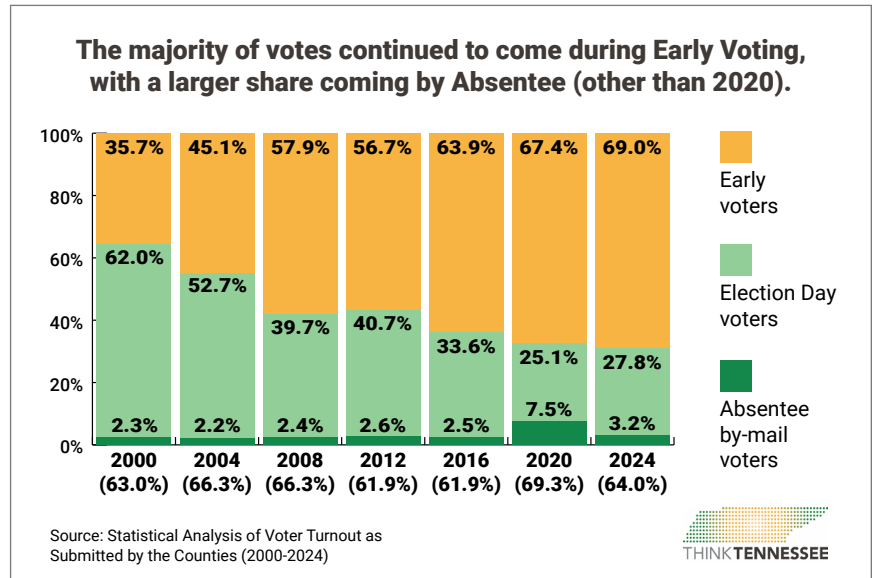
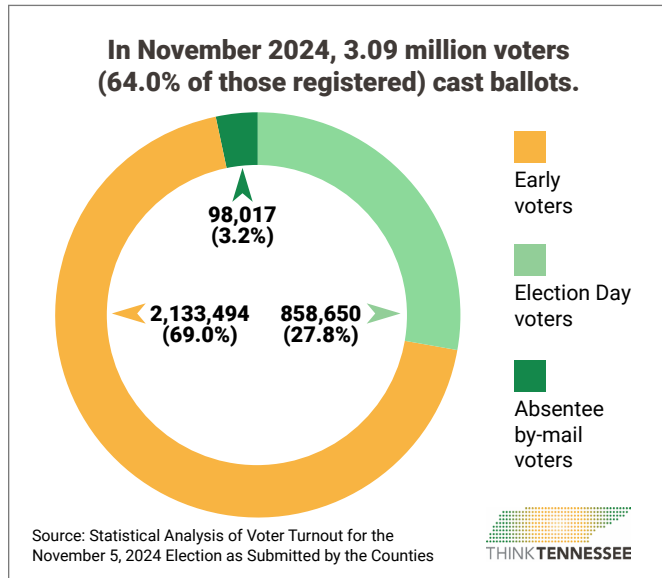


Election 2024 After Action Report

An analysis of Tennessee's 2024 election cycle related to voter turnout, choice, and experience

AFTER ACTION REPORT

In the November 2024 presidential election, **64.0% of registered Tennessee voters cast ballots**. This was lower than 2020's record (69.3%) but higher than the two previous presidential cycles in 2016 and 2012 (61.9% in both). Keeping with historical trends, the majority of votes were cast during Early Voting (69.0%) and the fewest by Absentee (3.2%). Though more votes were cast absentee than the historical average of 2.4% before 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic.






In this report, we analyze **voter turnout and choice** in the August 1st primary and November 5th general elections, **Tennessee voters' election experience**, and historical data to identify **voter turnout trends** over time.

Key Takeaways

- **Tennessee's elections remain secure.** No major issues were reported. East Tennessee counties even administered an election in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, with all but one affected county seeing higher turnout rates than the state average.
- **Voter turnout continues to trail most other states.** More registered voters participated in November than in the two presidential cycles prior to 2020's record-breaking year, but two early estimates of national turnout rank Tennessee 33rd and 45th.¹
- **Would-be voters continue to miss out on casting a ballot.** Election protection hotline calls continue to highlight gaps in knowledge related to our state's voting process, such as the 30-day voter registration deadline.
- **Presidential election cycles and contested races drive higher voter turnout.** Analysis of historical voter data shows that all else equal, voter participation is higher in presidential cycles than in midterms and when more than one candidate (especially two major party candidates) is on the ballot.

Inside the 2024 Election After Action Report

 <p>Part I</p>	<p>Voter Turnout and Choice</p> <p>Voter turnout rates and candidates on the ballot.</p>	 <p>Part II</p>	<p>Voter Experience</p> <p>A snapshot of the 2024 election cycle and hotline calls.</p>	 <p>Part III</p>	<p>Historical Trends</p> <p>Voter turnout trends over time.</p>
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Part I

Voter Turnout and Choice

November's turnout rate was lower than record-breaking 2020, but more Tennesseans than ever participated, and they had more choices on their ballot than in previous election cycles.

Turnout was historically low in August, shy of record-breaking in November, and still trails most states.

2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CYCLE

March 5: Presidential Preference Primary

August 1: State and Federal Primary*

November 5: General



President



1 U.S. Senator



All 9 U.S. House of Representatives



16 out of 33 Even-Numbered State Senate Seats



All 99 State House Seats

*and State and County General Election

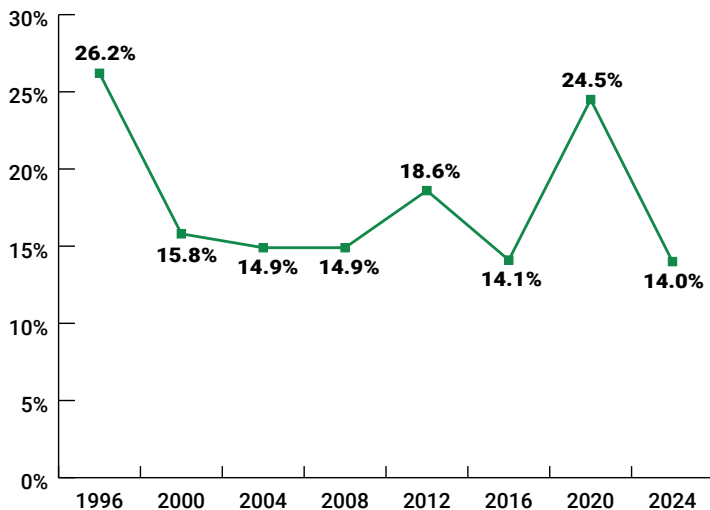
Fewer registered voters cast ballots in the August primary than in recent history.

In August, Tennesseans cast ballots for local races and selected party candidates for November's general elections for Congress and the state legislature. At **14.0% of registered voters**, voter turnout was the lowest for an August primary in a presidential election cycle since at least 1996.²

November turnout was lower than 2020's record but higher than other recent presidential cycles.

