

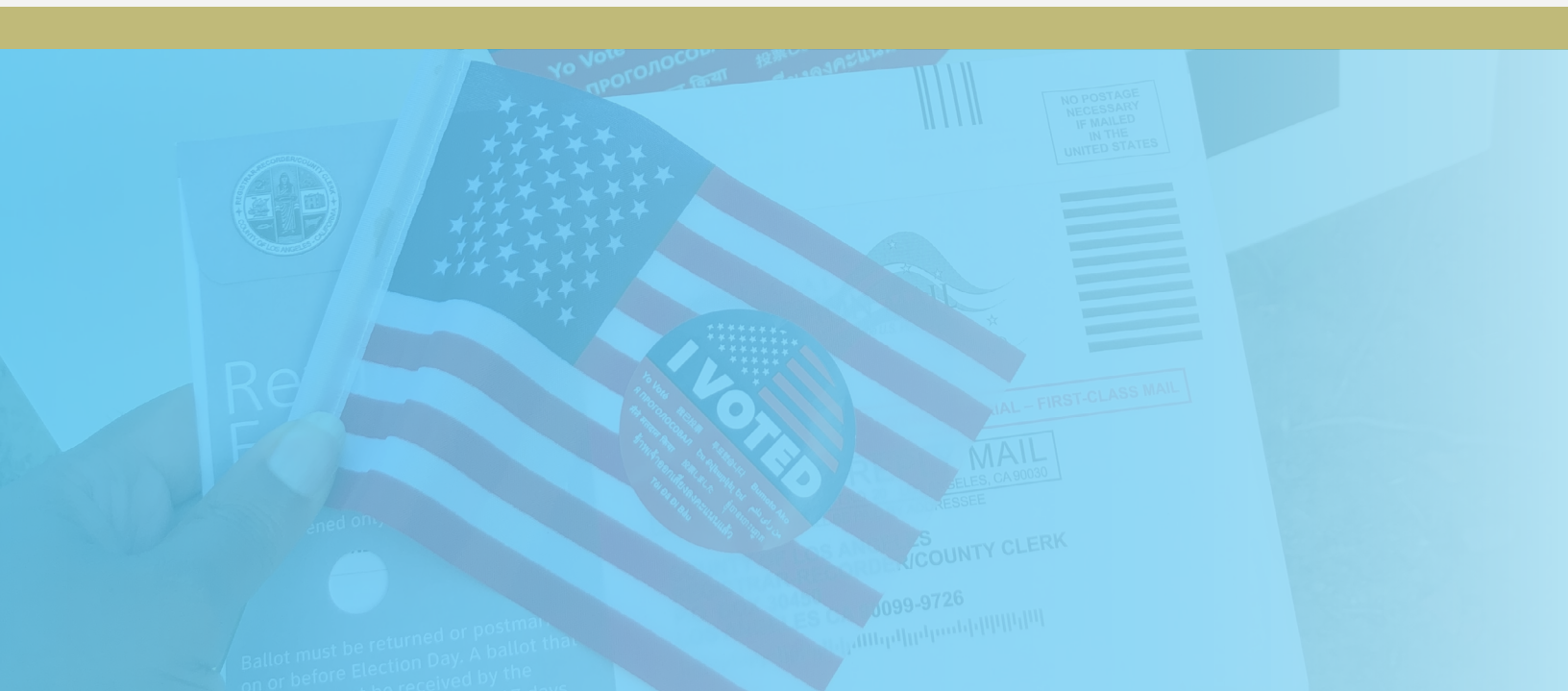


MIT ELECTION DATA
+ SCIENCE LAB

HOW WE VOTED IN 2022

A TOPICAL LOOK AT THE SURVEY OF THE
PERFORMANCE OF AMERICAN ELECTIONS

Charles Stewart III



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Charles Stewart III is the Kenan Sahin Distinguished Professor of Political Science and the Director of the [MIT Election Data and Science Lab](#).

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Election Trust Initiative, or other organizations or individuals who provided advice for the 2022 survey or report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Survey of the Performance of American Elections (SPAEE) provides information about how Americans experienced voting in the most recent federal election. Conducted in every presidential election since 2008, the SPAEE is the only national survey of election administration that focuses on the process of voting and provides insights into the performance of elections in the individual states.

In 2022, 10,200 registered voters responded to the survey, which was administered by YouGov—200 observations in each state plus the District of Columbia. The study was supported by the Election Trust Initiative.

Among the findings discussed in this report are the following:

VOTING BY MAIL

- » The percentage of voters casting ballots by mail retreated to 32 percent, down more than 10 points from 2020 and more than doubling the fraction from 2016. The share of voters casting ballots on Election Day grew to 50 percent, from 31 percent in 2020.
- » Forty-six percent of Democrats, compared to 27 percent of Republicans, reported voting by mail. This is down from 60 percent for Democrats and 32 percent for Republicans in 2020.
- » The use of mail to return ballots that were mailed to voters rebounded in 2022 to 62 percent, compared to 53 percent in 2020. Twenty-one percent of mail ballots were returned to drop boxes, which is virtually unchanged from 2020.
- » Almost five percent of voters who returned their ballot to a drop box reported seeing something disruptive, such as demonstrators, when they dropped off their ballot.
- » Forty percent of mail voters reported using online ballot tracking.

IN-PERSON VOTING

- » The use of schools to vote in-person continued its decade-long gradual decline.
- » Average wait times to vote were roughly equal to the last midterm election for Election Day voters (6 percent waiting over 30 minutes compared to 5 percent in 2020); they declined for early voters (4 percent reported waiting over 30 minutes compared to 7 percent in 2020).

- » Ten percent of Election Day voters and 9 percent of early voters reported seeing something disruptive when they voted. The most common disruptions were voters talking loudly and voters in a dispute with an election worker or other voter.
- » Approximately 3 percent of in-person voters reported seeing demonstrators outside their polling place claiming the election was fraudulent.

SATISFACTION WITH VOTING

- » Voters who cast ballots in person and by mail continued to express high levels of satisfaction with the process, as in past years.

REASONS FOR NOT VOTING

- » The primary reported reason for not voting in 2022 was not knowing enough about the choices (12.1 percent of non-voters), followed by not being interested (11.7 percent) and being too busy (9.8 percent).

VOTER CONFIDENCE

- » Measured across all voters, confidence that votes were counted as intended remained similar to past years.
- » The partisan gap in confidence that opened up in 2020 closed somewhat in 2022, with the primary reason being Republicans becoming more confident.
- » Compared to 2020, the Democratic-Republican gap in state-level confidence declined significantly in most states. Major exceptions were Pennsylvania and Arizona.
- » Among Republicans, lack of confidence in whether votes were counted as intended at the state level was strongly correlated with whether Donald Trump won the respondent's state and with the fraction of votes cast by mail in the state.

ELECTION SECURITY MEASURES

- » Of a set of common security measures used by election officials, respondents were most aware of logic-and-accuracy testing and securing paper ballots. One-third of respondents stated that election officials used none of the measures asked about.
- » Respondents stated that the security measures that would give them the greatest assurance about

the security and integrity of elections were logic-and-accuracy testing (74 percent), securing paper ballots (74 percent), and post-election audits (72 percent).

FRAUD

- » Partisan attitudes about the prevalence of several types of vote fraud remained polarized in 2020, although less so than in 2020.

REFORM

- » Requiring electronic voting machines to have paper backups, requiring a photo ID to vote, automatically changing registrations when voters move, requiring election officials to be nonpartisan, and declaring Election Day a holiday were supported by majorities of both Democrats and Republicans.
- » Adopting automatic voter registration, moving Election Day to the weekend, and Election-Day registration are supported by a majority of respondents, but not by a majority of Republicans.
- » Ranked-choice voting, conducting elections entirely by mail, and allowing Internet voting were opposed by a majority of respondents but supported by a majority of Democrats; hand-counting paper ballots was opposed by a majority of respondents but supported by a majority of Republicans.
- » Voting on cell phones was opposed by majorities of Democrats and Republicans.

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INTRODUCTION

The Survey of the Performance of American Elections (SPAЕ) provides information about how Americans experienced voting in the most recent federal election. Conducted in every presidential election since 2008 and in the federal midterm elections of 2014 and 2022, the SPAЕ is the only national survey of election administration that focuses on the process of voting and provides insights into the performance of elections in the individual states.

In 2022, 10,200 registered voters—200 from every state and the District of Columbia—responded to the survey, which was administered by YouGov. The 2022 SPAЕ was supported by the Election Trust Initiative.

This document provides a look into some of the findings from the survey. It is an update of the 2020 report, with one important difference. The 2020 report did not include results from the 2014 SPAЕ—the only one at the time that was administered during a midterm—and only included comparisons to the results from the presidential elections of 2008, 2012, and 2016. This report includes the 2014 results, to allow comparison with that midterm. In addition, a few items that appear on the SPAЕ also appear in the Cooperative Election Study (CES). Where they are available, midterm results from 2010 and 2018 are also included using items from the CES. Finally, to provide long-term context about voter turnout and use of voting modes, we take advantage of the Voting and Registration Supplement of the Current Population Survey, conducted by the U.S Census Bureau.

