. Among key findings:

- 1 | The attention index for the 25th-highest ranked state, Tennessee, was 0.04 – meaning voters in the median state received 1/25th the attention of what they would have received if every voter were treated equally.
- 2 | In per capita terms, the states receiving the most attention were Iowa, Ohio and New Hampshire. In absolute terms, the three states were Ohio, Florida and Pennsylvania.
- 3 | 23 states had zero television ads, while just three states had more than 52% of all the ads shown during peak campaign season. Florida had 55,477 ads while California, New York and Texas had a combined total of only seven ads.
- 4 | The campaigns were very confident in targeting their efforts in the final weeks based on internal polling. For instance, Missouri was a hard-fought state in 2000, with George Bush winning by just 3%. But its attention index in 2004 was only 0.69. The campaigns paid even less attention to some other recently competitive states like Arkansas (at 0.11) and Louisiana (0.03).
- 5 | The campaigns gave small population states and medium sized states the least amount of attention. Analyzing states grouped by population, the median state in every grouping received less than a quarter of the attention received by the average voter nationally. Of the 18 smallest population states, 11 received absolutely no attention.
- 6 | The campaigns spent more than \$10 per vote in the peak season in New Mexico and Nevada. More than \$1 per vote was spent in 12 additional states. A nickel or less was spent per vote in 28 states, including less than a penny in 25 states.
- 7 | Looking at the ranking broken down by party shows only slight variation; the parties largely mirrored each other’s activities.

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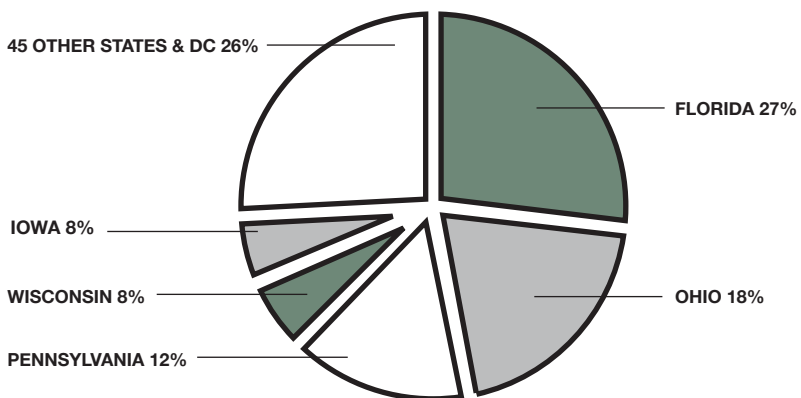
*The Campaigns' Answer in Visits and TV Ad Spending* | WHO PICKS THE PRESIDENT?

The election of the president of the United States is certainly the most watched American election, and perhaps the world's most watched political contest. No other office captures our imagination like the presidency. It has glamour and power. The position symbolizes America; after all, it is the one office elected by voters of all states in the nation.

But while everyone gets to vote for president, fewer and fewer Americans cast a meaningful ballot. They are trapped in a spectator state – one that sits on the sidelines while record amounts of money and attention are showered on neighbors in contested states, the so-called battleground states.

In 2004, Republican George W. Bush and Democrat John Kerry ran a close, hard-fought campaign for president. *Who Picks the President?* documents the allocation of campaign resources by the major party campaigns and interest groups from September 26th to November 2nd 2004 – the peak campaign season in the most expensive presidential campaign in history. While the conclusion that swing states are more heavily courted than the rest of the country is hardly shocking, the magnitude of the discrepancy between battleground and spectator states has not been debated. Our study also reveals how modern campaigns' polling techniques and sophisticated analysis of past voting patterns lead to very few competitive states by the last weeks of a modern presidential campaign.

*More money was spent advertising in Florida than 45 states and DC combined.*



| **THREE STATES DOMINATE**

The 2004 Presidential election was dominated by the three battleground states with the largest populations: Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Together these three states have just 14% of the American population but accounted for an absolute majority of the money spent on TV advertising and more than 45% of presidential and vice presidential candidate visits during the campaign's peak season. Per capita, however, the state that received the very most attention was Iowa, whose privileged position in the presidential nomination process was repeated in the general election. The third-ranked state was New Hampshire, also echoing

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its role in presidential primaries. Those small states were anomalies, however; on average, small states received far less attention per capita than bigger states.

Not surprisingly, after its key role in the 2000 election, Florida was the most intensively contested state in the 2004 election. 27% of all money spent on TV advertising went to Florida, as did 20% of all candidate visits. A quarter of all resources expended to influence the 2004 election thus were heaped on the 6% of the US population that lives in Florida. In comparative terms, more money was spent advertising in Florida than 45 states and DC combined. The combined spending of the campaigns and their 527 allies was less than 17 cents per voter in 31 states and the District of Columbia. It was more than \$6.25 per voter in the top seven states, including \$8.45 in Florida.

However, the sheer scale of the efforts dedicated to swinging Florida voters are obscured in hindsight by George Bush's relatively large (380,978 votes or 5%) margin of victory – making Florida only the 12th closest state in the nation in victory margin, as opposed to the closest in 2000. This suggests that Ohio – with a 2.1% victory margin, the most competitive large state won by Bush – will be even more aggressively courted in 2008.

#### | BATTLEGROUND STATE FOCUS

The closest states by margin in the 2004 election – Wisconsin, Iowa, New Mexico, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Nevada, Michigan, Oregon, Colorado, and Florida – accounted for 92% of all candidate visits and an astonishing 96% of all TV expenditures during the last five and a half weeks of the election. But this list collectively only makes up 27% of the US population.

In contrast, the lowest ranking 25 states on our list, home to 51% of the population, received three visits from major candidates during peak season, and a paltry \$395,844 dollars in television ads. That's comparable to what two allied groups each spent in just one state (Florida) during the last *three days* of the election – with Swift Boat Veterans for Truth spending \$432,270 and the League of Conservation Voters \$340,022.

#### | WHERE STATES RANK

On a per capita basis the voters of Iowa were the most intensively courted citizens in the United States during the 2004 election. While candidates did not spend an especially large amount of money on advertising in Iowa, the state was visited 37 times in the last five weeks by major party candidates, the third largest total behind Florida (61 visits) and Ohio (48 visits). More than 12% of all candidate visits in the peak season were to Iowa, 12 times its share of the nation's population.

In terms of ads aired, Florida had 55,477 ads, Ohio 44,131 and Pennsylvania 30,228. Together they had 52% of all the ads aired. New Hampshire, with only two U.S. House seats, had 5,929 ads. In contrast, California, Texas, Illinois and New York – where 30% of the country lives and with a total of 135 U.S. House seats – had a total of seven ads. They were treated to just three campaign visits, all of which were almost certainly just to raise money or appear on national television programs.

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Illinois and Texas fall last in our ranking because they are the states with the largest populations that received no campaign attention. 17 other states were also completely ignored. In all, 28 states went without a visit from any of the four candidates and another nine had fewer than five visits. Only six states enjoyed more than 15 visits from the major candidates.

On the spending side, voters in 23 states did not see a single television ad: Texas experienced just one ad (\$127 worth) and another 11 states were deemed worth spending less than \$500,000 on. At the top end, 16 states received more than \$1 million in ads, and candidates and committees spent more than \$10 million in just six states. Of the states home to the top ten media markets, with 30% of American television viewers, ads were only aired in New York (six ads) and Pennsylvania (30,228 ads).