In November, **64.0% of registered Tennessee voters**—3.09 million out of 4.83 million registered—cast ballots.³ While this was the highest number of voters of any previous election⁴ (due to population growth), the turnout rate among registered voters was five percentage points below 2020's record turnout of 69.3% but higher than the previous presidential cycles in 2016 and 2012 (61.9% in both).⁵

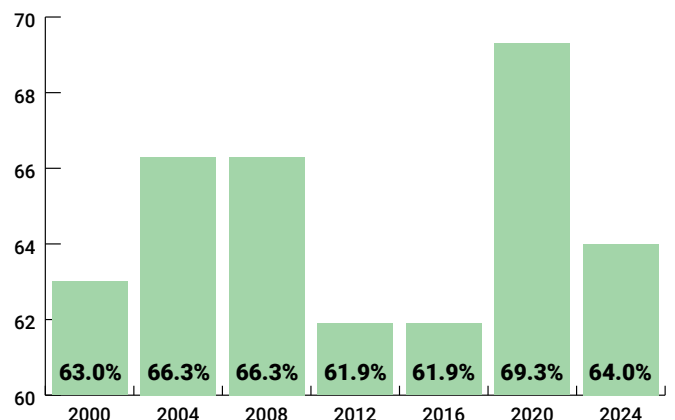
Voter turnout in August primaries was lower than in any presidential election year since at least 1996.



Source: Statistical Analysis of Voter Turnout as Submitted by the Counties (1996-2024)



November 2024 voter participation was lower than 2020 but higher than other recent years.

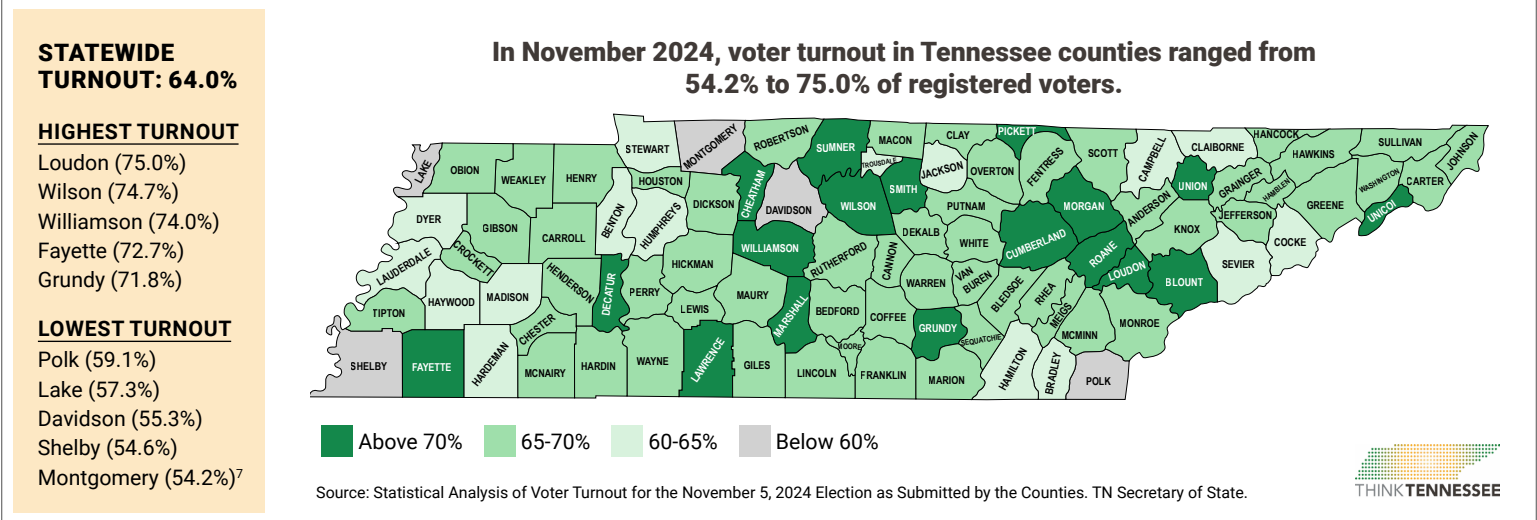


Voter Turnout (as a % of Registered Voters)

Source: Statistical Analysis of Voter Turnout as Submitted by the Counties (2000-2024)

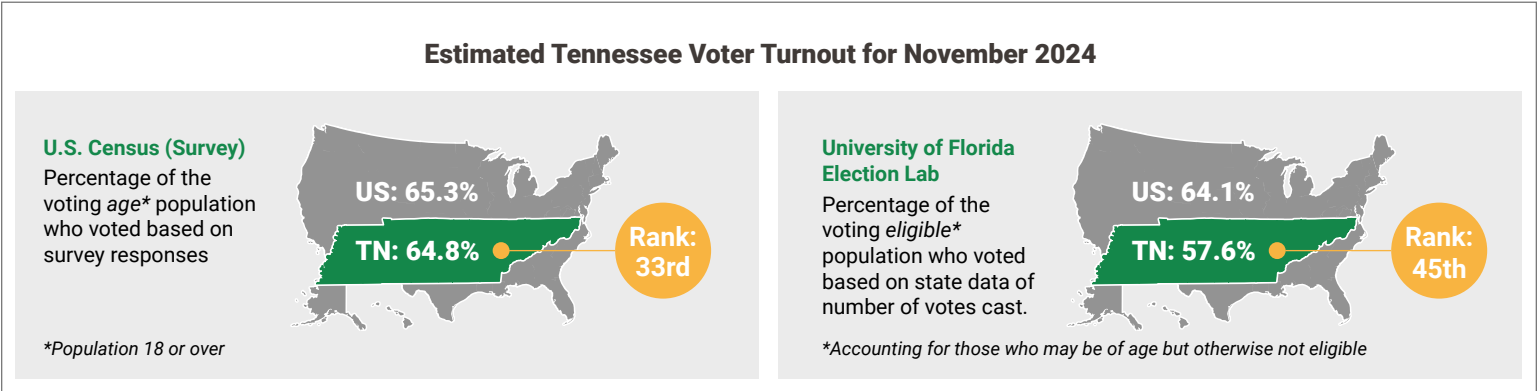


Most counties (81%) saw higher turnout rates than the state's average of 64.0%, with 18 seeing turnout of at least 70%.⁶



Tennessee voter turnout continues to trail most other states.

As we await data for our State of Our State Dashboard rankings, two additional data sources using different methodology show that Tennessee turnout continues to trail most other states.⁸



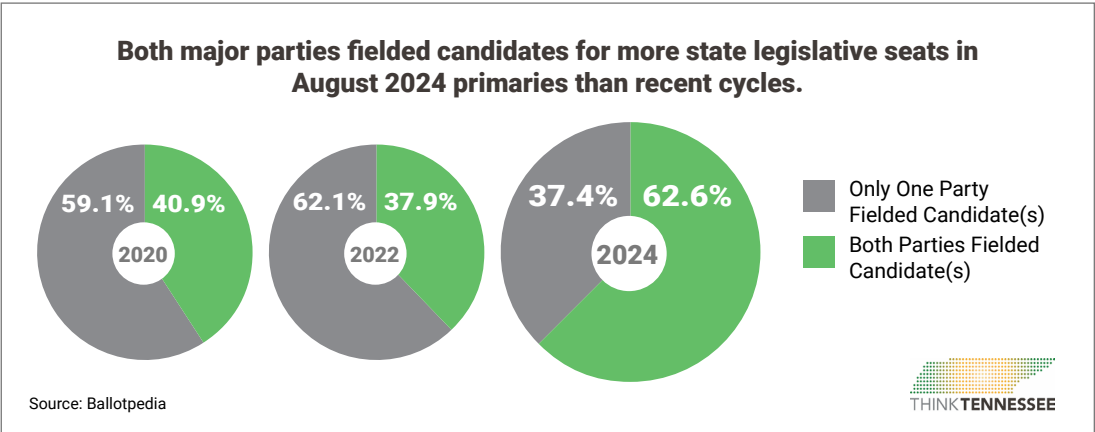
More candidates running meant more choices for voters, but few races were close.