More information about the SPAЕ, including the questionnaire and data, may be downloaded at the Harvard Dataverse.¹

The two biggest issues for election administration that affected the experience of voters when they cast their ballots were:

- » the echoes from the disruptions that occurred in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- » threats of disruptions and violence in polling places that some feared, owing to threats that were aimed at election officials themselves.

¹ The URL for the SPAЕ Dataverse is <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/SPAЕ>.

In addition, the security and accuracy of the electoral process has come under question from some quarters. Therefore, in this edition of the SPAЕ, we revisit some issues that were explored in the 2020 SPAЕ, notably, voting by mail, and add analysis of questions asked to gauge the degree to which voters experienced disruptions when they voted. We also pay particular attention to voter attitudes about confidence in the system and shifting opinions about the prevalence of fraud and support for reforms.

VOTING BY MAIL

The 2020 election cycle saw the biggest and most dramatic shift in how Americans vote in American history. Because of permanent and temporary changes made to state election laws, emergency declarations, and voter concern about public health, the percentage of voters casting ballots by mail in 2020 doubled compared to 2016. The 2022 election saw some backing off this surge, mostly by Democrats, but overall, voting by mail in 2022 was well ahead of the trend that had been established over the previous two decades.

MAIL BALLOT USAGE

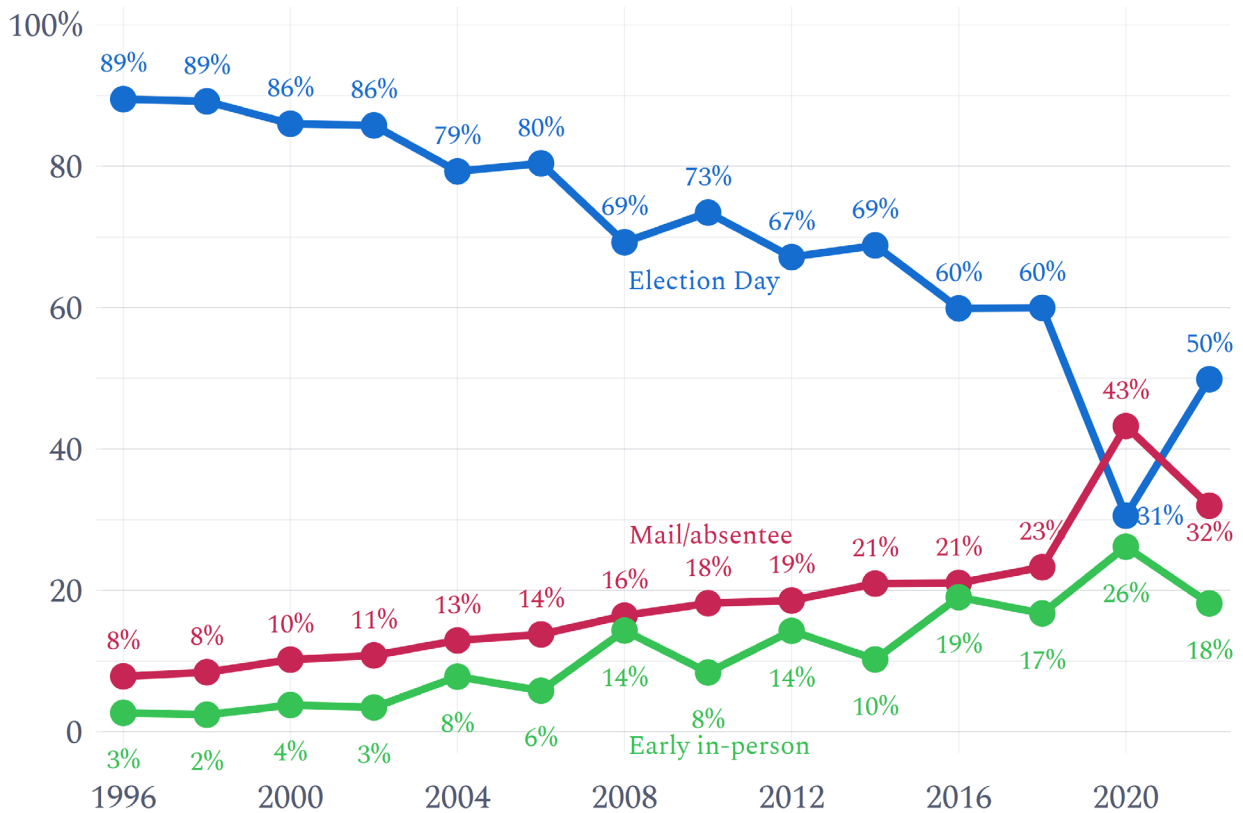
For the past three decades, the percentage of voters casting ballots in person on Election Day has declined, as more have cast ballots either in person before Election Day or by mail. These changes, particularly regarding voting by mail, accelerated dramatically in

2020, with the percentage of voters casting votes on Election Day dropping from 60% in 2016 to 31% in 2020.² Ballots cast by mail nearly doubled, from 23% to 43%, while votes cast early and in person continued their steady pace upward.

Election Day voting rebounded somewhat in 2022 compared to 2020, as voting by mail and early in-person voting declined a bit—mail balloting more than early voting. (The early voting decline in 2022 fits into the long-established pattern of early voting declining a bit compared to the previous presidential election.) Still, the overall usage pattern of mail ballots in 2022 was more like 2020 than the pattern in the previous midterm election, 2018.

² Voting mode statistics in this subsection are taken from the Voting and Registration Supplement of the Current Population Survey.

VOTING MODES, 1996-2022



Data sources: Census Bureau, Voting and Registration Supplement, 1996-2022

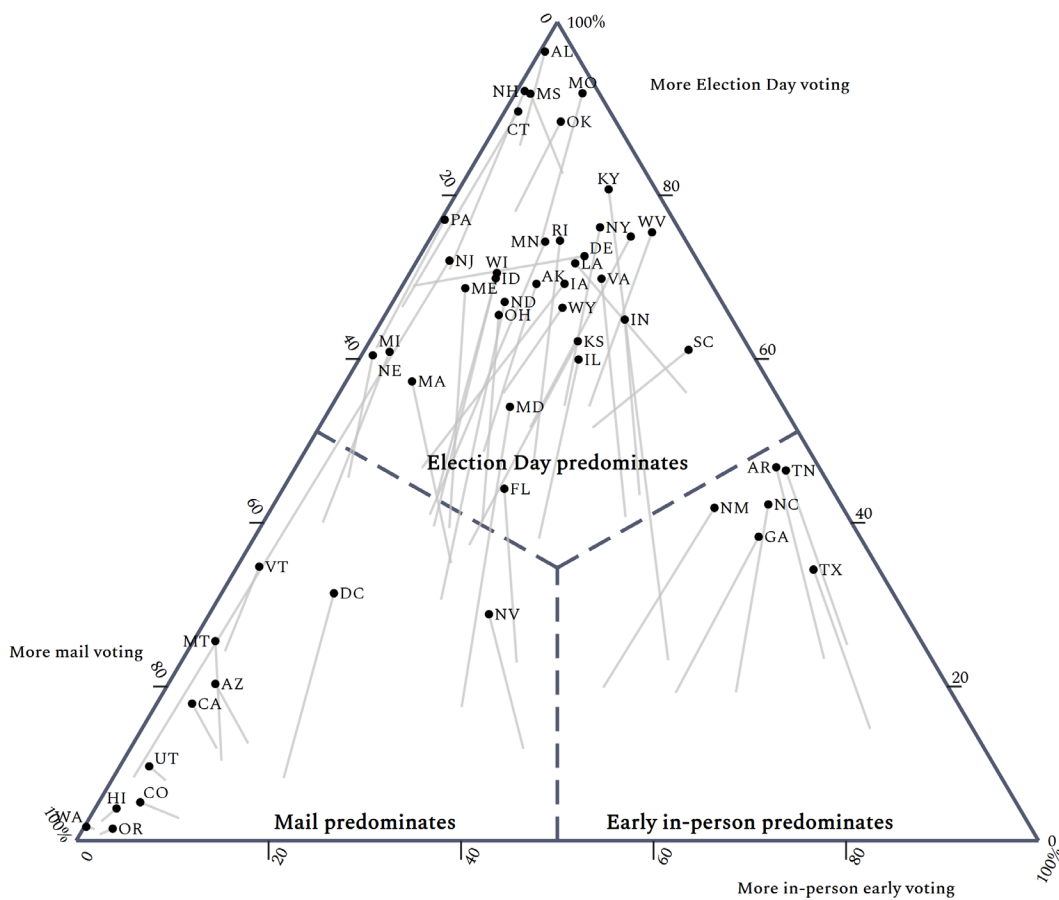
The rebound in Election Day voting proceeded at different rates across the states, as did the transition from voting in-person to voting by mail. The following graph uses a ternary (or triplot) graph to describe the mix of voting modes in each state in 2020 and 2022, at least as reported in the SPAE.³ The data tokens represent the mix of voting modes reported in 2022. The gray lines attached to the data tokens trace the path of each state back to where they were in 2020. Almost all the gray lines trace some path upward, although the states in the lower left-hand corner (universal vote-by-

mail states) saw virtually no movement.⁴ The bulk of states are seen moving on a path that is parallel to the axis that describes mail voting, which indicates voters in those states were primarily substituting mail balloting for Election Day voting. States such as Delaware, New Mexico, Georgia, and Kansas trace out primarily rightward paths, indicating shifts predominantly toward early in-person voting.