#### | THE CAMPAIGNS NARROW THE FIELD

Our data shows how focused the campaigns and their allies could be in the peak season. Even though 12 states were won by 5% or less, only seven stood out, receiving on average more than four times the national average (1.0) in our attention index. Seven others received an average of 1.83. The 37 remaining jurisdictions (including the District of Columbia) were home to 72% of the US population but had next to no attention.

#### | ALL CATEGORIES OF STATES LOSE OUT, BUT SMALL STATES THE MOST

Some suggest the current state-by-state, winner-take-all Electoral College system means candidates spend more attention on smaller states, but our data shows this is generally not true. We divided the states into size classes, and then compared the relative average attention in each group of states. If all states were treated in exact equality relative to population, each state would receive a measure of one in the attention index. Thus, any attention index number above 1.0 indicates relatively more attention than the national average, while less than 1.0 indicates less attention. Note that voters in large states are the only ones to receive more than the 1.0 national average, although the median state in every grouping of states is well below the national average. We found the following:

- 6 largest states (at least 21 electoral votes): index of 1.15 (mean) and 0.03 (median)
- 5 large states (15 to 20 electoral vote): index of 1.34 (mean) and 0.23 (median)
- 10 medium states (10 to 14 electoral votes): index of 0.87 (mean) and 0.14 (median)
- 12 small states (6 to 9 electoral votes): index of 0.98 (mean) and 0.035 (median)
- 18 smallest states (5 or fewer electoral votes): index of 0.87 (mean) and 0 (median)

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## | PARTY COMPARISONS

The major parties generally mirrored each other's activities. Among exceptions, Democrats made Maine their 10th highest state but Republicans gave it no attention, substituting Hawaii instead. Such small differences remain trivial when compared to the crushing attention both campaigns paid to just a few states.

## | INEQUALITY AND POLICY

In conclusion, one might ask whether campaign attention really matters. FairVote believes it is hardly fitting for most Americans to receive little, if any, attention in elections for our one national office. We are already seeing significant discrepancies in voter participation between battleground states and spectator states. In closely contested states participation rose by nearly 10% in 2004, compared to just 2% in spectator states. When we look at voters under 30 the discrepancy grows by a whopping 17%. We also believe there are and inevitably will be impacts on policy and attention because of electoral calculations by incumbent administrations. For example, consider that in the past two years Florida and Louisiana both experienced significant damage due to hurricanes. Could any differential treatment they received from the federal government in the wake of these disasters be tied to how much they matter in presidential elections? Louisiana's attention index was 0.03 in 2004, while Florida's index was fully 135 times greater at 4.05. Major party presidential candidates visited Florida 61 times in the peak season, but no candidate visited Louisiana.

We hope this report contributes to a dialogue about what it means to have most of the country ignored during the election of the president. Every four years we are asked to pay attention and choose our leaders. Shouldn't candidates be asked to pay a little attention to all of us?

### Methodology

All the data comes from cnn.com and pertains to the period from September 26th to November 2nd, 2004. Candidate visits include presidential and vice presidential candidates for both Democrats and Republicans. Home state visits for each of these four candidates were not tallied. TV ad data includes candidate expenditures and independent expenditures combined.

The formula uses two measures:

State visits/total visits in US = % of visits

State ad spending/total ad spending in US = % of ad \$

Ranking is calculated this way:

$(\% \text{ of visits} + \% \text{ of ad } \$) / 2 / \% \text{ of US Population in given state}$

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**GUIDE TO CHARTS AND GRAPHS | WHO PICKS THE PRESIDENT?**

On the following pages are summary graphs and charts on the 50 states and the District of Columbia:

**PAGE 37** | 2004 campaign Attention Index ranking – lists states based on TV ad expenses and campaign visits factored by population

**PAGE 38** | 2004 campaign Democrat Attention Index ranking – lists states based on TV ad expenses and campaign visits factored by population

**PAGE 39** | 2004 campaign Republican Attention Index ranking – lists states based on TV ad expenses and campaign visits factored by population

**PAGE 40** | Pie graph showing Attention Index – top 5 states vs. state population

**PAGE 40** | Pie graph showing Attention Index for all states

**PAGE 41** | Pie graph of campaign visits

**PAGE 41** | Pie graph of TV ad spending

**PAGE 42** | Ranking based on visits from major party candidates

**PAGE 43** | TV ad spending ranking for candidates and committees

**PAGE 44** | Total number of television ads per state

**PAGE 44** | TV ad spending by specific interest groups listed by state  
(*see [fairvote.org/whopicks](http://fairvote.org/whopicks)*)

**PAGE 45** | What a vote is worth based on ad spending per voter by state

2004 PEAK SEASON CAMPAIGN ATTENTION INDEX

Ranking	State	Money Spent	TV ad % spent in state	Visits	Visit % in state	Visit%+TV ad%/2	State Pop	% US Pop	Attention Index
1	Iowa	\$9,412,462	3.96%	37	12.71%	8.34%	2,954,451	1.01%	8.29
2	Ohio	\$47,258,086	19.90%	48	16.49%	18.20%	11,459,011	3.90%	4.66
3	New Hampshire	\$4,608,200	1.94%	6	2.06%	2.00%	1,299,500	0.44%	4.52
4	Wisconsin	\$14,468,062	6.09%	31	10.65%	8.37%	5,509,026	1.88%	4.46
5	New Mexico	\$8,096,270	3.41%	6	2.06%	2.74%	1,903,289	0.65%	4.22
6	Florida	\$64,280,557	27.07%	61	20.96%	24.02%	17,397,161	5.92%	4.05
7	Nevada	\$8,596,795	3.62%	7	2.41%	3.01%	2,334,771	0.80%	3.79
8	Pennsylvania	\$36,813,492	15.51%	23	7.90%	11.70%	12,406,292	4.22%	2.77
9	Minnesota	\$10,734,683	4.52%	14	4.81%	4.67%	5,100,958	1.74%	2.69
10	Colorado	\$7,015,486	2.95%	10	3.44%	3.20%	4,601,403	1.57%	2.04
11	Michigan	\$13,518,566	5.69%	19	6.53%	6.11%	10,112,620	3.44%	1.77
12	Maine	\$2,171,101	0.91%	1	0.34%	0.63%	1,317,253	0.45%	1.40
13	Oregon	\$2,280,367	0.96%	5	1.72%	1.34%	3,594,586	1.22%	1.09
14	West Virginia	\$2,213,110	0.93%	1	0.34%	0.64%	1,815,354	0.62%	1.03
15	Missouri	\$2,361,944	0.99%	5	1.72%	1.36%	5,754,618	1.96%	0.69
16	Hawaii	\$388,095	0.16%	1	0.34%	0.25%	1,262,840	0.43%	0.59
17	Arizona	\$104,186	0.04%	5	1.72%	0.88%	5,743,834	1.96%	0.45
18	New Jersey	\$0	0.00%	4	1.37%	0.69%	8,698,879	2.96%	0.23
19	Kansas	\$0	0.00%	1	0.34%	0.17%	2,735,502	0.93%	0.18
20	Massachusetts	\$0	0.00%	2	0.69%	0.34%	6,416,505	2.19%	0.16
21	Washington	\$1,198,882	0.50%	0	0.00%	0.25%	6,203,788	2.11%	0.12
22	Arkansas	\$485,305	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.10%	2,752,629	0.94%	0.11
23	Maryland	\$0	0.00%	1	0.34%	0.17%	5,558,058	1.89%	0.09
24	Oklahoma	\$235,485	0.10%	0	0.00%	0.05%	3,523,553	1.20%	0.04
25	Tennessee	\$356,774	0.15%	0	0.00%	0.08%	5,900,962	2.01%	0.04
26	North Carolina	\$431,899	0.18%	0	0.00%	0.09%	8,541,221	2.91%	0.03
27	California	\$0	0.00%	2	0.69%	0.34%	35,893,799	12.22%	0.03
28	Louisiana	\$203,093	0.09%	0	0.00%	0.04%	4,515,770	1.54%	0.03
29	New York	\$33,037	0.01%	1	0.34%	0.18%	19,227,088	6.55%	0.03
30	District of Columbia	\$33,311	0.01%	0	0.00%	0.01%	830,364	0.28%	0.02
31	Alabama	\$87,424	0.04%	0	0.00%	0.02%	4,530,182	1.54%	0.01
32	South Carolina	\$38,852	0.02%	0	0.00%	0.01%	4,198,068	1.43%	0.01
33	Wyoming	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	506,529	0.17%	0.00
34	Delaware	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	553,523	0.19%	0.00
35	Vermont	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	621,394	0.21%	0.00
36	North Dakota	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	634,366	0.22%	0.00
37	Alaska	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	655,435	0.22%	0.00
38	South Dakota	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	770,883	0.26%	0.00
39	Montana	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	926,865	0.32%	0.00
40	Rhode Island	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	1,080,632	0.37%	0.00
41	Idaho	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	1,393,262	0.47%	0.00
42	Nebraska	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	1,747,214	0.59%	0.00
43	Utah	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	2,389,039	0.81%	0.00
44	Mississippi	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	2,902,966	0.99%	0.00
45	Connecticut	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	3,503,604	1.19%	0.00
46	Kentucky	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	4,145,922	1.41%	0.00
47	Indiana	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	6,237,569	2.12%	0.00
48	Virginia	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	7,459,827	2.54%	0.00
49	Georgia	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	8,829,383	3.01%	0.00
50	Illinois	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	12,713,634	4.33%	0.00
51	Texas	\$127	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	22,490,022	7.66%	0.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$237,425,651</b>		<b>291</b>			<b>293,655,404</b>		<b>avg. 1.0</b>