With 115 state legislative (99 House and 16 Senate) and 10 congressional seats on the ballot in 2024, there were a total of 250 possible August primary races—two races, a Republican and a Democratic race, for each of the 125 seats.⁹

A candidate for both parties ran in more primary races for legislative seats than previous cycles.

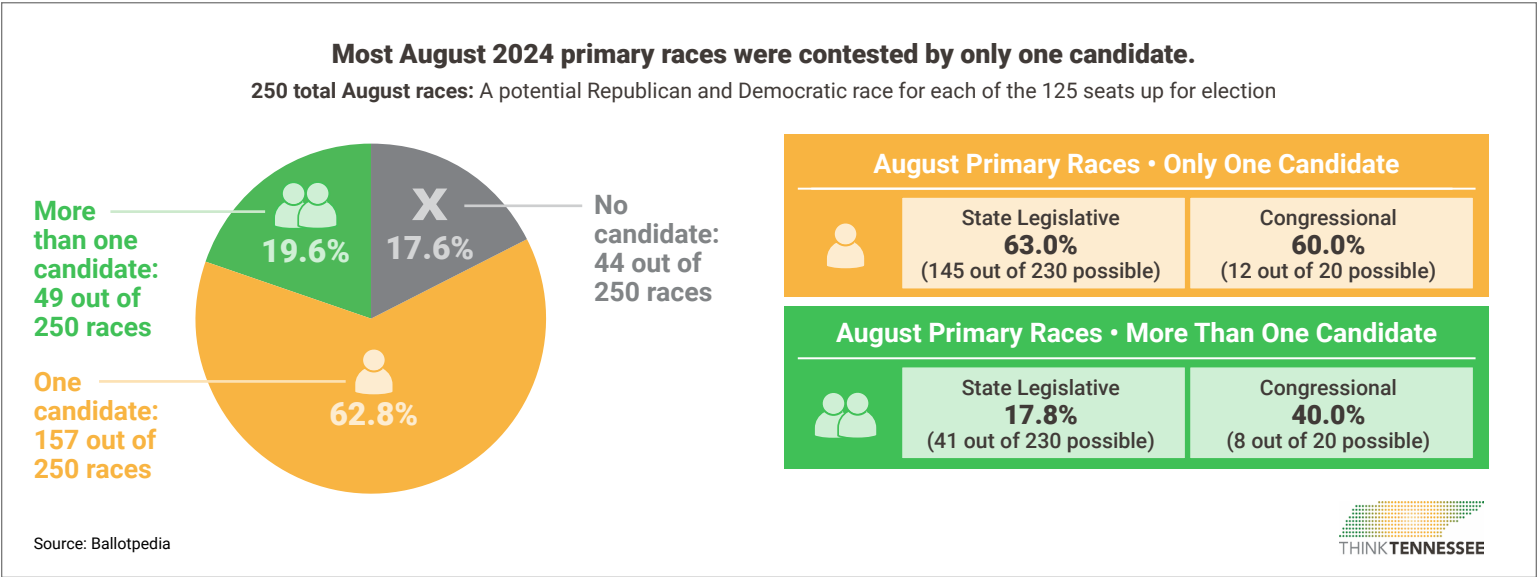
Both major parties fielded candidates for more state legislative seats in the August 2024 primaries than recent cycles.¹⁰

A Republican and Democratic candidate ran in **62.6% of state legislative seats** (72/115), giving more voters the opportunity to participate in the primaries than in the previous two election cycles.¹¹



Yet most August primary races featured only one candidate.

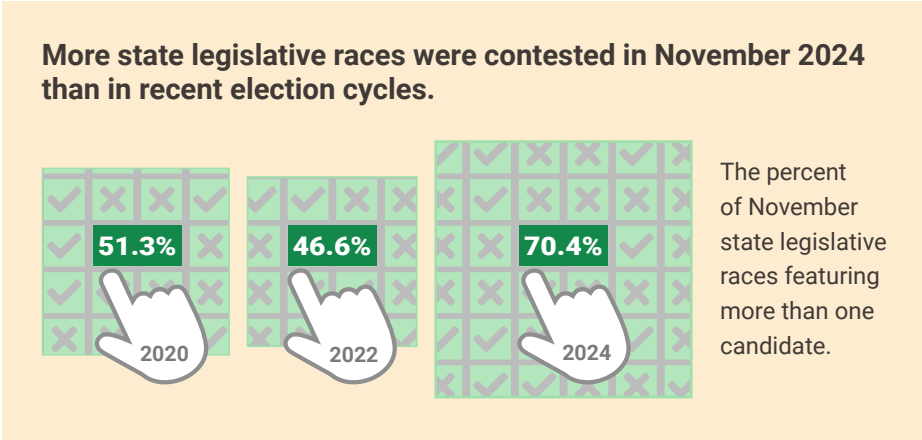
While more seats featured races by candidates for both parties, voters' choices after selecting a party ballot were limited as **62.8% of the 250 possible primary races were not contested**—they featured only one candidate. Just 19.6% of all races featured more than one candidate.¹²



With both parties contesting more seats in August, voters had more choices in November.

Because both parties fielded candidates in more August races, voters had more candidates on their ballot to choose from in November than in previous election cycles. **Of the 125 total races (state legislative and congressional) on the ballot, 72.8% (91 out of 125) were contested, featuring more than one candidate (including Independents).**¹³

The number of contested state legislative races (81 out of 115, or 70.4%) increased by 50% from 2022 and a little over a third from 2020.¹⁴



Despite a greater number of contested races in November, few races were close.

Most 2024 races were determined by large margins, with legislative and congressional margins of victory averaging between 34 and 44 percentage points.¹⁵ Just a handful of races came within 10 percentage points (12 in August and six in November) and were decided by fewer than 300 votes (five in August and one in November).

Six 2024 races were decided by fewer than 300 votes.

House District 20 Part of Blount Co.	House District 27 Part of Hamilton Co.	House District 33 Part of Anderson Co.	House District 65 Part of Williamson Co.	House District 96 Part of Shelby Co.	House District 67 Part of Montgomery Co.
Republican Primary Won by 139 votes (open seat)	Republican Primary Won by 137 votes (incumbent loss)	Republican Primary Won by 258 votes (incumbent loss)	Republican Primary Won by 95 votes (open seat)	Democratic Primary Won by 132 votes (open seat)	General Election Won by 131 votes

Source: Ballotpedia.

THINK TENNESSEE



Part II

Voter Experience

The 2024 election cycle saw election officials and voters navigate new policies and unexpected challenges. Surveyed election administrators again reported strong turnout and highlight successes, and Tennessee calls to a national election protection hotline highlight questions about key areas of the voting process.

The 2024 election cycle included a hurricane, citizenship questions, and new policies.

Tennessee's 2024 election cycle overcame destruction from Hurricane Helene, saw confusion over registered voters' citizenship status, and was the first with new voting machines and amended voting rights restoration policies.



Counties impacted by late September's Hurricane Helene saw strong voter turnout.

Storm damage in East Tennessee led to polling place adjustments and challenges with road access in Washington, Carter, Unicoi, Johnson, Greene, and Cocke counties. Despite these challenges, voter turnout in all but Cocke exceeded average statewide turnout.¹⁶



Citizenship of registered Tennessee voters questioned before the August primaries.