3 Voters in states at the very top of the triangle all cast their ballots on Election Day. Voters in states at the lower left corner all cast their ballots by mail. Voters in states in the lower right corner all cast their ballots early in-person.

4 The states that saw an estimated increase in the use of voting by mail in 2022 compared to 2020 were Colorado, Louisiana, Utah, and Washington.

MIX OF VOTING MODES USED BY STATES, 2020 AND 2022



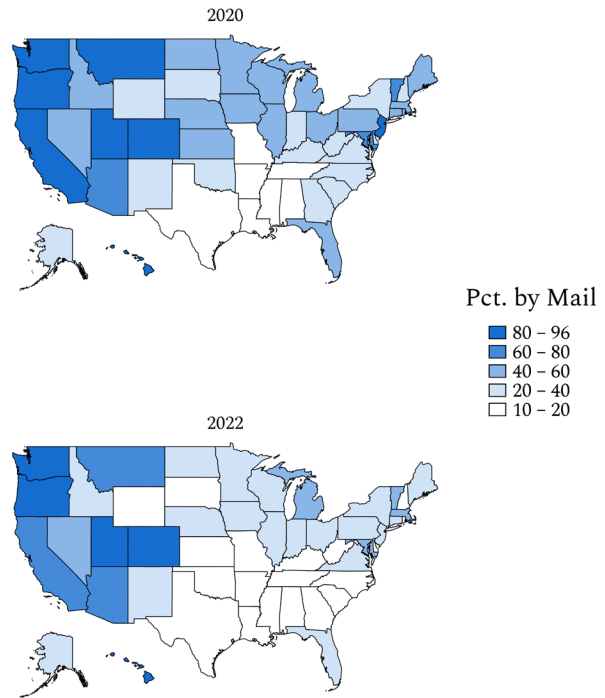
The data tokens represent the mix in 2022. The grey lines trace the path back to the mix in 2020.

Data sources: Census Bureau, Voting and Registration Supplement

Close examination of the triplot graph reveals clusters of states that had very similar vote-mode portfolios in 2022. The five states in the lower left-hand corner of the plot saw at least 85 percent of ballots cast by mail (as reported by survey participants) and single-digit percentages of voters using either in-person mode. These states—Washington, Oregon, Colorado, Hawaii, and Utah—can be called (fairly) pure “vote-by-mail” states. The six states at the top of the graph saw at least 85 percent of ballots cast on Election Day and single-digit reports of early and absentee voting. These states—Alabama, Missouri, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Oklahoma—can be called (fairly) pure “Election Day” states. There are no states that even approach pure early voting states. The six states in the trapezoid in the lower right—Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, New Mexico, Georgia, and Texas—each saw between 46 percent and 60 percent of ballots cast early and almost all the remaining ballots cast on Election Day. (Only Georgia and New Mexico saw more than 10 percent of ballots cast by mail—11 percent and 13 percent, respectively.)

These two maps help to visualize the geographic distribution of the decline of voting by mail from 2020 to 2022. Prior to 2020, by far the greatest percentage of mail ballots were cast in the Western states. In 2020, voting by mail occurred at very high rates nationwide, with one major exception—the south-central part of the country, ranging from Texas up to Missouri and over to Tennessee. In 2022, the Mountain West and Pacific coast states continued with high levels of mail balloting, while the area of the country with low levels—defined as fewer than 20% of voters—spread to include virtually all of the South (excepting Florida) and pockets of the upper Midwest and Northeast. In general, the upper tier of states also saw declines in voting by mail, although at levels that were significantly greater than before 2020.

PERCENTAGE OF BALLOTS CAST BY MAIL, 2020 AND 2022

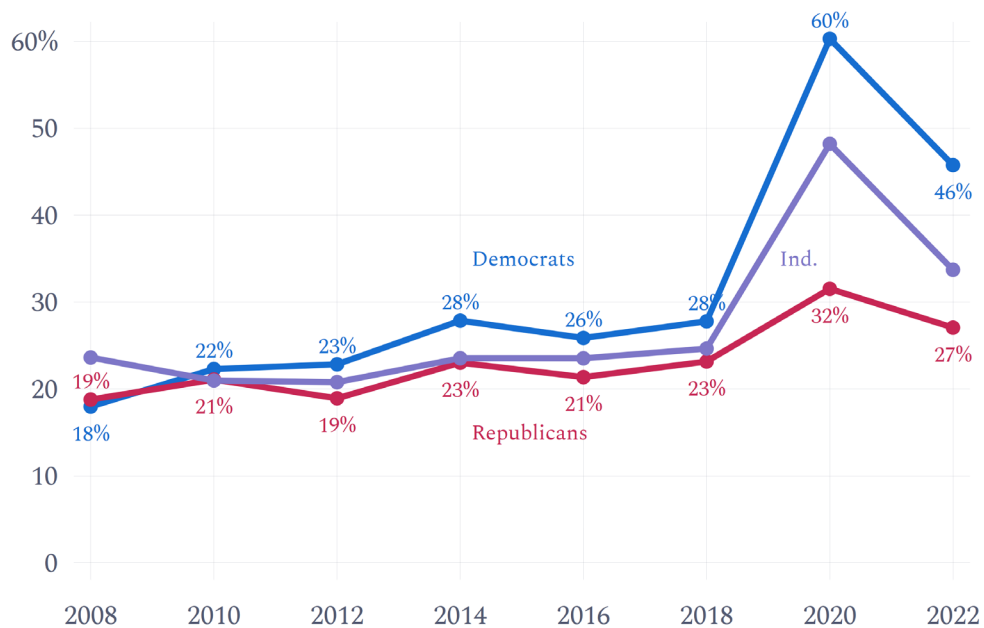


Data sources: Census Bureau, Voting and Registration Supplement, 2020; SPAE, 2022

Finally, we examine the most politically important feature of the changing patterns of voting by mail: that related to party. The 2020 election saw the development of a strong divide between Republicans and Democrats over the use of mail ballots, first at the elite level, and then at the grassroots. As the following graph shows, between 2008 and 2016 Democrats were

slightly more likely to vote by mail than Republicans. However, this difference was primarily an artifact of which states had chosen to conduct their elections entirely by mail. In 2020, the partisan gap in voting by mail opened up wide. In 2022, the gap closed somewhat, although this was primarily due more to Democrats pulling back than Republicans.

VOTING BY MAIL, BY PARTY



Data sources: SPAE (2008, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2020, 2022); Cooperative Election Study (2010, 2018)

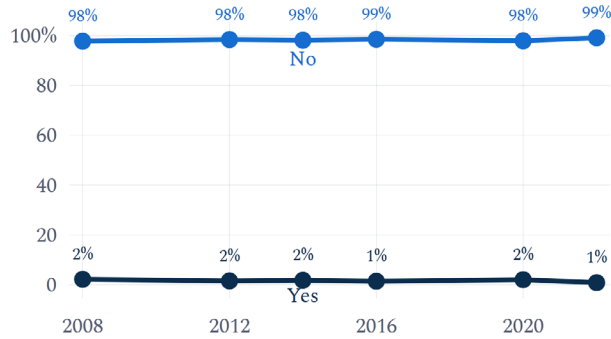
THE EXPERIENCE OF VOTING BY MAIL

A core feature of the SPAE is that it asks voters directly about their experience voting. With respect to voting by mail, the SPAE includes three key questions, which are reflected in the following graphs. In every iteration of the survey, mail voters have been asked whether they had any problems getting their absentee or mail ballots sent to them, if they had any problems marking their ballot, and how easy it was to follow all the instructions necessary to cast their ballot and return it to be counted.

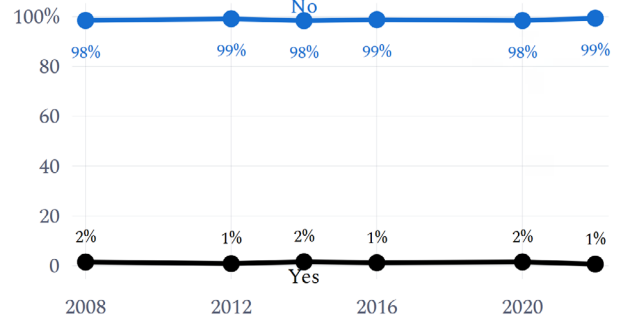
As the graphs below show, the experience of mail voters in 2022 was similar to prior years. Ninety-nine percent of mail voters stated there were no problems in getting their absentee or mail ballot sent to them, 99 percent stated they encountered no problems marking or completing their ballot, and 82 percent said it was very easy to follow all the instructions necessary to cast their ballot and return it. In the end, 73 percent of voters by mail said they were very confident that their vote was counted as intended.

EXPERIENCE CASTING A MAIL BALLOT

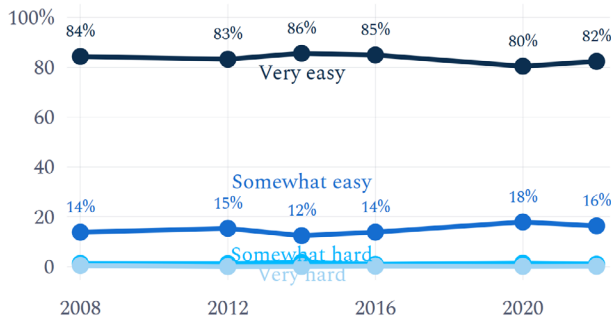
Were there any problems getting your absentee or mail-in ballot sent to you?