2004 PEAK SEASON DEMOCRAT CAMPAIGN ATTENTION INDEX

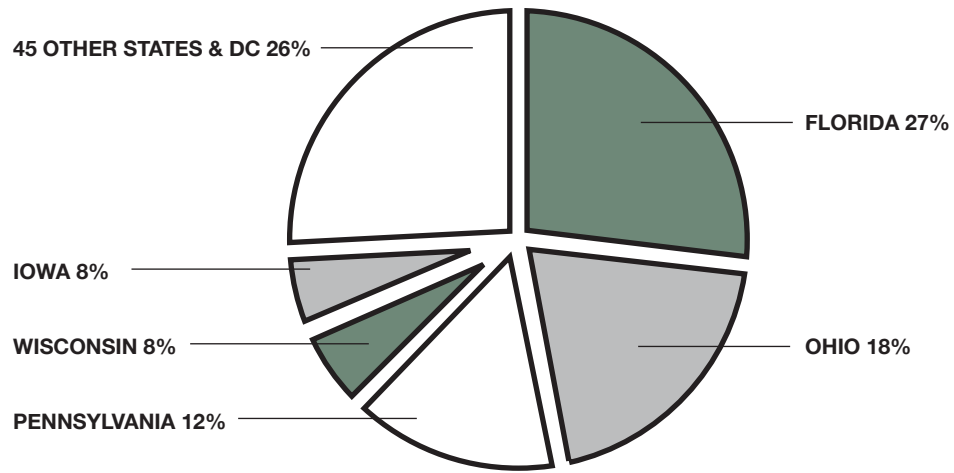
Ranking	State	Kerry Ad \$	D Interest Ad \$	D Total Ad \$	Ad % Spent in State	Total Visits	% in State	Visit%+Ad%/2	% US Pop	Attention Index
1	Iowa	\$2,839,191	\$2,704,134	\$5,543,325	4.15%	21	14.09%	9.12%	1.01%	9.06
2	Ohio	\$12,588,208	\$12,693,436	\$25,281,644	18.91%	28	18.79%	18.85%	3.90%	4.83
3	New Hampshire	\$878,735	\$1,178,736	\$2,057,471	1.54%	4	2.68%	2.11%	0.44%	4.77
4	New Mexico	\$2,898,550	\$1,626,620	\$4,525,170	3.38%	4	2.68%	3.03%	0.65%	4.68
5	Florida	\$18,956,635	\$18,566,221	\$37,522,856	28.06%	33	22.15%	25.10%	5.92%	4.24
6	Nevada	\$2,175,175	\$2,446,152	\$4,621,327	3.46%	3	2.01%	2.73%	0.80%	3.44
7	Wisconsin	\$4,433,616	\$3,840,534	\$8,274,150	6.19%	10	6.71%	6.45%	1.88%	3.44
8	Minnesota	\$3,800,174	\$2,711,443	\$6,511,617	4.87%	7	4.70%	4.78%	1.74%	2.75
9	Pennsylvania	\$11,721,975	\$7,904,781	\$19,626,756	14.68%	9	6.04%	10.36%	4.22%	2.45
10	Maine	\$899,581	\$650,251	\$1,548,832	1.16%	1	0.67%	0.91%	0.45%	2.04
11	Colorado	\$2,271,832	\$906,578	\$3,178,410	2.38%	4	2.68%	2.53%	1.57%	1.62
12	Michigan	\$5,709,922	\$1,841,380	\$7,551,302	5.65%	7	4.70%	5.17%	3.44%	1.50
13	Oregon	\$1,180,927	\$44,987	\$1,225,914	0.92%	4	2.68%	1.80%	1.22%	1.47
14	Missouri	\$0	\$1,965,989	\$1,965,989	1.47%	3	2.01%	1.74%	1.96%	0.89
15	West Virginia	\$738,162	\$572,141	\$1,310,303	0.98%	0	0.00%	0.49%	0.62%	0.79
16	Kansas	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	1	0.67%	0.34%	0.93%	0.36
17	Arizona	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	2	1.34%	0.67%	1.96%	0.34
18	Massachusetts	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	2	1.34%	0.67%	2.19%	0.31
19	Hawaii	\$27,198	\$270,218	\$297,416	0.22%	0	0.00%	0.11%	0.43%	0.26
20	New Jersey	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	2	1.34%	0.67%	2.96%	0.23
21	Washington	\$556,946	\$472,760	\$1,029,706	0.77%	0	0.00%	0.39%	2.11%	0.18
22	Maryland	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	1	0.67%	0.34%	1.89%	0.18
23	Arkansas	\$0	\$306,653	\$306,653	0.23%	0	0.00%	0.11%	0.94%	0.12
24	Oklahoma	\$0	\$285,985	\$285,985	0.21%	0	0.00%	0.11%	1.20%	0.09
25	Tennessee	\$0	\$336,554	\$336,554	0.25%	0	0.00%	0.13%	2.01%	0.06
26	California	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	2	1.34%	0.67%	12.22%	0.05
27	North Carolina	\$0	\$412,623	\$412,623	0.31%	0	0.00%	0.15%	2.91%	0.05
28	New York	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	1	0.67%	0.34%	6.55%	0.05
29	Louisiana	\$0	\$161,422	\$161,422	0.12%	0	0.00%	0.06%	1.54%	0.04
30	District of Columbia	\$2,886	\$8,272	\$11,158	0.01%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.19%	0.02
31	Alabama	\$0	\$89,141	\$89,141	0.07%	0	0.00%	0.03%	1.54%	0.02
32	South Carolina	\$0	\$38,852	\$38,852	0.03%	0	0.00%	0.01%	1.43%	0.01
33	Wyoming	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.17%	0.00
34	Vermont	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.21%	0.00
35	North Dakota	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.22%	0.00
36	Alaska	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.22%	0.00
37	South Dakota	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.26%	0.00
38	Delaware	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.28%	0.00
39	Montana	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.32%	0.00
40	Rhode Island	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.37%	0.00
41	Idaho	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.47%	0.00
42	Nebraska	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.59%	0.00
43	Utah	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.81%	0.00
44	Mississippi	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.99%	0.00
45	Connecticut	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	1.19%	0.00
46	Kentucky	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	1.41%	0.00
47	Indiana	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	2.12%	0.00
48	Virginia	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	2.54%	0.00
49	Georgia	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	3.01%	0.00
50	Illinois	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	4.33%	0.00
51	Texas	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	7.66%	0.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$71,678,713</b>	<b>\$62,035,863</b>	<b>\$133,714,576</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>avg. 1.0</b>