In June, election officials sent letters to 14,375 registered voters stating Department of Safety data showed they may not have been a U.S. citizen when they received their Tennessee license.¹⁷ Informed that non-citizen voting was a felony, they were given the opportunity to request to be removed from the voter rolls. Officials later clarified that not responding would not result in removal. By July, nearly 3,200 provided evidence of U.S. citizenship, and over 300 requested removal from voter rolls.¹⁸



2024 was the first election cycle all counties used voting machines with a paper backup and since voting rights restoration after a felony conviction required full citizenship rights restoration.

- ▶ A 2022 state law required all counties to use voting machines providing a paper backup by 2024—only 28 counties did so in the last presidential cycle.¹⁹ Paper backups let voters verify their ballots and are used for post-election audits. Implementation of new machines appeared to go smoothly across the state.²⁰
- ▶ A July 2023 memo from election officials stated that in order to restore voting rights, Tennesseans must first have their full citizenship rights restored—including gun rights.²¹ Though the state initially objected, four Tennesseans whose rights had been restored by a Davidson County judge (despite their ineligibility for gun rights) were able to cast provisional ballots which were ultimately counted.²²

Takeaways From Surveyed Election Administrators

A survey of Tennessee's 95 county election administrators on the November 2024 election elicited 13 responses to multiple choice questions highlighting successes, challenges, voter questions, and areas for future support.²³



Voter Engagement

was higher than normal or as expected in all but two counties which reported lower than normal turnout



Poll Worker Recruitment and Training

was cited as both a success (5 counties) and challenge (4 counties)

RESPONSE TAKEAWAYS



Common Questions

included those on voter registration and absentee eligibility or deadlines



Future Support

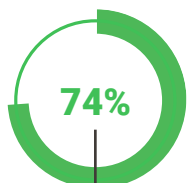
would be most helpful for increased staffing and voter education efforts

Hotline calls reflected questions or issues Tennesseans encountered with the election process.

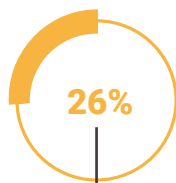
Tennesseans made 554 calls to a national election protection hotline with questions or to report issues they experienced.²⁴



Most Tennesseans contacted the hotline about voter registration, experiences at polling places, status of their ballot, and requirements for absentee voting in Tennessee.²⁵

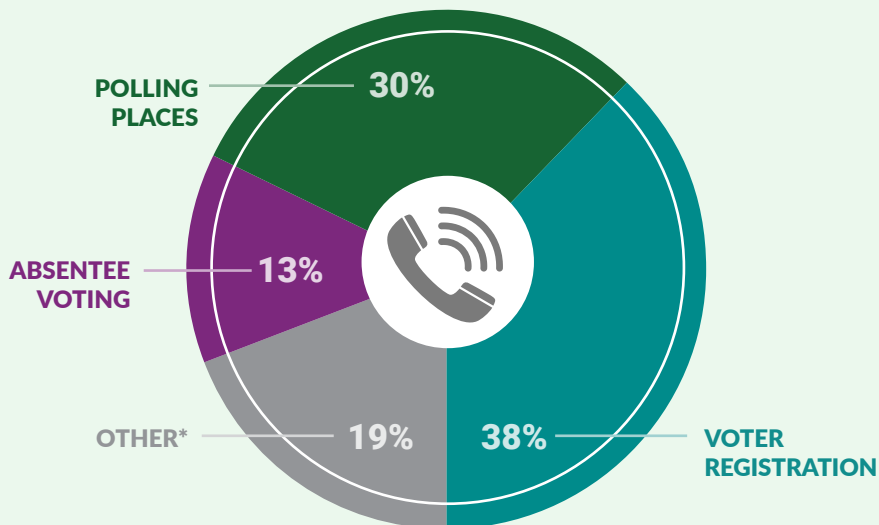


? QUESTIONS



! ISSUES

Most (74%) asked questions about voting, while 26% reported issues or challenges that they experienced during the voting process.



*The most calls categorized as "other" came from 71 callers mistakenly seeking to confirm that their in-person ballot had been counted. Once ballots are cast at a polling place, they cannot be tracked or traced to a voter.



VOTER REGISTRATION

Over 200 calls asked questions or raised issues about voter registration. Some were unaware of the voter registration deadline or that they needed to update their registration after a move, and college students and individuals with felony convictions asked about how they could register to vote.

90
callers

? **Voter registration after a move.** Questions about registering after moves within the same county, to a new county, or to or from another state.

21
callers

? **College students.** Asked about where students should register and vote while away at college.

20
callers

? **Felony convictions.** Callers asked about their eligibility to vote, including eight with out-of-state convictions asking about Tennessee's process.

65
callers

! **Missed the deadline.** Would-be voters asked how to register or update their registration (mostly after a move) after the 30-day deadline.

18
callers

! **Arrived at the polls and did not appear on voter rolls.** Some were able to cast a provisional ballot because they believed they were properly registered.

Reminder: Tennessee Election Laws

30
days

Tennessee's deadline is 30 days before Election Day.



Re-register if you've moved to a **new county**, or update your registration if you've moved within the same county.²⁶



Students choose whether to register and vote at school or home.²⁷



Voting rights must be restored after a felony conviction.²⁸



POLLING PLACES

Over 160 calls sought information related to polling places—where and when to vote, asking for a ride, and about Voter ID—and to report voting machine issues.

22
callers

🔍 **Early Voting.** Asked where and when to vote during Early Voting.

24
callers

🔍 **Election Day voting.** Asked for polling location and hours.

11
callers

🔍 **Ride to the polls.** Asked about a free ride to the polling place.

24
callers

🔍 **Voter ID.** Asked about using an expired or out-of-state license.

25
callers

⚠️ **Polling place issue.** Reports of voting machines switching selections and temporary power outages.

Reminder: Tennessee Election Laws



During Early Voting, all registered voters can use any polling location in the county.



On Election Day, voters have an assigned polling place (unless the county has Vote Centers).



Voter IDs verify a voter's identity and may be expired.

✓ Accepted IDs are a TN driver's license, U.S. passport, or military photo ID, photo ID issued by the TN Dept. of Safety or TN or federal government, or TN handgun permit.

✗ Unaccepted IDs are a student ID or out-of-state license.



ABSENTEE VOTING

Over 70 calls about absentee voting included questions—about eligibility and the process—and reported issues with receiving or sending their ballot.

30
callers

🔍 **Process.** Asked about eligibility, deadlines, and returning ballots.

10
callers

🔍 **Tracking.** Wanted to confirm their ballot arrived in time.

23
callers

⚠️ **Issues.** Reported problems with requesting, receiving, or sending their ballots.²⁹

6
callers

⚠️ **First-time voters.** Ineligible to vote absentee because they registered by mail.

Reminder: Tennessee Election Laws



Tennesseans must meet a qualifying excuse such as being 60 or older or out of town to vote absentee.



Ballots must be requested by 10 days before Election Day and returned by mail.³⁰



Voters can track absentee ballots online, and they are notified if their ballot has been rejected. However in-person ballots are cast at a polling place and cannot be tracked or traced to the voter after the fact.

Expanded education efforts and policies can help address voters' questions.

Hotline calls indicate some would-be voters continue to fall through the cracks and are unable to cast their ballots, either due to lack of awareness of our state's rules or because some of those rules inhibit their participation. Consideration of additional election policies could help catch those Tennesseans and facilitate more voter engagement in our state without sacrificing the integrity of our election system.