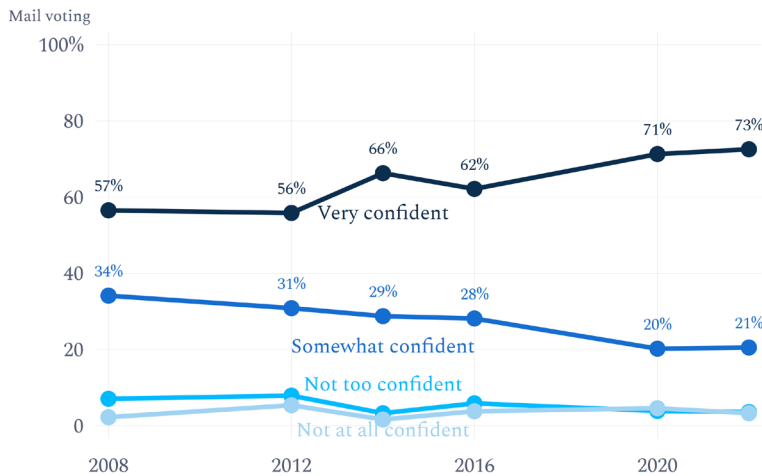
Did you encounter any problems marking or completing your ballot that may have interfered with your ability to cast your vote as intended?



Overall, how easy was it to follow all the instructions necessary to cast your ballot and return it to be counted?



How confident are you that your vote in the General Election was counted as you intended?



RETURNING MAIL BALLOTS

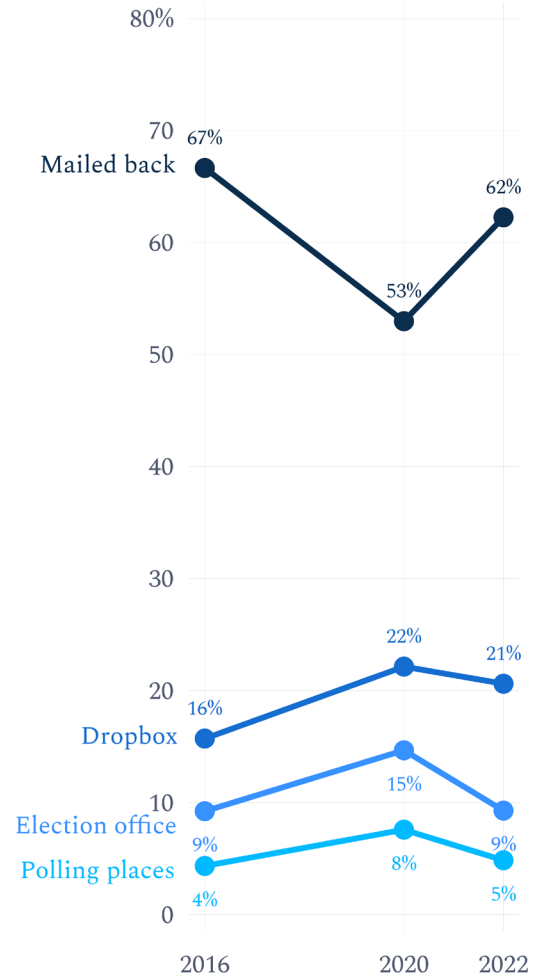
An important issue that arose in the 2020 election was how best to return mail ballots. Historically, experience in vote-by-mail states had suggested that the most secure and convenient way for voters to return their mail ballots was through drop boxes provided by the election authority. In addition, controversy arose over the capacity of the United States Postal Service to deliver mail ballots in time to be counted in November. Election administrators responded by expanding opportunities to return ballots through modes other than the mail, and voters took them up on those opportunities.

However, the use of drop boxes became politically controversial, as did most features of mail-voting policy. This led some states to outlaw the use of drop boxes after 2020. It may also have led Republicans to be less likely to use drop boxes as a means of returning mail ballots.

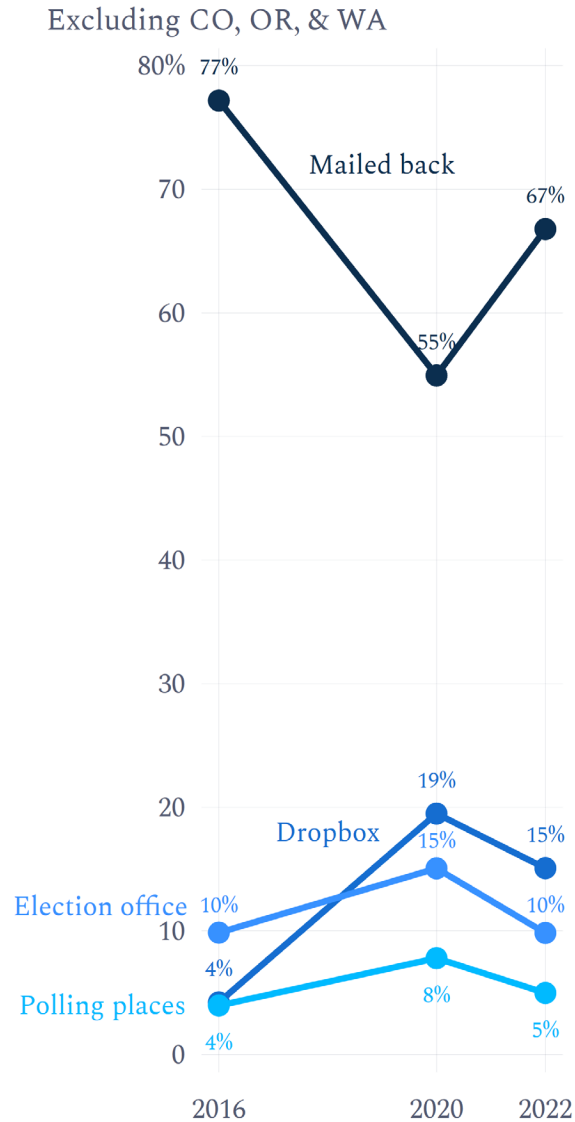
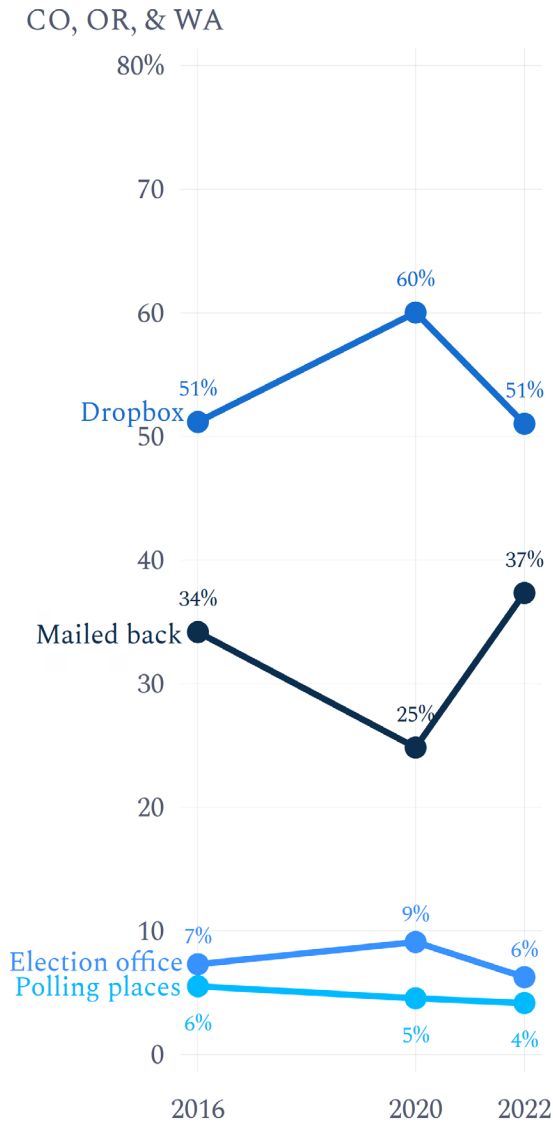
As the accompanying graph shows, although nearly half the mail ballots in 2020 were returned in person (down from 2016, when two-thirds of all mail ballots were returned through the Postal Service), the share of ballots returned by mail rebounded in 2022. One interesting detail about this rebound, however, is that the use of drop boxes did not decline in 2022. Instead, voters became less likely to report returning their ballots at election offices or polling places.

Of course, most of the country was new to the experience of voting by mail in 2020 and patterns of mail-ballot return may have been different among those new to voting by mail compared to those who were old hands. It is instructive to compare how voters returned their ballots in the more long-standing vote-by-mail states of Colorado, Oregon, and Washington to the rest of the nation; the next two graphs show how voters in those three states returned their ballots compared to voters in the other states and D.C.

HOW MAIL BALLOTS WERE RETURNED



HOW MAIL BALLOTS WERE RETURNED



It is notable that drop box usage declined in both the long-standing vote-by-mail states and in all the other states. Indeed, drop box usage dropped more in the long-standing states (9 points) than in all other states (4 points), although in proportional terms, the declines were similar.