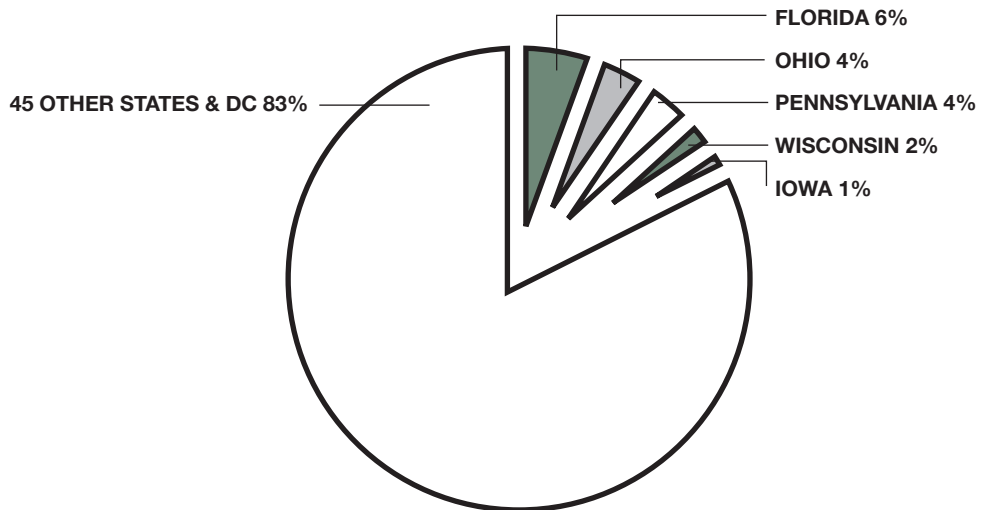
2004 PEAK SEASON REPUBLICAN CAMPAIGN ATTENTION INDEX

Ranking	State	Bush Ad \$	R Interests Ad \$	R Total Ad \$	Ad % Spent in State	Total Visits	% in State	Visit%+Ad%/2	% US Pop	Attention Index
1	Iowa	\$2,149,705	\$1,408,438	\$3,558,143	3.39%	16	10.81%	7.10%	1.01%	7.06
2	Wisconsin	\$3,362,036	\$2,778,751	\$6,140,787	5.85%	21	14.19%	10.02%	1.88%	5.34
3	Ohio	\$11,332,296	\$12,161,125	\$23,493,421	22.40%	20	13.51%	17.96%	3.90%	4.60
4	New Hampshire	\$1,172,541	\$1,345,258	\$2,517,799	2.40%	2	1.35%	1.88%	0.44%	4.24
5	Nevada	\$2,621,806	\$1,318,624	\$3,940,430	3.76%	4	2.70%	3.23%	0.80%	4.06
6	Florida	\$17,152,568	\$9,527,823	\$26,680,391	25.44%	28	18.92%	22.18%	5.92%	3.74
7	New Mexico	\$1,977,795	\$1,265,509	\$3,243,304	3.09%	2	1.35%	2.22%	0.65%	3.43
8	Pennsylvania	\$10,918,618	\$6,061,903	\$16,980,521	16.19%	14	9.46%	12.82%	4.22%	3.04
9	Colorado	\$2,367,200	\$1,527,083	\$3,894,283	3.71%	6	4.05%	3.88%	1.57%	2.48
10	Minnesota	\$2,907,487	\$1,094,978	\$4,002,465	3.82%	7	4.73%	4.27%	1.74%	2.46
11	Michigan	\$4,974,690	\$972,574	\$5,947,264	5.67%	12	8.11%	6.89%	3.44%	2.00
12	West Virginia	\$736,370	\$104,234	\$840,604	0.80%	1	0.68%	0.74%	0.62%	1.19
13	Hawaii	\$0	\$90,567	\$90,567	0.09%	1	0.68%	0.38%	0.43%	0.89
14	Missouri	\$147,910	\$1,360,468	\$1,508,378	1.44%	2	1.35%	1.39%	1.22%	0.71
15	Oregon	\$994,157	\$22,041	\$1,016,198	0.97%	1	0.68%	0.82%	1.22%	0.67
16	Arizona	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	3	2.03%	1.01%	1.96%	0.52
17	New Jersey	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	2	1.35%	0.88%	2.96%	0.23
18	Maryland	\$697,329	\$0	\$697,329	0.66%	0	0.00%	0.33%	1.89%	0.18
19	Arkansas	\$58,668	\$82,256	\$140,924	0.13%	0	0.00%	0.07%	0.94%	0.07
20	Washington	\$148,134	\$0	\$148,134	0.14%	0	0.00%	0.07%	2.11%	0.03
21	Louisiana	\$0	\$41,671	\$41,671	0.04%	0	0.00%	0.02%	1.54%	0.01
22	Wyoming	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.17%	0.00
23	District of Columbia	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.19%	0.00
24	Vermont	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.21%	0.00
25	North Dakota	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.22%	0.00
26	Alaska	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.22%	0.00
27	South Dakota	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.26%	0.00
28	Delaware	\$0	\$1,549	\$1,549	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.28%	0.00
29	Montana	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.32%	0.00
30	Rhode Island	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.37%	0.00
31	Maine	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.45%	0.00
32	Idaho	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.47%	0.00
33	Nebraska	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.59%	0.00
34	Utah	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.81%	0.00
35	Kansas	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%	0.00
36	Mississippi	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.99%	0.00
37	Connecticut	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	1.19%	0.00
38	Oklahoma	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	1.20%	0.00
39	Kentucky	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	1.41%	0.00
40	South Carolina	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	1.43%	0.00
41	Alabama	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	1.54%	0.00
42	Tennessee	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	2.01%	0.00
43	Indiana	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	2.12%	0.00
44	Massachusetts	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	2.19%	0.00
45	Virginia	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	2.54%	0.00
46	North Carolina	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	2.91%	0.00
47	Georgia	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	3.01%	0.00
48	Illinois	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	4.33%	0.00
49	New York	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	6.55%	0.00
50	Texas	\$127	\$0	\$127	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	7.66%	0.00
51	California	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	12.22%	0.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$63,719,437</b>	<b>\$41,164,852</b>	<b>\$104,884,289</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>95.95%</b>	<b>97.97%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>avg. 1.0</b>