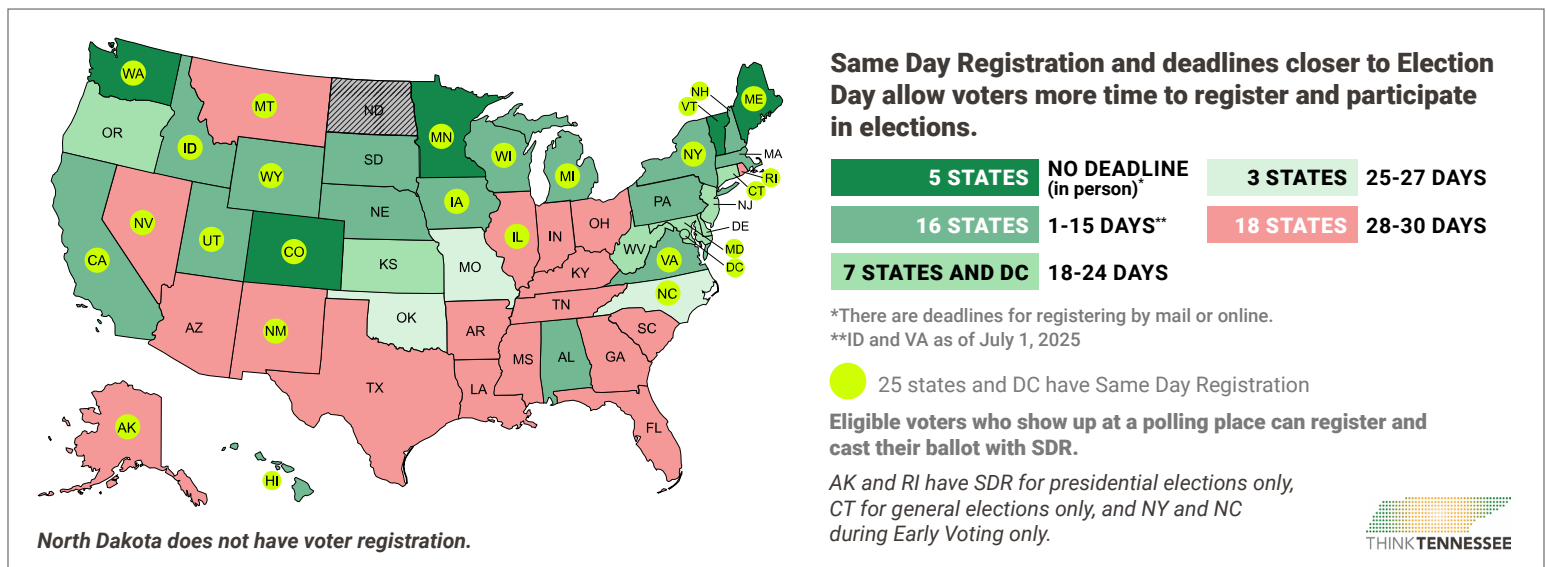
➤ Enhanced Voter Education Efforts

Additional support—funding or partnering with trusted community organizations—to help county election commissions share information could help plug the gap in voters' awareness of how our process works. Along with the “basics” like how and when to register to vote and where and when to cast ballots,³¹ officials can help share information on changes to processes implemented since 2024—including the new voting rights restoration process.³²

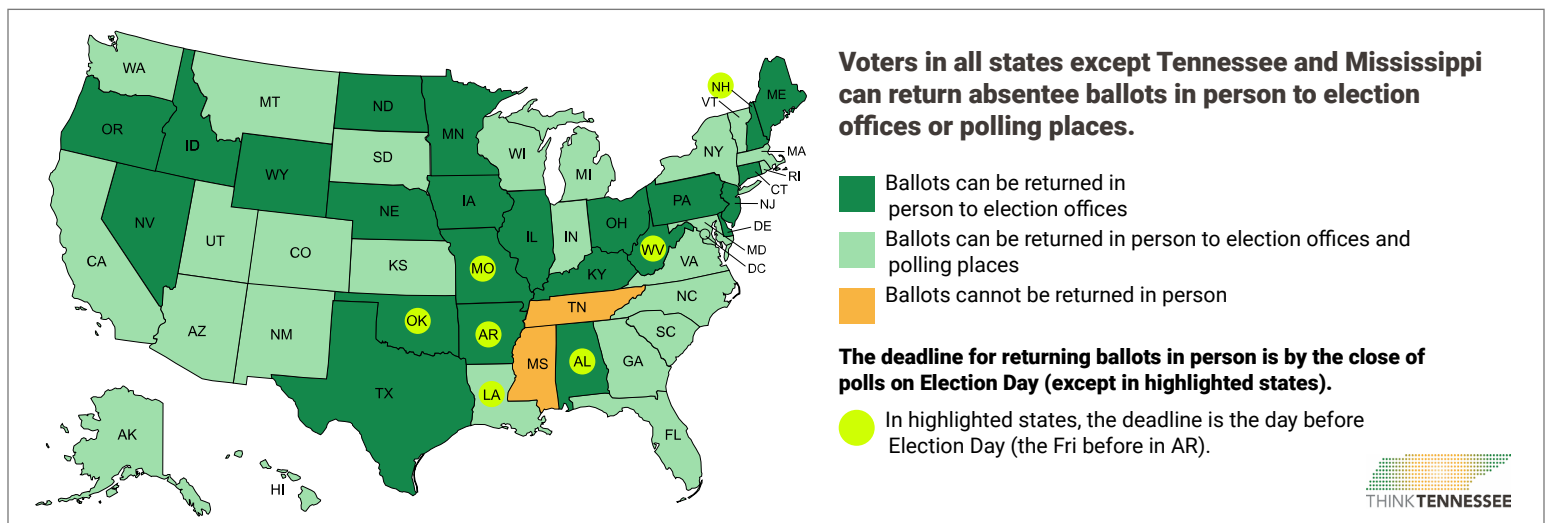
➤ Expanded Voting Policies

In addition to helping to ensure voters know how to participate under the current rules and guidelines, Tennessee officials could look to other states for alternative voting policies that could also help increase participation. For example:

- **Extend the Voter Registration Deadline.** Tennessee is one of only 12 states requiring voters to be registered the earliest—30 days before Election Day. Most other states have registration deadlines closer to, or on, Election Day.



- **Allow Absentee Ballots to Also be Returned in Person.** Tennessee and Mississippi are the only two states to require absentee ballots be returned by mail. In all others, voters have the additional option of returning their ballots to election officials in person—helping to ensure their ballots arrive on time.





Part III

Historical Voting Trends in Tennessee

An analysis of historical data shows voter turnout rates are higher in presidential cycles and when races are contested.

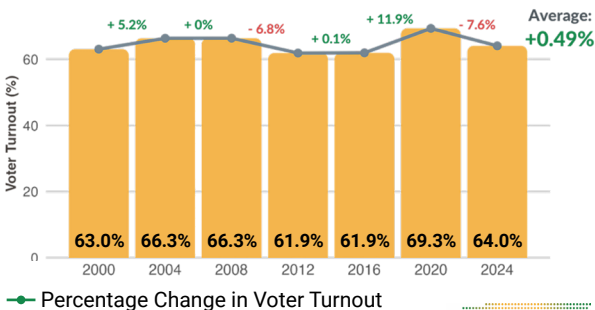
While Tennessee typically sees higher voter turnout in presidential cycles over midterm cycles, our analysis shows that all else being equal, presidential cycles—and contested races—drive higher turnout.