In 2022, these rates were 62% for both parties. Explanations for these differences may include greater emphasis among Democratic campaigns to get mail ballots returned in person in 2022 or, more likely, greater skepticism among Democrats about whether the Postal Service would deliver their ballots on time.

Partisanship may have played a role in the return to the Postal Service as a mode to return mail ballots. In 2020, 58% of Republicans reported returning their mail ballots by mail, compared to 52% of Democrats.

DISRUPTIONS AT DROP BOXES

Prior to the 2022 election, some election experts expressed concern that groups or lone individuals would intimidate voters coming to deposit their ballots at drop boxes or vote at polling places. Although there were isolated reports of disruptions at polling places, the consensus among observers was that voting went smoothly, despite these reports. Media reports and other attempts to compile lists of voter problems run into the obvious problem that they are anecdotal and rarely systematic. As a consequence, there is value to asking a representative sample of voters what they saw when they went to vote or drop off their ballot.

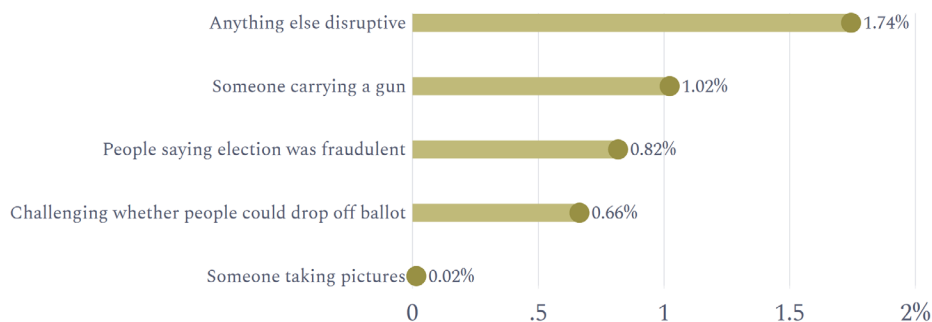
To address this issue, the SPAE asked the following question of those who reported that they deposited their ballot at a drop box: “When you returned your ballot to a drop box, did you directly observe any of the following events taking place near the drop box?” The closed-ended response categories were these:

- » People peacefully holding signs or giving out literature in support of a candidate or ballot question.
- » Individuals or groups of people casting doubt on whether the election was fraudulent.

- » Individuals or groups of people seeming to challenge whether some people were properly dropping off ballots.
- » Individuals or groups, other than police officers, carrying a gun.
- » Someone taking pictures of voters or election workers who did not seem to be a reporter.
- » Anything else that seemed disruptive.
- » Respondents were also allowed to report that they saw none of these things.

Among those who responded to the question, two percent stated that they saw people peacefully holding signs or giving out campaign literature, but nothing disruptive. Roughly one percent of drop-box returners saw someone carrying a gun, someone saying the election was fraudulent, or someone challenging people dropping off ballots. Despite being frequently covered in the press, almost no one—only 0.2 percent of those who returned a ballot at a drop box—stated they saw someone, other than a reporter, taking pictures of people returning ballots. Overall, 95.6 percent of those who returned ballots using drop boxes reported nothing disruptive when they did so.

WHEN YOU RETURNED YOUR BALLOT TO A DROP BOX, DID YOU DIRECTLY OBSERVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING EVENTS TAKING PLACE NEAR THE DROP BOX?



The “other” category was the most frequently chosen response, by 1.7% of relevant respondents. Only six respondents chose the “anything else” response. They were invited to describe what they observed. Here are their quotes:

- » People sitting 30 feet away from drop box, library was closed at the time.

- » There was a sign that warned people not to carry guns within 100 ft of the building.
- » Stickers were stuck onto the drop portion bashing a candidate.
- » There was a guy wearing some sort of army type clothes standing around with his cell phone but he didn’t say anything to us and we left.
- » Closed circuit camera on the area.
- » Poll watcher in car, +30ft away.

BALLOT TRACKING

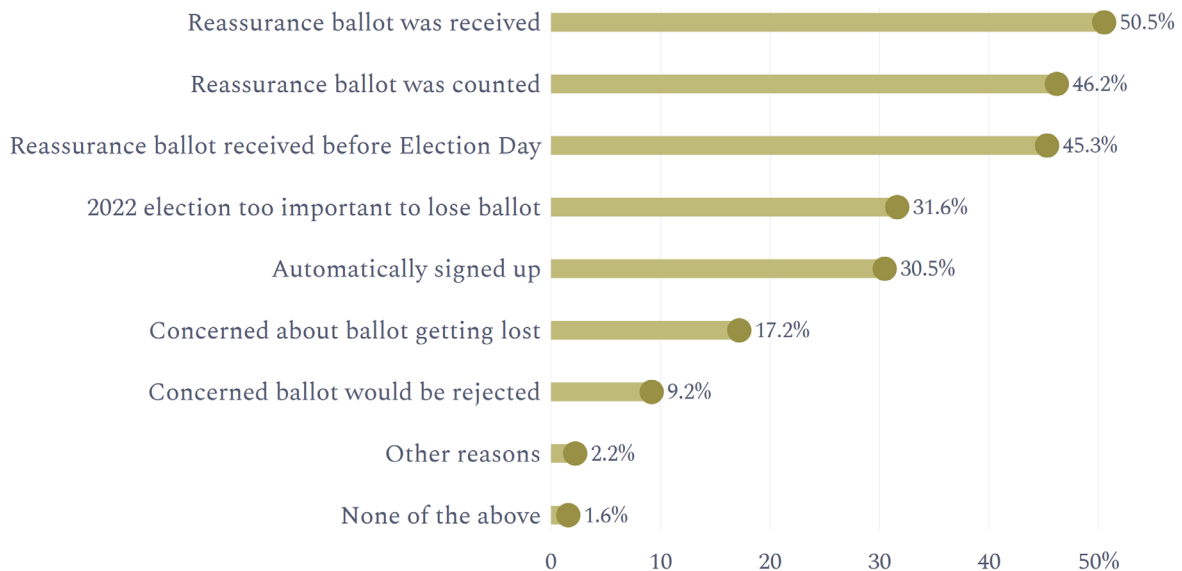
The availability of online ballot tracking for those voting by mail has grown significantly over the past few elections. The availability of ballot tracking exploded during the 2020 election, paralleling the explosion of voting by mail. In 2022, almost every state offered by-mail voters to track whether their mail ballot had been received for counting.

In 2022, for the first time, the SPAE asked respondents who reported voting by mail, “Did you track your mail/absentee ballot online or through text/email messages?” Among respondents to this question, 40 percent said they used online ballot tracking. For respondents who reported they used ballot tracking, a follow-up question asked “Which of the following describe reasons you chose to track your ballot? Choose all that apply.” The response categories were the following:

- » I was automatically signed up for ballot tracking.
- » I was concerned my ballot would be lost in the mail.
- » I wanted reassurance my ballot was received by the election authorities.
- » I wanted reassurance my ballot was counted by the election authorities.
- » I wanted reassurance my ballot would be received/accepted before Election Day deadline.
- » I was concerned my ballot would be rejected.
- » I believed the 2022 election was too important to risk my ballot being rejected.
- » Other.
- » None of the above.

The three most common reasons pertained to reassurance that the ballot was received, counted, and/or received before Election Day; 75.1 percent of respondents chose one of these three reasons.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBE REASONS YOU CHOSE TO TRACK YOUR BALLOT? CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY.



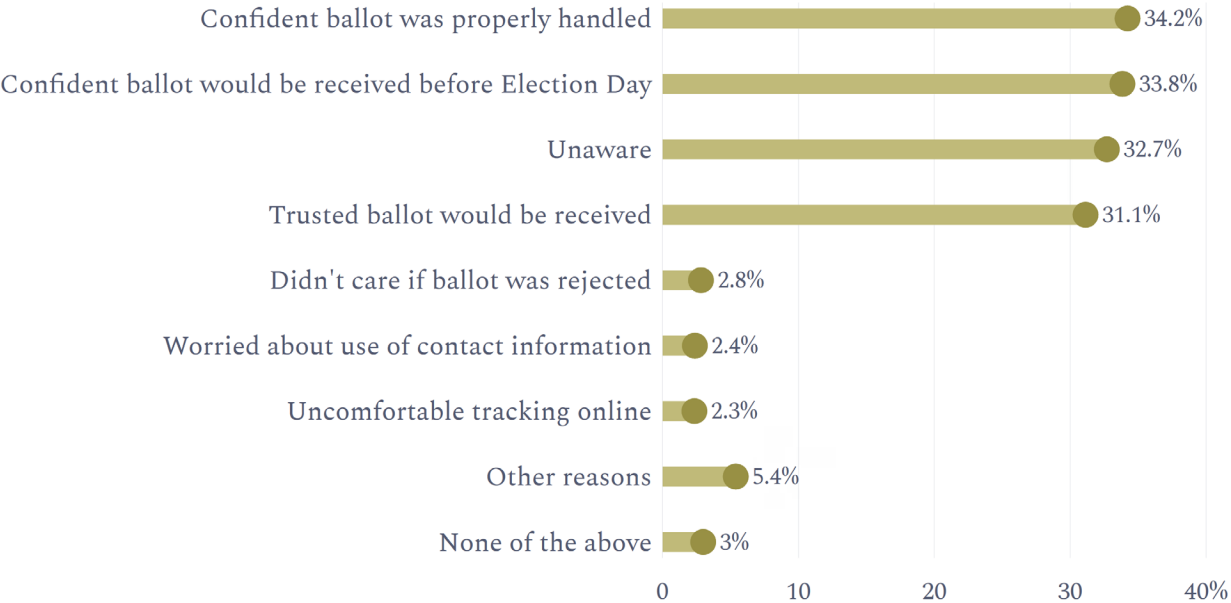
Most respondents—60 percent—who reported voting by mail also reported that they did not use ballot tracking. These respondents were asked, “Which of the following describe reasons you chose not to track your ballot? Choose all that apply.” The reasons offered were the following:

- » I was not aware that I could track my ballot.
- » I fully trusted my ballot would be received and counted by the election authorities.