**2004 PEAK SEASON CAMPAIGN ATTENTION INDEX - TOP 5 STATES VS. STATE POPULATION**



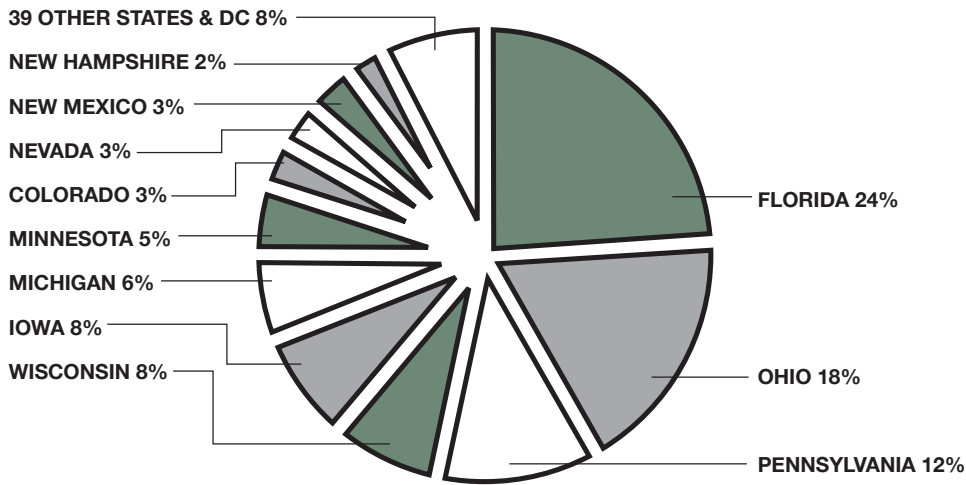
**TOP 5 STATES AS A PERCENTAGE OF US POPULATION**



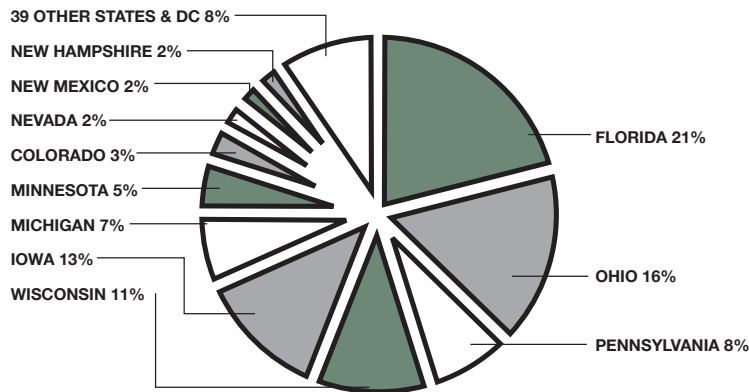
**45 OTHER STATES**

AL, AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, DC, GA, HI, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OK, OR, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA, WV, WY.

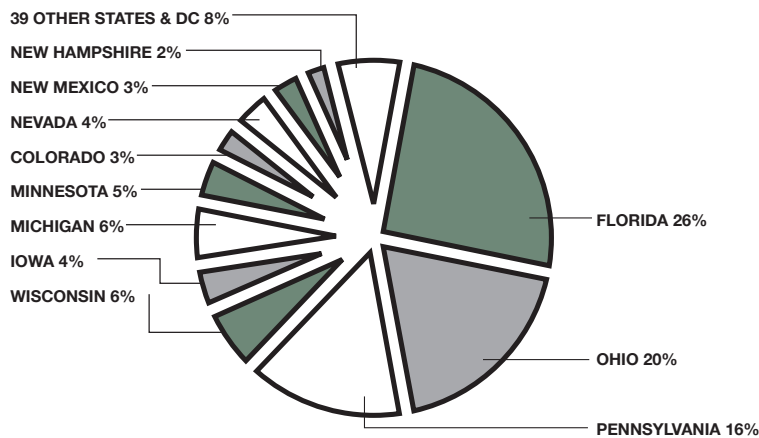
2004 PEAK SEASON CAMPAIGN ATTENTION INDEX FOR ALL STATES



CAMPAIGN VISITS



TV AD SPENDING



CANDIDATE VISITS

State	Busb	Cheney	R	Kerry	Edwards	D	Total Visits*
FL	16	12	28	13	20	33	61
OH	10	10	20	13	15	28	48
IA	10	6	16	7	14	21	37
WI	8	13	21	5	5	10	31
PA	7	7	14	3	6	9	23
MI	4	8	12	2	5	7	19
MN	3	4	7	2	5	7	14
CO	4	2	6	3	1	4	10
NV	2	2	4	3	3	3	7
DC	6		6			0	6
NH	2		2	3	1	4	6
NM		2	2	4		4	6
AZ	3		3	2		2	5
MO	2		2	2	1	3	5
OR	1		1		4	4	5
TX	4*		0			0	0
NJ	1	1	2		2	2	4
MA			0	2*	2	2	2
WY		3*	0			0	0
CA			0		2	2	2
NC			0		2*	0	0
HI		1	1			0	1
WV		1	1			0	1
ME			0		1	1	1
MD			0		1	1	1
KS			0		1	1	1
NY			0		1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>297</b>

\*not factored in final tally

AZ, NJ, KS, MA, MD, CA, NY, WY, DE, VT, ND, AK, SD, MT, RI, ID, NE, UT, MI, CT, KT, IN, VA, GA, IL are not listed because they received no visits during peak campaign season.

"R" indicates the total visits for Republicans George Bush and Dick Cheney. "D" indicates the total visits for Democrats John Kerry and John Edwards.

TV AD SPENDING BY GROUP

State	Bush	R Interest Groups	Kerry	D Interest Groups	Total
FL	\$17,152,568	\$9,527,823	\$18,956,635	\$18,566,221	\$64,203,247
OH	\$11,332,296	\$12,161,125	\$12,588,208	\$12,693,436	\$48,775,065
PA	\$10,918,618	\$6,061,903	\$11,721,975	\$7,904,781	\$36,607,277
WI	\$3,362,036	\$2,778,751	\$4,433,616	\$3,840,534	\$14,414,937
MI	\$4,974,690	\$972,574	\$5,709,922	\$1,841,380	\$13,498,566
MN	\$2,907,487	\$1,094,978	\$3,800,174	\$2,711,443	\$10,514,082
IA	\$2,149,705	\$1,408,438	\$2,839,191	\$2,704,134	\$9,101,468
NV	\$2,621,806	\$1,318,624	\$2,175,175	\$2,446,152	\$8,561,757
NM	\$1,977,795	\$1,265,509	\$2,898,550	\$1,626,620	\$7,768,474
CO	\$2,367,200	\$1,527,083	\$2,271,832	\$906,578	\$7,072,693
NH	\$1,172,541	\$1,345,258	\$878,735	\$1,178,736	\$4,575,270
MO	\$147,910	\$1,360,468	\$0	\$1,965,989	\$3,474,367
ME	\$697,329	\$0	\$898,581	\$650,251	\$2,246,161
OR	\$994,157	\$22,041	\$1,180,927	\$44,987	\$2,242,112
WV	\$736,370	\$104,234	\$738,162	\$572,141	\$2,150,907
WA	\$148,134	\$0	\$556,946	\$472,760	\$1,177,840
AR	\$58,668	\$82,256	\$0	\$306,653	\$447,577
NC	\$0	\$19,274	\$0	\$412,623	\$431,897
HI	\$0	\$90,567	\$27,198	\$270,218	\$387,983
TN	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$336,554	\$336,554
OK	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$285,985	\$285,985
LA	\$0	\$41,671	\$0	\$161,422	\$203,093
AL	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$89,141	\$89,141
SC	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$38,852	\$38,852
DC	\$0	\$1,549	\$2,886	\$8,272	\$12,707
TX	\$127	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$127
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$63,719,437</b>	<b>\$41,184,126</b>	<b>\$71,678,713</b>	<b>\$62,035,863</b>	<b>\$238,618,139</b>

NJ, KS, MA, MD, CA, WY, DE, VT, ND, AK, SD, MT, RI, ID, NE, UT, MI, CT, KT, IN, VA, GA, IL are not listed because they had no ads aired during the peak campaign season.