Voter turnout in presidential elections has remained relatively stable over time.

While Tennessee's population has increased 26.7% from 2000 to 2024, the percentage of registered voters participating in presidential election cycles has remained relatively stable.³³ Though turnout rates have fluctuated, overall, **voter participation rates have trended slightly upward, increasing by an average of 0.49% from one cycle to the next.**³⁴

Most (81) counties have also seen a positive trend in voter turnout over time since 2000, with Hancock and Pickett counties seeing the largest increases (an average of 6%). The remaining 14 counties have trended downwards, with rates in Davidson, Greene, and Humphreys falling by an average of at least 2% since 2000.³⁵

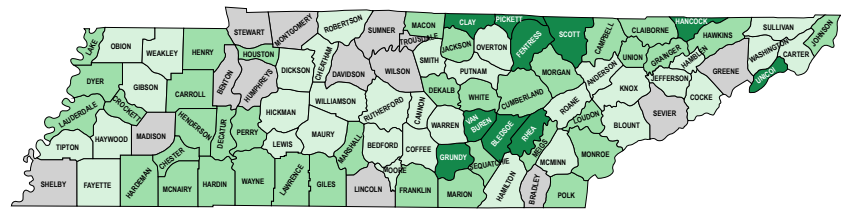
Even with fluctuations, voter turnout has trended upwards, increasing an average of 0.49% from one presidential cycle to the next.



Source: Statistical Analysis of Voter Turnout as Submitted by the Counties (2000-2024)

THINK TENNESSEE

Most of the state—81 counties—experienced a positive average increase in turnout from one presidential cycle to the next from 2000-2024.



Average Change in Voter Turnout, 2000-2024

0 to -2% Less than +2% Between 2 and +4% Over +4%

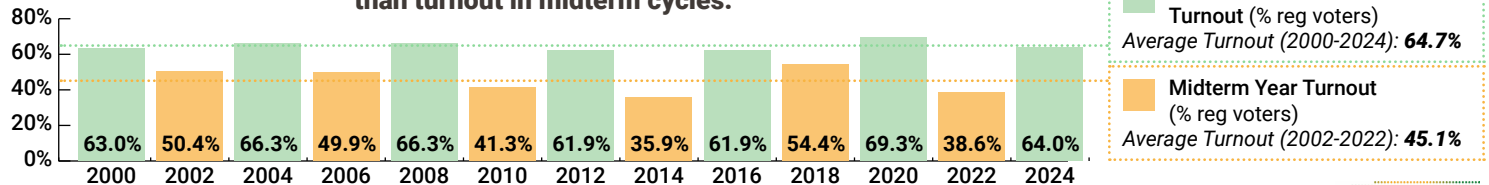
Source: Statistical Analysis of Voter Turnout as Submitted by the Counties (2000-2024)

THINK TENNESSEE

Presidential election cycles drive higher voter turnout than midterm election cycles.

Federal elections occur every two years, alternating from presidential to midterm cycles.³⁶ Since 2000, Tennessee voter turnout has been **nearly one-and-a-half (1.4) times higher in presidential election cycles** (average of 64.7%) than in midterm cycles (average of 45.1%).

On average, voter turnout in presidential cycles is 1.4 times higher than turnout in midterm cycles.

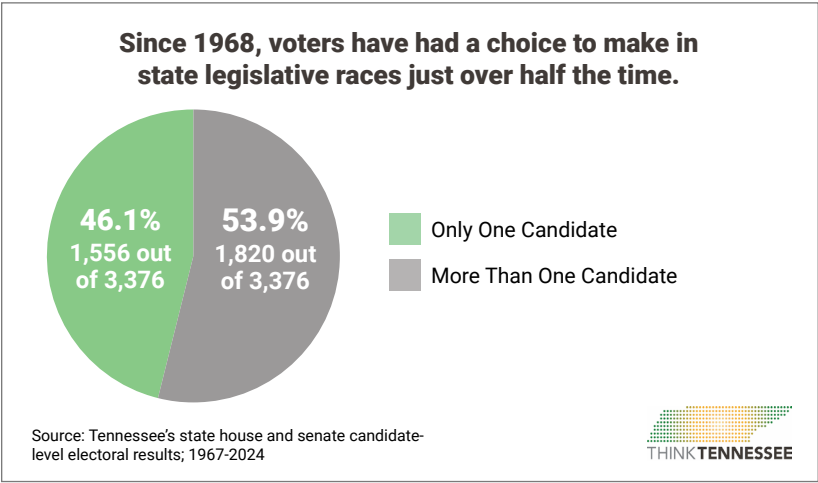


Source: Statistical Analysis of Voter Turnout as Submitted by the Counties (2000-2024)

THINK TENNESSEE

Members of Tennessee's House of Representatives, elected to two-year terms, run in both presidential and midterm election cycles. An analysis of district-level data from House races held between 2010 and 2024 (a total of 792 races) show the impact of presidential cycles on turnout: all else being equal, **voter turnout is 13.2 percentage points higher** when races for the same district occur in presidential cycles.³⁷

Having more than one candidate on the ballot also drives higher voter turnout.



Analysis of historical data also shows contested races to be a driver of higher voter turnout. From 2010 to 2024, average voter participation was nearly 10 points higher in contested races (43.3%) than those with only one candidate (32.2%). And the 10-point gap holds whether it's a presidential or midterm election cycle.³⁸

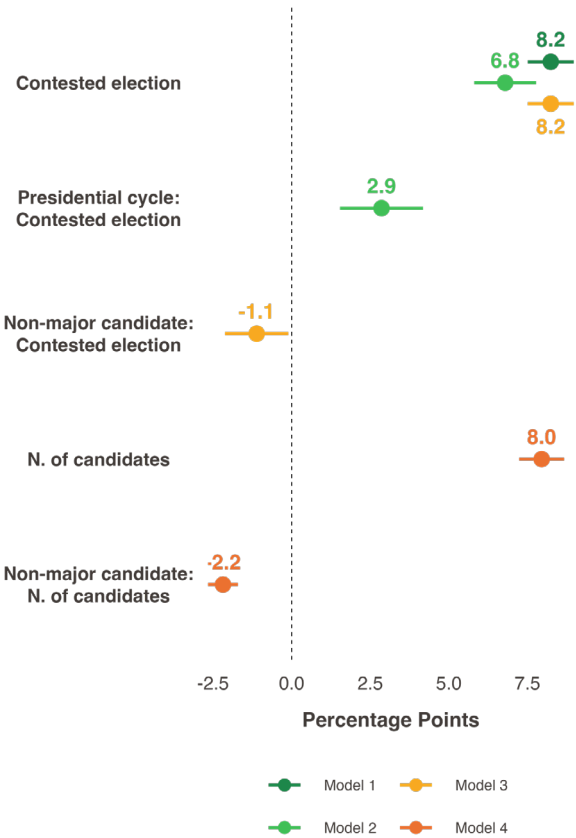
However, historically, just over a half of Tennessee's state legislative races have been contested—with more than one candidate running in races from 1968 to 2024.³⁹



Diving Deeper:
The Impact of Contested Elections
with Non-Major Party Candidates

We found a contested race to be a statistically significant predictor of increasing turnout in both types of election cycles, but with a greater effect in presidential cycles. In midterm cycles, contested races increase voter turnout by 8.2 percentage points (● Model 1), while in presidential cycles it increases by 9.7 percentage points (● Model 2: 6.8 +2.9).