- » I did not feel comfortable tracking my ballot information online or through text messages.
- » I felt confident my ballot would be received/counted before the Election Day deadline.
- » I felt confident my ballot was correctly handled and would be accepted.
- » I did not care too much if my ballot was rejected.
- » I was worried my contact information would be used for non-election purposes.
- » Other
- » None of the above

Among those who reported not using online ballot tracking, nearly one-third (32.7 percent) reported they were unaware that ballot tracking was available. Among the remaining non-tracking respondents, 82.9 percent stated that they were either confident the ballot was properly handled, confident the ballot would be received before Election Day, or trusted the ballot would be received on time to be counted. Very few respondents reported discomfort that information used by ballot trackers would be improperly used.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBE REASONS YOU CHOSE NOT TO TRACK YOUR BALLOT? CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY.



VOTING IN-PERSON

Although the expansion of voting by mail was the most notable issue in election administration in 2020, voting in person remained important. Indeed, as previously noted, in-person voting rebounded in 2022.

The challenge of voting in-person in 2020 and 2022 can be split into three categories: people, places, and things. That is, responding to the demand for voting in-person has been strained by the potential lack of poll workers, polling places, and provisions necessary to carry out voting. If voting by mail had not been so successful in 2020, the in-person voting system would perhaps have been under an insurmountable strain. On the other hand, the rebound away from mail ballots in 2022 may have exacerbated strains on the in-person voting system that had been avoided in 2020 by reducing demand on the system. Nonetheless, as in 2020, voters who cast their ballots in person in 2022 ultimately reported that their experiences were very similar to in-person voters in the past.

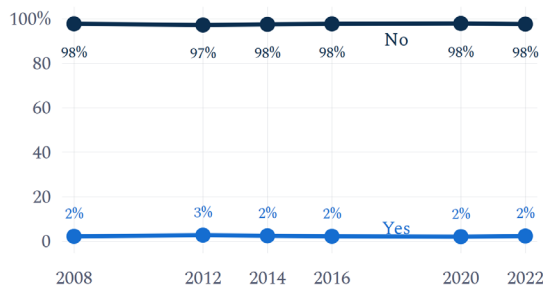
THE IN-PERSON VOTING EXPERIENCE

The SPAE asks in-person voters about problems they had with voter registration and voting equipment, how well things were run in the polling place, and the job performance of poll workers. As with mail voting, in-person voters reported very similar, and overall positive, experiences to past years. Among those who voted on Election Day, for instance, 98 percent said they had no problems with registration when they tried to vote, 97 percent did not encounter any problems with the voting equipment, 83 percent said the polling place was very well-run, and 70 percent said the performance of the poll workers at the polling place was excellent. These statistics are virtually identical to all past SPAE studies.

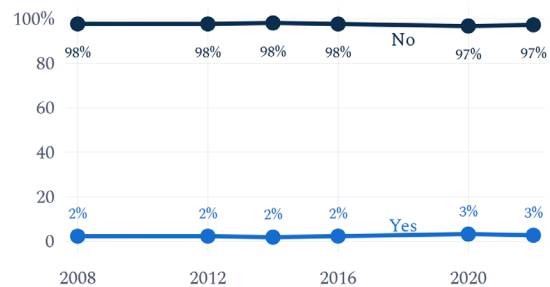
In addition, 68 percent of the Election Day voters said that they were very confident that their ballot was counted as intended, with another 24 percent saying they were somewhat confident. The percentage of Election Day voters who were very confident that their vote was counted as intended rebounded from 2020.

EXPERIENCE VOTING ON ELECTION DAY

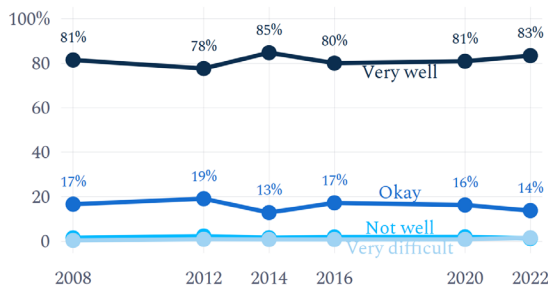
Was there a problem with your voter registration when you tried to vote?



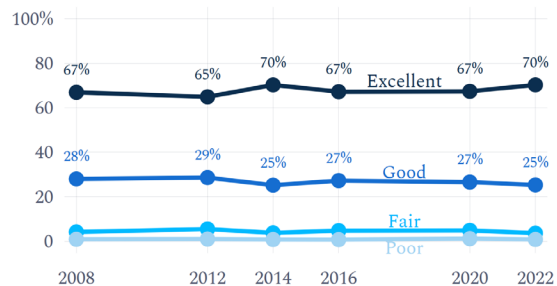
Did you encounter any problems with the voting equipment or the ballot that may have interfered with your ability to cast your vote as intended?



How well were things run at the polling place where you voted?

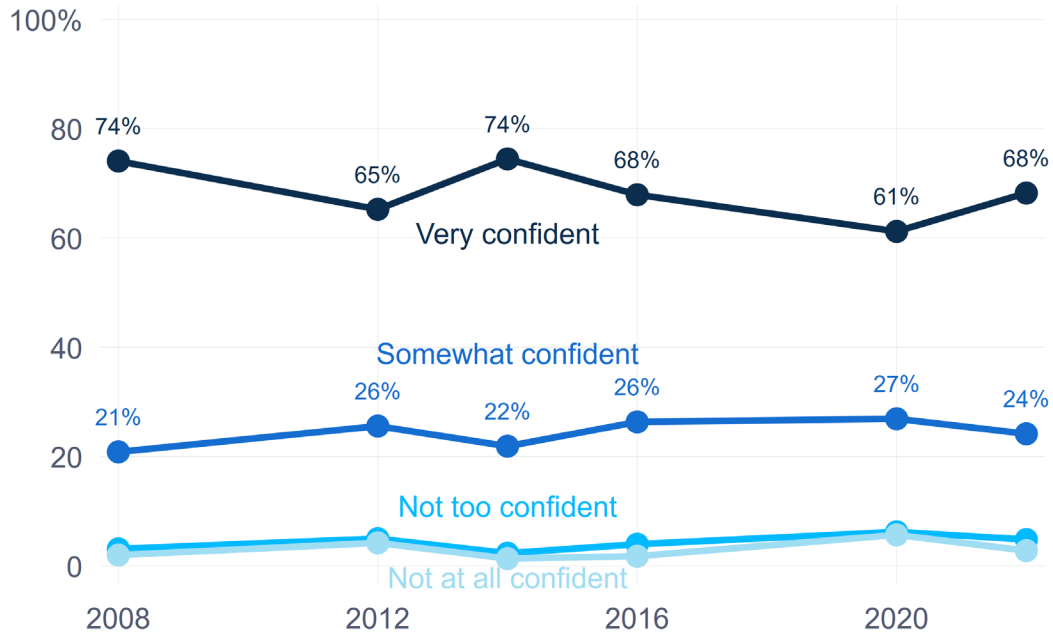


Please rate the job performance of the poll workers at the polling place where you voted.



HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU THAT YOUR VOTE IN THE GENERAL ELECTION WAS COUNTED AS YOU INTENDED?

Election Day voting



WHERE PEOPLE VOTED

Arranging for places for people to vote in-person has become greater in recent years. The COVID pandemic in 2020 accelerated the pace of difficulties. In 2020, with schools closing, churches not holding services, rising concerns about infections in nursing homes, and apprehension among first responders about interacting with the public, the availability of traditional high-demand polling places — schools, churches, senior centers, and fire stations — was in question.