NUMBER OF TV ADS

State	Total	% of Total US Ads
Florida	55,477	22.25%
Ohio	44,131	17.70%
Pennsylvania	30,228	12.12%
Wisconsin	24,152	9.69%
Iowa	17,935	7.19%
Michigan	13,328	5.35%
New Mexico	12,141	4.87%
Colorado	9,751	3.91%
Nevada	8,252	3.31%
Minnesota	6,108	2.45%
New Hampshire	5,929	2.38%
West Virginia	5,923	2.38%
Maine	4,515	1.81%
Oregon	3,400	1.36%
Washington	1,763	0.71%
Missouri	1,687	0.68%
Hawaii	1,307	0.52%
North Carolina	703	0.28%
Louisiana	682	0.27%
Arkansas	615	0.25%
Oklahoma	575	0.23%
Tennessee	541	0.22%
Alabama	254	0.10%
South Carolina	96	0.04%
Arizona	95	0.04%
D. C.	13	0.01%
New York	6	0.00%
Texas	1	0.00%
Alaska	0	0.00%
California	0	0.00%
Connecticut	0	0.00%
Delaware	0	0.00%
Georgia	0	0.00%
Idaho	0	0.00%
Illinois	0	0.00%
Indiana	0	0.00%
Kansas	0	0.00%
Kentucky	0	0.00%
Maryland	0	0.00%
Massachusetts	0	0.00%
Mississippi	0	0.00%
Montana	0	0.00%
Nebraska	0	0.00%
New Jersey	0	0.00%
North Dakota	0	0.00%
Rhode Island	0	0.00%
South Dakota	0	0.00%
Utah	0	0.00%
Vermont	0	0.00%
Virginia	0	0.00%
Wyoming	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>249,354</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

TV AD SPENDING BY SPECIFIC INTEREST GROUPS LISTED BY STATE

*For full listing of spending by specific groups please download full report at*

[www.fairvote.org/whopicks](http://www.fairvote.org/whopicks)

## WHAT A VOTE IS WORTH

<i>State</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>TV Ad \$</i>	<i>Vote Value</i>
New Mexico	756,304	\$8,096,270	\$10.71
Nevada	829,587	\$8,596,795	\$10.36
Florida	7,609,810	\$64,280,557	\$8.45
Ohio	5,627,908	\$47,258,086	\$8.40
New Hampshire	677,738	\$4,608,200	\$6.80
Pennsylvania	5,769,590	\$36,813,492	\$6.38
Iowa	1,506,908	\$9,412,462	\$6.25
Wisconsin	2,997,007	\$14,468,062	\$4.83
Minnesota	2,828,387	\$10,734,683	\$3.80
Colorado	2,130,330	\$7,015,486	\$3.29
Maine	740,752	\$2,171,101	\$2.93
West Virginia	755,887	\$2,213,110	\$2.93
Michigan	4,839,252	\$13,518,566	\$2.79
Oregon	1,836,782	\$2,280,367	\$1.24
Hawaii	429,013	\$388,095	\$0.90
Missouri	2,731,364	\$2,361,944	\$0.86
Arkansas	1,054,945	\$485,305	\$0.46
Washington	2,859,084	\$1,198,882	\$0.42
Oklahoma	1,463,758	\$235,485	\$0.16
Tennessee	2,437,319	\$356,774	\$0.15
D. C.	227,586	\$33,311	\$0.15
North Carolina	3,501,007	\$431,899	\$0.12
Louisiana	1,943,106	\$203,093	\$0.10
Arizona	2,012,585	\$104,186	\$0.05
Alabama	1,883,449	\$87,424	\$0.05
South Carolina	1,617,730	\$38,852	\$0.02
New York	7,391,036	\$33,037	\$0.00
Texas	7,410,765	\$127	\$0.00
Alaska	312,598	\$0	\$0.00
California	12,419,857	\$0	\$0.00
Connecticut	1,578,769	\$0	\$0.00
Delaware	375,190	\$0	\$0.00
Georgia	3,301,875	\$0	\$0.00
Idaho	598,447	\$0	\$0.00
Illinois	5,274,322	\$0	\$0.00
Indiana	2,468,002	\$0	\$0.00
Kansas	1,187,756	\$0	\$0.00
Kentucky	1,795,860	\$0	\$0.00
Maryland	2,386,678	\$0	\$0.00
Massachusetts	2,912,388	\$0	\$0.00
Mississippi	1,152,149	\$0	\$0.00
Montana	450,445	\$0	\$0.00
Nebraska	778,186	\$0	\$0.00
New Jersey	3,611,691	\$0	\$0.00
North Dakota	312,833	\$0	\$0.00
Rhode Island	437,134	\$0	\$0.00
South Dakota	388,215	\$0	\$0.00
Utah	927,844	\$0	\$0.00
Vermont	312,309	\$0	\$0.00
Virginia	3,198,367	\$0	\$0.00
Wyoming	243,428	\$0	\$0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>122,293,332</b>	<b>\$237,425,651</b>	<b>\$1.94</b>









| **IS THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE NEARLY ALWAYS GOING TO ELECT THE POPULAR VOTE WINNER?**

*No.* Electoral College defenders dismiss “popular vote reversals” (meaning elections where the national popular vote winner loses) as abnormal aberrations. But one out of every 12 presidential elections since the Civil War has experienced a popular vote reversal. Several additional close calls including victories by Woodrow Wilson in 1916, Harry Truman in 1948, Richard Nixon in 1968, Jimmy Carter in 1976, and George Bush in 2004.

The problem of popular vote reversals is particularly serious in light of today’s closely divided electorate. No winning presidential candidate has reached 51% of the vote in the four elections since 1988, while Congress and state legislatures are in historically close balance. Although two-thirds of our presidential elections since 1824 have been won by more than 5%, typically with comfortable wins in the Electoral College, today’s partisan division makes it more instructive to see how the system regularly misfires in the remaining 15 elections. Three out of these close elections had popular vote reversals: in 1888 and the particularly pivotal elections of 1876 and 2000. There easily could have been more reversals. Indeed, a shift of fewer than 79,000 votes could have reversed the winner in five additional elections since World War II alone.

| **DOES THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE PROTECT AMERICAN STABILITY?**

*No.* In upcoming elections, one could just as well flip a coin as use the Electoral College to decide the winner if the popular vote margin is inside a still-comfortable half million votes. Al Gore lost the 2000 election despite that winning margin, and George Bush almost certainly would have lost even with a comparable popular vote edge in 2004. Furthermore, state-by-state election results where small shifts often can change who wins the national election are sure to lead to controversies and legal disputes where the courts must intervene as they did in 2000.