Interestingly, analysis of midterm cycles also shows that the impact of contested races on voter turnout is reduced when there is a candidate from a non-major party, i.e., an Independent, on the ballot. Though turnout still increases because of a contested race, all else being equal, the impact is reduced by 1.1 percentage points (● Model 3). Additionally, an increase in the number of candidates by one unit (for each additional candidate in the race) where at least one is a non-major party candidate, decreases turnout by 2.2 percentage points (● Model 4).⁴⁰



Sources: ThinkTennessee's statistical analysis of state legislative district turnout data from C. Klarner (2024), MIT Election Data and Science Lab (2025), and the U.S. Census Bureau (2010-2024).

THINKTENNESSEE

Tennessee is experiencing positive trends, yet opportunities remain for deeper voter engagement.

While more total votes were cast than ever before, and participation rates are trending positive over time, the percentage of registered Tennesseans participating in elections is increasing on average by less than 1% from one presidential cycle to the next (0.49%) and continues to trail those in most other states.

Tennessee's election system is secure and worthy of voters' trust, yet opportunities remain for deeper voter engagement. While more candidates are running in races, which is shown to drive higher turnout in Tennessee, additional investments to increase voter education and awareness and consideration of policies to further promote access can also help to deepen voter engagement in our state.

References

1. These rankings are calculated using data from the U.S. Census Bureau (33rd) and University of Florida Election Lab (45th) and are measured differently than the data source ThinkTennessee typically uses for our State of the State Dashboard rankings (the MIT Elections Performance Index). We anticipate that data to be released later in 2025.
2. Voter turnout among registered voters in presidential-year August primaries ranges from a low in August 2024 (14.0%) to a high in August 1996 (26.2%). Tennessee Secretary of State. (1996-2024). Election Statistics. <https://sos.tn.gov/elections/statistics>.
3. Tennessee Secretary of State. (2025). Statistical Analysis of Voter Turnout for the November 5, 2024 Election as Submitted by the Counties. <https://sos-prod.tnsosgovfiles.com/s3fs-public/document/2024%20November%20Turnout%20Report.pdf>.
4. Tennessee Secretary of State. (December 2, 2024). Secretary of State's Division of Elections Announces Record Turnout, Certification of Nov. 5 Results. <https://sos.tn.gov/press-releases/secretary-of-states-division-of-elections-announces-record-turnout-certification-of->
5. Tennessee Secretary of State. (2012, 2016). Election Statistics. <https://sos.tn.gov/elections/statistics>.
6. Tennessee Secretary of State. (2025). Statistical Analysis of Voter Turnout for the November 5, 2024 Election as Submitted by the Counties. <https://sos-prod.tnsosgovfiles.com/s3fs-public/document/2024%20November%20Turnout%20Report.pdf>. Comparatively, 52 counties in 2020 (nearly three times more than the 18 in 2024) had turnout rates of 70% or higher.
7. Comparatively, in 2020, Williamson, Wilson, Loudon, and Fayette similarly had the highest turnout rates in the state. However, Grundy County rose from 41st in 2020 to 5th in 2024 turnout rankings. Montgomery also recorded the lowest turnout in 2020; however, Davidson and Shelby are new to the bottom three—dropping from 81st and 82nd in 2020 to 93rd and 94th in 2024 (respectively).
8. ThinkTennessee uses the Election Performance Index from MIT (<https://elections.mit.edu/#/data/map>) for our State of the State Dashboard rankings on voter registration and turnout rates. The 2024 election statistics are not yet available and are expected later this year. In the meantime, two alternative sources provide comparative rankings using different data sources and methodologies. U.S. Census Bureau. (April 2025). Table 4a Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2024. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/voting-and-registration/p20-587.html> (ranking Tennessee 33rd in voter turnout among states based on survey responses about voting behavior) and McDonald, Michael. (November 2024). Turnout Rates in the 2024 General Election (v0.1). <https://election.lab.ufl.edu/dataset/2024-general-election-turnout-rates-v0-3/> (ranking Tennessee 45th in voter turnout among states based on the number of ballots cast).
9. Both Republicans and Democrats could field a candidate for all 99 state House seats, 16 state Senate seats, 9 U.S. House seats, and 1 U.S. Senate seat—totaling 250 possible primaries to fill 125 seats.
10. In 2020, both parties fielded candidates for 40.9%, or 47 out of 115 seats, and in 2022, in only 37.9%, or 44 out of 116 seats. Both parties fielded a candidate in more races in 2024, resulting in 60.9% featuring both parties in November, after two Democratic candidates withdrew after the primary. Ballotpedia. (2024). https://ballotpedia.org/Tennessee_elections,_2024.
11. In August 2024, 61 out of 99 state House seats and 11 out of 16 state Senate seats featured candidates from both major parties. All 10 congressional seats also featured candidates from both major parties.
12. Only 49 out of 250 possible primaries featured more than one candidate: 32 in the House, 9 in the Senate, and 8 for Congress.
13. In November, 68 out of 99 House races, 13 out of 16 Senate races, and all 10 congressional races gave voters a choice to make between candidates (including Independents).
14. In 2020, 59 out of 115 seats (or 51.3%) and in 2022, 54 out of 116 seats (or 46.6%) featured more than one candidate for voters to choose from, including Independents.
15. The average August margins of victory were 33.9 points in the state legislature and 37.2 points in congressional races, with November margins at 43.6 points in the state legislature and 37.5 points in congressional races.
16. Unicoi (71.0%), Washington (67.2%), Johnson (68.1%) Carter (67.3%), and Greene (66.8%) all experienced voter turnout above the state average of 64.0%, while Cocke fell just shy at 62.0% of registered voters. Tennessee Secretary of State. (2025). Statistical Analysis of Voter Turnout for the November 5, 2024 Election as Submitted by the Counties. <https://sos-prod.tnsosgovfiles.com/s3fs-public/document/2024%20November%20Turnout%20Report.pdf>.
17. Election officials compared Tennessee's voter registration rolls with data from the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security. Some of these individuals may not have been a citizen at the time of their license transaction but may have since been naturalized. See Jones, Vivian. (June 25, 2024). 14,000 Tennesseans sent letters requesting proof of citizenship ahead of election. Tennessean. <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/politics/2024/06/25/14000-tennesseans-sent-letters-requesting-proof-of-citizenship-ahead-of-election/74205558007/>.
18. Matisse, Jonathan and Kruesi, Kimberlee. (July 17, 2024). Tennessee won't purge voter rolls of people who disregard a letter asking them to prove citizenship. Associated Press. <https://apnews.com/article/voting-citizenship-tennessee-7802df69609bc54eb55d9296f6321100>.
19. Public Chapter 1144 (2022) required all counties to use voting machines that produce a voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) by January 2024. Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-9-101(d). At the time, election officials testified that 61 counties would need to switch to new machines, and in November 2020, only 28 counties were using machines that could provide a VVPAT. ThinkTennessee. (May 2021). Election 2020 After Action Report. p. 10. <https://www.thinktennessee.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/November-2020-After-Action-Report.pdf>.
20. There were reports from Davidson, Shelby, and Williamson counties during Early Voting of voting machines flipping voters' selections. Kiehl, Allison. (October 22, 2024). Early voting touch screen issues? How to ensure an accurate ballot in Tennessee. Tennessean. <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/politics/elections/2024/10/22/early-voting-issues-tennessee-accurate-ballot/75794165007/>
21. State election officials issued a memo to county election commissions outlining the state's interpretation of the Tennessee Supreme Court ruling in *Falls v. Goins*, No. M2020-01510-SC-R11-CV (June 29, 2023), available at <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/23884628-20230721-restoration-of-voting-rights/>. Election officials later clarified that gun rights were a citizenship right required to be restored before being eligible to vote. Matisse, Jonathan. (January 23, 2024). Felons must get gun rights back if they want voting rights restored, Tennessee officials say. Associated Press. <https://apnews.com/article/tennessee-felon-voting-rights-restoration-a50000a97f73c2767eaa8b9b1a2eee52>.
22. Kruesi, Kimberlee. (November 20, 2024). Tennessee to count provisional ballots by people convicted of felonies who had rights in limbo. Associated Press. <https://apnews.com/article/election-voting-rights-tennessee-felonies-3ae78068ad17c8139bfa9dcca854d142>. Another Circuit Court Judge restored voting rights to two additional people who would otherwise be ineligible to vote under the state's position requiring gun rights (bringing the total to six).
23. ThinkTennessee surveyed election administrators in December 2024. Each of Tennessee's three Grand Divisions was represented among the 13 responding counties.
24. ThinkTennessee analyzed all calls from Tennesseans to the 866-OUR VOTE election protection hotline operated by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law for the 2024 election cycle. Those identified as "test" calls, blank voicemails, or those that did not raise substantive questions or issues were excluded from the total counts. Nearly half of the calls (49.8%) came the final week before polls closed, with 166 calls (30%) on Election Day alone.
25. Some calls covered multiple issue areas and were therefore categorized in multiple issue areas.
26. In some instances, a voter may be able to update their address at the polling place if they moved within the same county they were registered in before. If a person moves away from Tennessee within 30 days of a presidential election, they are still eligible to vote where they were last registered, in-person or by absentee ballot. Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-2-103.
27. Students can decide whether to register and vote at their school address or their home address. The decision determines which state and local elections students wish to participate in.
28. Certain convictions may also be expunged, allowing someone to register and vote without needing to have voting rights restored. Some felony convictions do not result in a loss of voting rights.