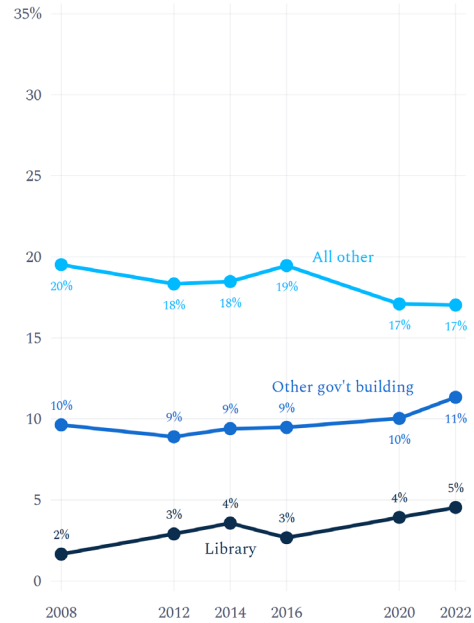
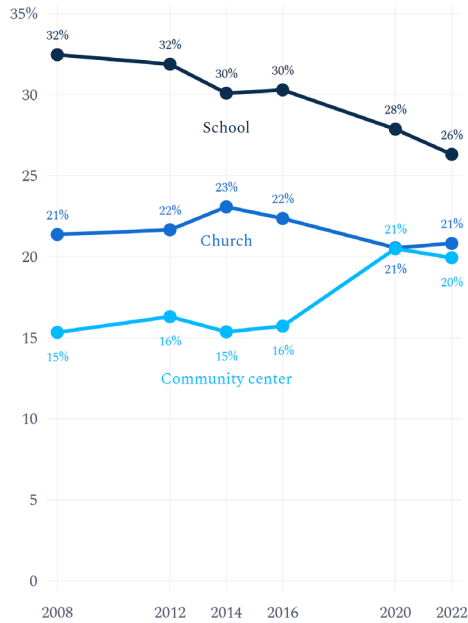
Patterns related to in-person voting locations continued from 2020 into 2022. The major long-term trend has been the decline in the use of schools, which continued in 2022. Still, 26 percent of Election-Day voters reported casting a ballot in a school, 21 percent in a community center, 20 percent in a church, 10 percent in other types of government buildings (courthouses, government office buildings, etc.), and 17 percent in all other places. None of these percentages are sta-

tistically different from 2020, although we can confirm that the long-term downward trend in voting in schools is significant.

Early voting typically occurs in a different collection of buildings, because voting is stretched out over a longer period and more people typically frequent them. “Other government buildings,” which includes court houses, city halls, and election offices, has been by far the most common place where early in-person votes were cast. The decline in the use of these facilities continued in 2022. As with Election Day voting, the usage rates of building types were nonetheless very similar to what was observed in 2020. In 2022, 35 percent of early in-person voters cast a ballot in an “other government building,” 21 percent in a community center, 14 percent in a library, 11 percent in a school, 5 percent in a church, and 14 percent in all other facilities.

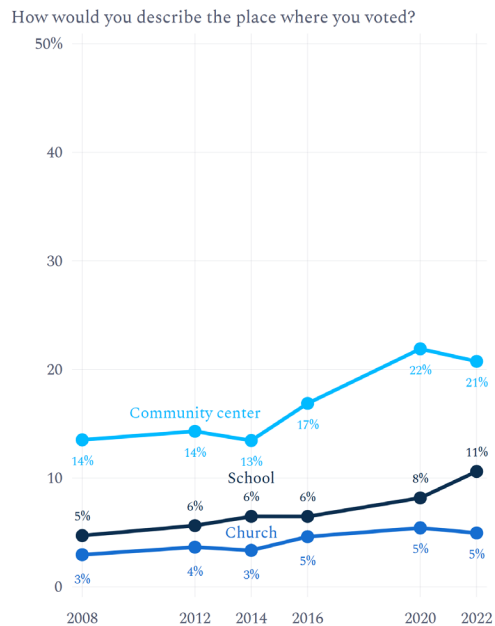
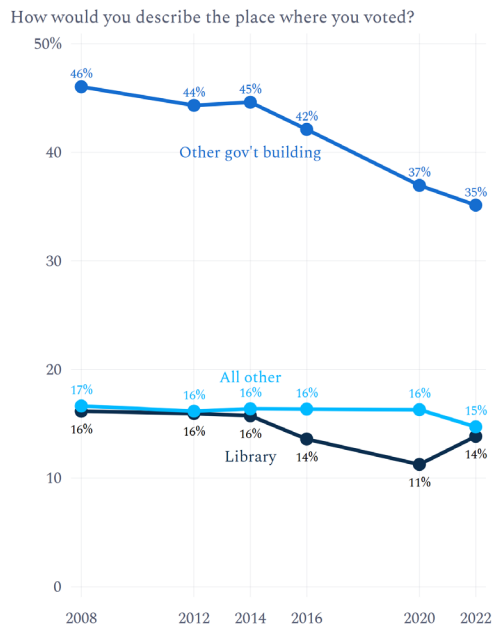
HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE PLACE WHERE YOU VOTED?

Election Day voters



HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE PLACE WHERE YOU VOTED?

Early voters



WAIT TIMES TO VOTE

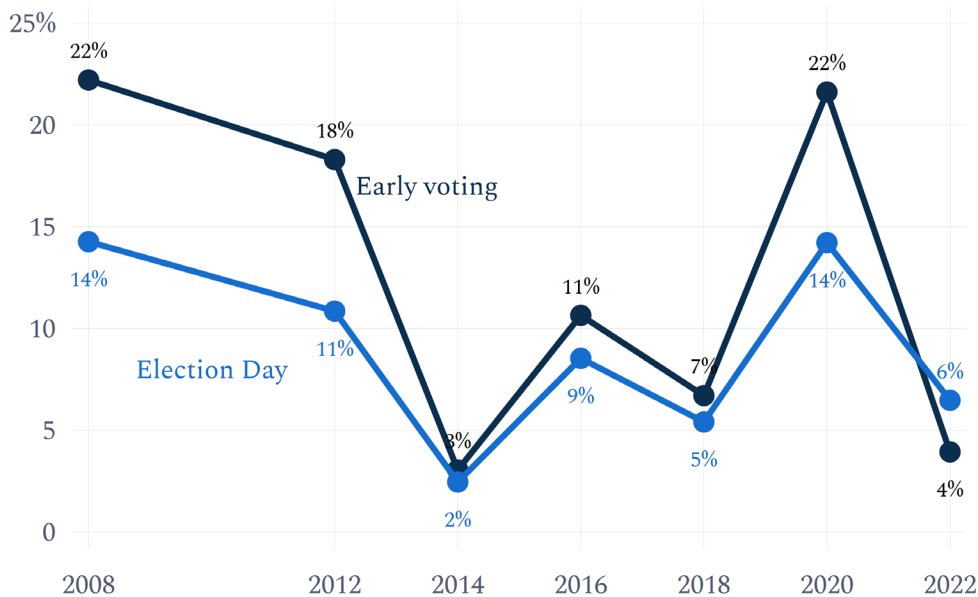
The issue of voter wait times became salient immediately after the 2012 election, when President Obama cited long lines in Florida during his victory speech, calling on Americans “to fix that.” Efforts to reduce wait times were successful in the following three federal elections, but reared back up in 2020. Wait times were much greater in 2020 than in 2016, reversing gains made over the preceding decade.

Wait times in 2022 returned to the levels seen in the 2018 midterm election, which were higher than 2014.

The average Election Day voter waited six minutes before voting; the average early voter waited four minutes. (These differences were not statistically significant.) That wait times would be much less than in 2020 is unsurprising, because long wait times are a sign of congestion in polling places as the pace of arrivals challenges the capacity of the system. In-person turnout is less in a midterm election than in a presidential election, but local officials tend not to reduce polling place capacity—measured by the number of voting booths, poll books, and voting machines/scanners—to the same degree as the decline in turnout.

APPROXIMATELY HOW LONG DID YOU HAVE TO WAIT IN LINE TO VOTE?