In 1948 and 1968, the regionally popular candidacies of Strom Thurmond and George Wallace led to them winning a number of electoral votes. A few state shifts would have put them in power to bargain after the election and give the presidency to whichever candidate was willing to make a deal – as indeed happened after the 1876 election, when Rutherford Hayes was willing to allow states to trample on civil rights in exchange for the White House.

Such opaque and controversial means to pick the president is hardly the means to bring the nation together after hotly contested elections where the result matters deeply to tens of millions of Americans. It is a mistake to assume that our nation’s relative stability is founded on such rules – just as our stability did not depend on indirect election of Senators or denying women suffrage.

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| **DOES THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE ENCOURAGE CANDIDATES TO CAMPAIGN IN MORE PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING BOTH LARGE AND SMALL STATES?**

*No.* Anyone who lived outside of a battleground state in 2004 could tell you how much they and their neighbors mattered in the 2004 presidential race. As FairVote's *Who Picks the President?* report clearly proves, the candidates and their backers completely ignored a majority of states and a majority of people. The 2004 election concentrated almost exclusively on a dozen states home to less than 28% of the electorate. These votes were regionally concentrated – 78 of the 142 electoral votes in the dozen closest states were located in states adjoining the Great Lakes.

While the Electoral College does prevent a candidate from attempting to maximize vote totals in their strongest areas, it also eliminates any incentive that a candidate might have to visit those areas at all. Similarly, they have no incentive to campaign in any states where they are sure to lose. The only states that matter are the ones that happen to be competitive.

| **DOES THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE HELP SMALL STATES?**

*No.* Small states theoretically get an Electoral College boost due to having more electors per capita, but that does not translate into any more influence. Consider that the category of states receiving the least attention in the 2004 election were the small states. Of the 13 smallest population states, only New Hampshire was a battleground and drew attention. The remaining twelve states were divided six and six for each party. *Who Picks the President?* shows how the 18 smallest population states received less attention on average than any other category of states in the campaign's peak season – with 11 of these 18 states indeed not having a single campaign visit by a major party presidential or vice-presidential candidate nor having a single television ad relating to the presidential race on their airwaves.

| **ISN'T IT TRUE THAT WITHOUT THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE, THE CANDIDATES WOULD ONLY CARE ABOUT CALIFORNIA, TEXAS, NEW YORK, AND BIG CITIES?**

*No.* The United States is a large nation. California, New York, and Texas are our largest population states, but even if a candidate won every single vote cast in those states, they would still have barely 25% of the vote, which is hardly more than Ross Perot won in 1992. Indeed, a candidate could win every single vote cast in the ten biggest states and still not have a majority. Because big states are geographically dispersed and every vote is equal, any candidate trying to win a majority of the national vote must try to win votes everywhere, and volunteers excited by that candidacy have every incentive to be active right in their own neighborhood, knowing that any new vote cast for their candidate will count the same as a vote cast anywhere else.

The same point applies to cities. One can see this point when examining closely contested campaigns in states. For example, John Kerry won the urban areas in Ohio in 2004, but George Bush's campaign mobilized many voters in the rural and "exurban" counties. When every vote counts the same, every vote matters.

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| **WOULD ABOLISHING THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE UNDERMINE FEDERALISM AND PROTECTION OF MINORITY RIGHTS?**

*No.* The question of state rights and federalism relates to the respective powers of the presidency, the Congress and the states rather than to the method of election for those offices. Indeed the concept of state power being protected by the Electoral College would only make sense if states regularly made distinct decisions about how to allocate electors – asserting their state interests as somehow different from other states. But in fact nearly all states allocate electoral votes to the statewide winner (with the only two exceptions also allocating all their votes to the statewide winner since changing their rule), making the Electoral College simply a bizarre electoral device, not any real expression of state differences.

The fact that most states today receive absolutely no attention from campaigns and that the big battleground states receive more attention from presidents and would-be presidents during the governing process than other states undermines the goals of federalism. If every vote counted equally, the people of every state would matter and their views and interests would matter. As it is, the only people to which the campaigns pay attention to are those who happen to live in competitive states. George Bush's campaign in 2004 was the best-funded in history, but it didn't waste a dime on polling the views of a single person in more than 30 states during the entire campaign. When voters don't matter, they have little power to protect their interests and the interests of their state.

| **WILL ABOLISHING THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE UNDERMINE THE TWO PARTY SYSTEM?**

*No.* No state of course is foolish enough to elect its governor with an Electoral College-type system, yet third parties are not achieving success in any of these states. The number of state legislators who are third party representatives consistently is in single digits, less than 0.1% of the overall total. That reality derives from the fact that the most important factor for third party success is not the Electoral College, but the use of winner-take-all elections in legislative races.

The Electoral College does far more to boost third parties that might have regional appeal. Given the close division between the national parties, it would only take success in two or three states for a third party candidate to be able to negotiate with the major parties under the Electoral College system – as Strom Thurmond and George Wallace could easily have been positioned to do in 1948 and 1968 respectively. In contrast, any third party or independent candidate able to win enough votes to capture the national popular vote would also have a potential to win enough states to capture the Electoral College.

| **DOESN'T THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE PROTECT US AGAINST THE TRAUMA AND UNCERTAINTY OF RECOUNTS?**

*No.* Despite claims made by Electoral College proponents that it exaggerates the margin of victory for the popular vote winner, one serious drawback of our current voting system

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– obvious to anyone who has paid attention to recent elections – is that it can greatly reduce the effective margin of victory for a presidential candidate. Some Electoral College proponents darkly warn against how a national popular vote will open up the need for a national recount in the event of a close election, but the closest margin in a national popular vote was far outside what might change with a recount. Since the 19th century, John Kennedy was the only popular vote winner to receive fewer than half a million more votes than his opponent, yet numerous election in that time could have changed with very small shifts of the vote in one or two states.

Even if we had to run a national recount, our nation should have a voting process that would allow us to do so. Other large democracies have developed the means to run modern elections where its people can trust the voting process to deliver accurate results. Surely the wealthiest nation on earth should run elections where we can conduct a national recount if necessary.

| **DOES THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE KEEP CAMPAIGNS FROM BEING JUST ONE GIANT TV COMMERCIAL?**

*No.* Advertising is going to be a part of modern politics, but the lesson of recent presidential races is that old-fashioned get-out-the-vote activities are essential to success. As long as there are Americans who are willing and able to get involved on the grassroots level there will be local-level campaigning in the United States. Candidates who can inspire such support will have a significant advantage.

| **DOES THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE'S TENDENCY TO MAGNIFY THE SIZE OF A POPULAR VOTE VICTORY PROVIDE A CLEARER MANDATE TO THE PRESIDENT?**

*No.* The average American does not, as a rule, pay much attention to the Electoral College, barely understanding how it functions and generally not liking it. Gubernatorial races are instructive: winners receive mandates, period, with big winners getting bigger mandates. Bill Clinton's big Electoral College margin in 1992 hardly gave him a resounding mandate that led Congress to go along with his policy goals on health care, energy, and urban development in 1993-1994.