29. Some callers had requested an absentee ballot but had not received it from their election commission (12), while others were notified of ineligibility, had requested their ballot too late, or expressed concerns that their mailed ballot did not arrive at the election commission on time (11).
30. In 2024, a new state law moved the absentee ballot request deadline from seven days to 10 days before Election Day. Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-6-202(a)(1) (effective November 6, 2024).
31. For example, in 2024 ThinkTennessee released a five-part Voter Education Series on key elements of Tennessee's election process. [https://www.thinktennessee.org/research/elections-civic-life/#:~:text=2024%20TENNESSEE%20VOTER%20EDUCATION%20SERIES%20\(2024\).](https://www.thinktennessee.org/research/elections-civic-life/#:~:text=2024%20TENNESSEE%20VOTER%20EDUCATION%20SERIES%20(2024).)
32. In 2024, the General Assembly passed HB 445/SB 405 changing the voting rights restoration process. Tennesseans now petition a circuit court for restoration of their voting rights, and voting rights can be restored separately from other citizenship rights, including gun rights. Public Chapter 298 (2024). <https://publications.tnsosfiles.com/acts/114/pub/pc0298.pdf>.
33. Tennessee's population has increased from 5,703,719 in 2000 to 7,227,750 in 2024. U.S. Census Bureau. (October 2012). State Intercensal Tables: 2000-2010. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/intercensal-2000-2010-state.html> and U.S. Census Bureau. (December 2024). State Population by Characteristics: 2020-2024. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-state-detail.html>.
34. The upward trend (0.49%) is the average percentage change in voter turnout of registered voters in between presidential cycles (e.g., 2000-2004; 2004-2008) from 2000-2024. Tennessee Secretary of State. (2000-2024). Election Statistics. <https://sos.tn.gov/elections/statistics>.
35. County turnout over time was found by averaging the percentage change in voter turnout among registered voters in a particular county for each of the presidential elections between 2000-2024. Tennessee Secretary of State. (2000-2024). Election Statistics. <https://sos.tn.gov/elections/statistics>.
36. In midterm election cycles, the governor's race is the top office on the ticket, along with congressional races, the full state House, and odd-numbered districts of the state Senate. Generally, voter turnout in midterm cycles with an incumbent governor is lower than when the seat is open.
37. We found the coefficient to be statistically significant at the 99% confidence level. Our predictor was the occurrence of a House legislative race in presidential (1) or midterm year (0), the dependent variable was measured as voter turnout as a percentage of the district's voting-age population in a given state House race. The fixed-effects model also includes control variables on incumbency, total district population, percent of non-citizen population, median household income, percent of workers commuting 30 or more minutes to work, unemployment rate, homeownership rate, and percent of residents 25 and older with an associate's degree or higher. Data on Tennessee's state house candidate-level electoral results was extracted from Klarner, Carl. (2024). State Legislative Election Returns, 1967-2022. Harvard Dataverse. <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/FJOGJB>, and from the MIT Election Data and Science Lab. (2025). 2024-elections-official (Version 1.0). <https://github.com/MEDSL/2024-elections-official> for 2024.
38. Voter turnout was measured as a percentage of voting-age population at the state legislative district level, comparing turnout in races with two or more candidates to single candidate races. Voting-age population estimates were extracted from U.S. Census Bureau. (2010-2024). ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2010.DP05?q=DP05&t=Populations+and+People&g=040XX00US47\\$6100000,47\\$6200000&y=2010&moe=false](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2010.DP05?q=DP05&t=Populations+and+People&g=040XX00US47$6100000,47$6200000&y=2010&moe=false). Data on electoral results were sourced from Klarner, Carl. (2024). State Legislative Election Returns, 1967-2022. (Version 1). Harvard Dataverse. <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/FJOGJB> for the 2010-2022 period, and from the MIT Election Data and Science Lab. (2025). 2024-elections-official (Version 1.0). <https://github.com/MEDSL/2024-elections-official> for the 2024 elections.
39. Contested elections occur when more than one candidate is running for a seat. Candidates can run under any of the two major parties, a non-major or independent party, or from an unidentified platform—but write-ins were excluded when measuring contestation. Klarner, Carl. (2024). State Legislative Election Returns, 1967-2022. Harvard Dataverse. <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/FJOGJB> and MIT Election Data and Science Lab. (2025). 2024-elections-official (Version 1.0). <https://github.com/MEDSL/2024-elections-official>.
40. ThinkTennessee's analysis found all coefficients are statistically significant at the 99% confidence level. Our predictor, election contestation, was introduced in two ways: (1) as a dichotomous measure (competitive vs. non-competitive) in models 1-3, (2) and as the number of candidates running in each race in model 4. The dependent variable was measured as voter turnout as a percentage of the district's voting-age population in a given state legislative race. All models also included control variables on the legislative chamber, incumbency, total district population, percent of non-citizen population, median household income, percent of workers commuting 30 or more minutes to work, unemployment rate, homeownership rate, and percent of residents 25 and older with an associate's degree or higher. In models 1, 3, and 4, we introduced a dichotomous variable controlling for presidential cycles. Model 2 introduces the presidential cycle dichotomous variable as an interaction term. Data on Tennessee's state house candidate-level electoral results was extracted from Klarner, Carl. (2024). State Legislative Election Returns, 1967-2022. Harvard Dataverse. <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/FJOGJB>, and from the MIT Election Data and Science Lab. (2025). 2024-elections-official (Version 1.0). <https://github.com/MEDSL/2024-elections-official> for 2024.

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