By Chris Pearson and Ryan O'Donnell  
Published November 1st 2005 at TomPaine.com

Americans elect the leader of the free world. Makes you feel important, right?

Picking the president of the United States is a massive affair. Candidates spend hundreds of millions of dollars, engage voters with bus tours, town hall meetings and slick TV ads. As the country endures the dual crises of economic uncertainty and a war in Iraq, the political stakes have been higher than any other time in recent memory. People are making an important decision.

Unfortunately, only people in a few states cast a meaningful vote for president. After all, we know certain states are sure things. Massachusetts is bound to go blue—Utah, red. In closely contested years, that list of spectator states has grown to nearly 40. The drama, focus and spending of elections are reserved for a small club of states that could go either way. If there was ever any doubt, we now have hard data that shows just how distorted our presidential elections have become.

“Battleground state” was a term most Americans heard a lot during the last election, but chances are, your state was not one of them. In 2004, a whopping two-thirds of the states were unabashedly ignored. They didn't see a TV ad, get a visit from a candidate or experience much, if any, campaign presence. Voters in most of the country had absolutely no chance to air concerns about local issues.

On the other hand, if you were a resident of Ohio, where the Bush and Kerry campaigns, along with PACs, funneled an unprecedented \$47 million into TV advertising in October and November alone, or Florida, inundated with \$64 million during that period, you might have been tearing your hair out with all the love you got. The safe states, meanwhile, were treated like a cheap date. Their support was firmly banked years in advance. Bush's campaign may have been the richest in history, but it didn't waste a dime on polling a single person in some two-thirds of the nation.

Let's be honest: This is nothing less than a two-tiered system. Some voters have a meaningful say in who becomes president, and some might better satisfy their patriotic urges by staying home and watching “The West Wing” rather than showing up at the polls. The troubling thing is that we're not just seeing a short-term disparity. We're witnessing an enduring trend.

FairVote, in its report “The Shrinking Battleground,” shows how hardening partisan division has slashed the number of competitive states nearly in half over the past 45 years. In 1960, 24 states were in play, representing 319 electoral votes. Today, there are just 13 real battlegrounds heading into 2008, representing only 159 electoral votes. In the final weeks of campaigning, the number of swing states shrinks to low single-digits.

If we look at past presidential elections, we see that state votes have been drifting further and further away from the national vote in close elections. Rather than a close election (like Kennedy vs. Nixon in 1960) producing a large number of states with close votes, close elections of today (like 2000 and 2004) produce only a few. Safe states are getting safer, and are less and less likely to matter in the future.

What gives? Consumers get a steady outpour of nifty electronics to satisfy America's love of new-fangled gadgets. NASA can explore distant galaxies from telescopes attached to satellites and science can grow new tissues in the lab with stem cell technology. But invent a system that listens to all people as we elect the most powerful office in the world? Fuggetaboutit.

Our failure to devise a better system has real implications for America. A shrinking battleground means the debate suffers. Not only are the issues of concern to two-thirds of the country swept under the carpet, but in some cases, entire industries get the brush-off. Maybe Silicon Valley should relocate to Ohio.

The Electoral College is poison for voter turnout. Though participation grew between the last two presidential races, it grew unevenly. In the spectator states, it increased by 2 percent, while it rocketed up by 9 percent in battlegrounds. The difference in participation between young voters in spectator versus battleground states has risen to a disturbing 17 percent. That should scare us—civic participation is learned early on, a fact that holds true all over the world. If young people don't vote within their first three or four presidential elections, they are unlikely to start. Even so, you can't blame young voters in spectator states for picking up on the fact that their vote is meaningless.

It gets worse. Most African Americans and Latinos live in the South or big states like New York, Illinois or California. Back in the day, these were key swing areas and presidential campaigns paid attention. Today it's a different story. Under the Electoral College, white people are more likely to live in a battleground state than people of other races. Most states with big racial minority populations are shut out of the process.

If you ask the people, we should change all this. Opinion polls show overwhelming support for direct election of the president that has stayed strong for more than 50 years. Only a national popular election would ensure that voters are heard in every state, and guarantee that America gets a leader responsive to everyone, everywhere in our country. Innovation has always been part of our country's character. Isn't it time we figure out a way to expand this battleground?

*Chris Pearson is the director of the Presidential Elections Reform program at FairVote – a non-partisan, non-profit election reform group in Takoma Park, MD. Ryan O'Donnell is its communications director.*

**Chicago Tribune | PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS ALL BUT IGNORE ILLINOIS**

By John B. Anderson  
Published January 1st 2006 in the Chicago Tribune

Some of you might remember that I served Illinois as a Republican in Congress and then in 1980 I ran for president as an independent. It was one of the greatest experiences of my life, traveling around the nation speaking with voters of every stripe and color—from labor unions to business owners, single mothers to local Rotaries.

Today candidates for the presidency may feel that they crisscross the nation, but a careful study of their actual schedules reveals a much smaller itinerary. In the last five weeks of the 2004 election, 33 states were left without a visit from any of the major party presidential and vice presidential candidates. Nor did they run television ads for every voter to see; more was spent on ads in Florida alone than in 45 states and the District of Columbia combined.

A recent study by the organization I chair, FairVote, quantified the presidential campaign. In terms of campaign visits by the candidates on the national ticket and dollars spent in television markets for campaign ads, Illinois tied with Texas for dead last with a zero for both measures.

This means that the 12 million people in Illinois were not important enough to warrant any significant effort from presidential candidates and the votes of Illinois were simply written off.

Safe states like Illinois are literally left off the political map as the candidates battled in only a few lucky states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, Florida and New Hampshire.

The system is so skewed that Matthew Dowd, a campaign strategist for President Bush, admitted they only polled in 18 states for the two years leading up to the 2004 presidential election.

The opinions and concerns of Americans in 32 states simply were not considered by the president's campaign team.

What if the upcoming gubernatorial campaign in Illinois occurred in just 10 counties--if the people in the other 92 counties, including most of the biggest, never saw a candidate, received a single piece of campaign literature in the mail or had a knock on the door from a campaign volunteer?

If the campaign worked that way, I think most of us would agree the system was broken and in need of serious improvement.

So why do we elect the president of the United States this way?

A presidential election should leave every voter with a sense of our nationhood—i.e. we are not voting as states each with its own parochial interest but expressing the fact that in electing a president we are speaking with one voice as a nation.

When I was in Congress, I was proud to be joined by Democrats and Republicans alike, including Presidents Johnson, Nixon, Ford and Carter, in calling for presidential elections under the golden principle of one-person, one-vote that dictates every election but one in this country. My Illinois colleagues were particularly strong in making this case for a national presidential election. I trust my home state again can lead the way on this vital reform to our republic.

*John B. Anderson was a Republican representative in Congress from Rockford, IL (from 1961 to 1981). In 1980 he ran for president as an independent and currently chairs the board of FairVote – a non-partisan, non-profit election reform group based in Takoma Park, MD.*



| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This document was produced by FairVote's Presidential Elections Reform Program, headed by Christopher Pearson with assistance from Executive Director Rob Richie. For more information, contact:

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“In the land of the free, political space is shrinking – literally. Elections in the states and districts where most of us live are getting less competitive and more one-sided all the time. When that happens, politics – and democracy itself – shrivels and dies. The innovative, reality-based research in this collection is a giant first step toward recovery.”

Hendrik Hertzberg, Senior editor, *The New Yorker*,  
and author, *Politics: Observations & Arguments*  
He is a long-time FairVote board member.



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