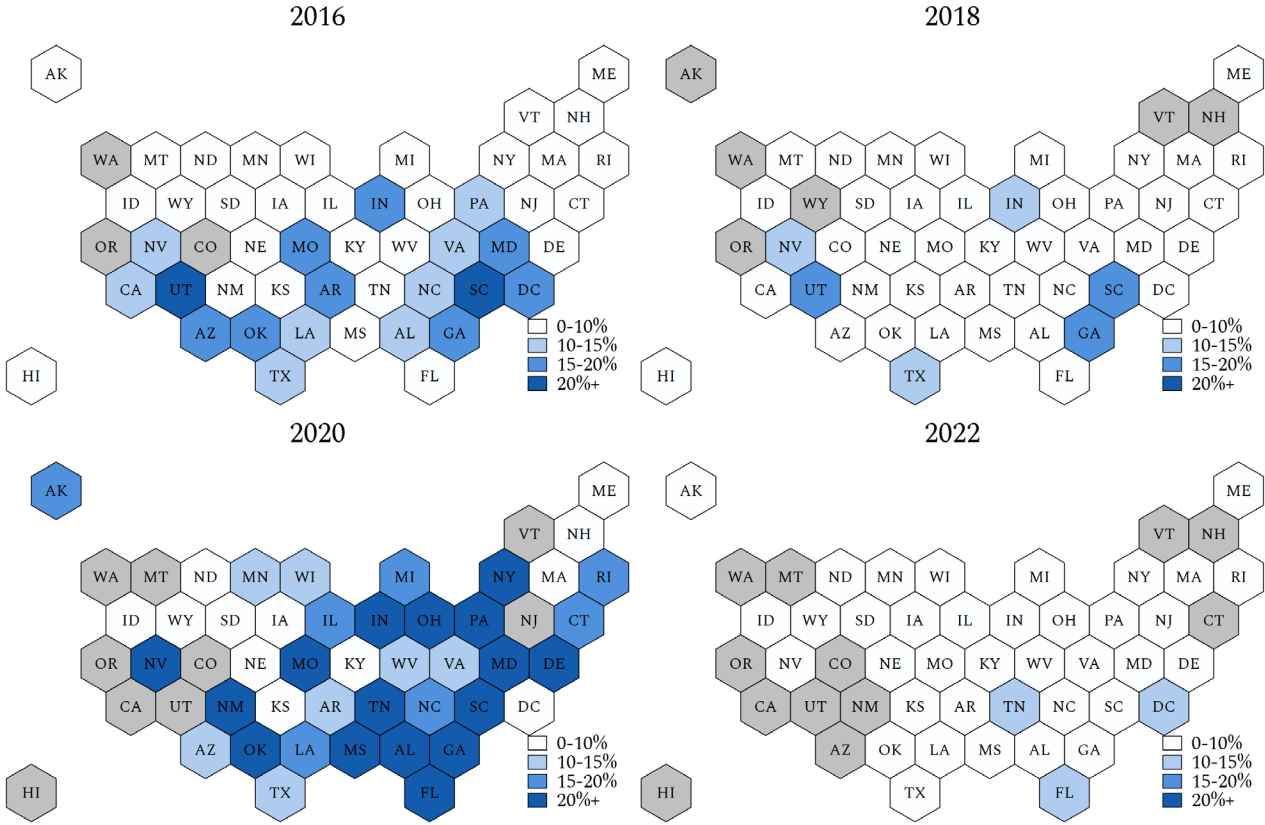
Those waiting more than 30 minutes



Note: Data from 2018 are from the Cooperative Election Study.

There were a few pockets of long wait times, measured by the percentage of voters reporting that they waited more than thirty minutes to cast a ballot. (The thirty-minute benchmark was established in the 2014 report of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration.) In 2022, two states (Florida and Tennessee) and the District of Columbia saw more than 10 percent of in-person voters waiting over thirty minutes to vote in person. As in most years, African Americans were more likely to report waiting more than 30 minutes to vote (8.2 percent) than Whites (3.4 percent).

PERCENTAGE OF IN-PERSON VOTERS WHO WAITED LONGER THAN 30 MINUTES TO VOTE



Note: States with fewer than 50 observations in the data set are colored grey.

DISRUPTIONS IN POLLING PLACES

The 2022 election was held in the context of heightened concerns over the safety and security of election workers and facilities. Although most of the public concern pertained to election officials and their offices, the elections community also had concerns that violence, or at least disruptions, would erupt in polling places themselves.

To gauge the degree to which voters encountered concerning behavior, the SPAE included two related batteries of questions for the first time in 2022. The first asked about disruptions observed in polling places, both on Election Day and during early voting. The second asked about activities outside of polling places. (A related set of questions were asked of those who used drop boxes. See the voting-by-mail section for a discussion of these items.)

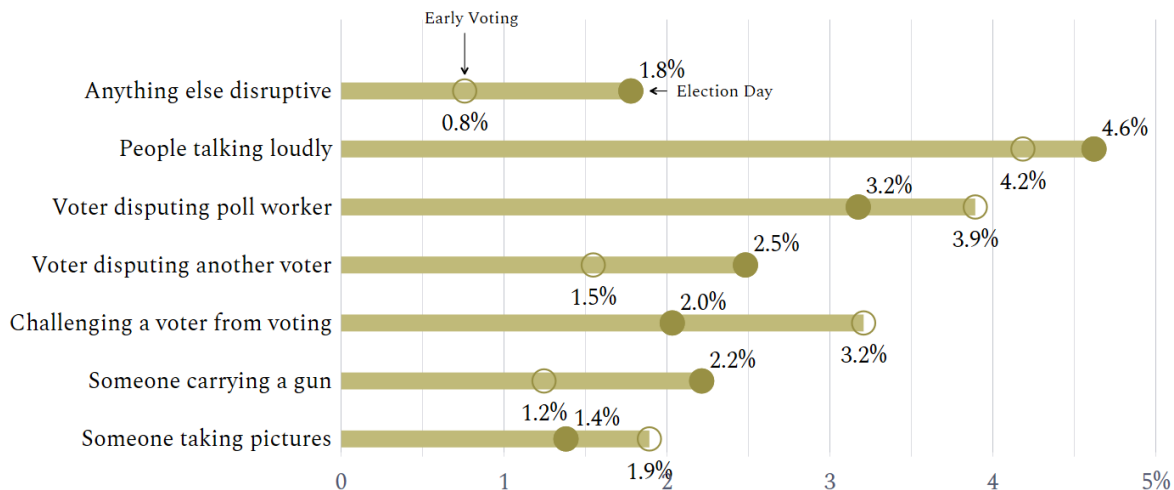
Voters who cast their votes in person, either on Election Day or early, were asked, “When you went to vote,

did you directly observe any of the following events taking place in the polling place? (Mark all that apply.)” The events mentioned were

- » People in the polling place talking loudly or acting in a way that disrupted the voting.
- » A voter in a dispute with an official election worker.
- » A voter in a dispute with another voter.
- » An individual, other than a police officer, carrying a gun.
- » Someone who was not an official election worker challenging whether someone could vote.
- » Someone taking pictures of voters or election workers who did not seem to be a reporter.
- » Anything else that seemed disruptive.

Respondents were also allowed to state that they observed none of these events.

WHEN YOU WENT TO VOTE, DID YOU DIRECTLY OBSERVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING EVENTS TAKING PLACE IN THE POLLING PLACE?



An overwhelming number of in-person voters—90 percent of Election Day voters and 91 percent of early voters—reported that they observed none of these potentially disruptive behaviors. The most common disruptive behaviors observed involved disputes with poll workers or voters, or people talking loudly. (Often, the loud talking was observed along with the disputes.) The disruptions observed in the two in-person vot-

ing modes were slightly different. Election Day voters were much more likely to see loud talking, voters disputing each other, and someone (other than a police officer) carrying a gun, whereas early voters were much more likely to report voters in a dispute with poll workers, voters being challenged from voting, and people taking pictures of voters.

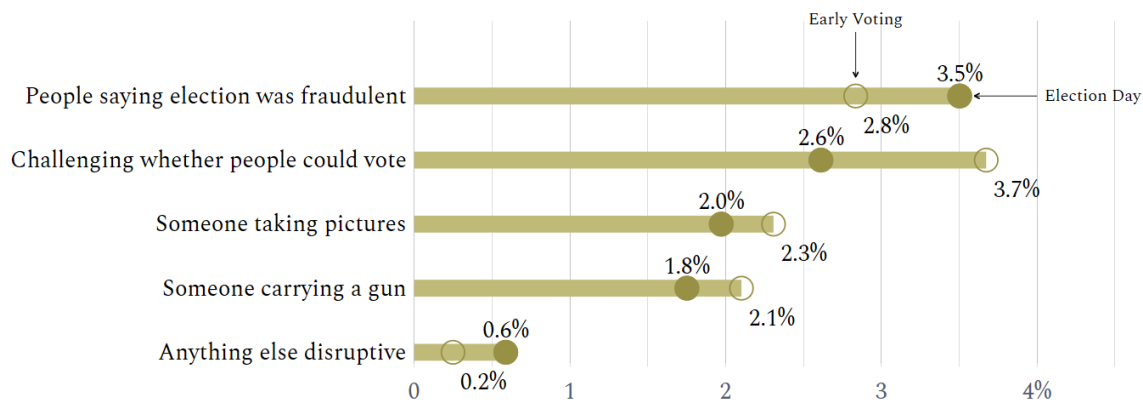
In-person voters were also asked about what they observed outside the polling place with this question: “When you went to vote, did you directly observe any of the following events taking place outside the polling place?” The possible responses were the following:

- » People peacefully holding signs or giving out literature in support of a candidate or ballot question.
- » Individuals or groups of people casting doubt on whether the election was fraudulent.
- » Individuals or groups of people seeming to challenge whether some people could enter the polling place to vote.
- » Individuals or groups, other than police officers, carrying a gun.
- » Someone taking pictures of voters or election workers who did not seem to be a reporter.

- » Anything else that seemed disruptive. (Please describe what you observed.)
- » I didn’t observe any of these things.

The first response, people peacefully holding signs or passing out literature, should not be considered a disruption, although voters may find even these activities to be intimidating. Twenty-one point five percent of respondents reported seeing this type of activity. Turning our attention to the remaining activities, the two most common outside disruptions involved people protesting that the election was fraudulent and challenging whether others could vote. Less common, but still observed by two percent of respondents, was people taking pictures of those coming to vote and someone other than a police officer carrying a gun.

WHEN YOU WENT TO VOTE, DID YOU DIRECTLY OBSERVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING EVENTS TAKING PLACE OUTSIDE THE POLLING PLACE?



NOT VOTING

Sixteen percent of respondents in 2022 reported that they did not vote. To understand the reasons, non-voting respondents were asked “What was the main reason you did not vote?” The categories these respondents were presented are the following:

- » I forgot
- » I’m not interested
- » Too busy
- » Did not like the candidates
- » I am not registered
- » I did not have the correct form of identification
- » Out of town
- » Sick or disabled
- » Transportation
- » Bad weather
- » The line at the polls was too long
- » I was not allowed to vote at the polls, even though I tried
- » I requested but did not receive an absentee ballot
- » I did not know where to vote
- » I did not feel that I knew enough about the choices
- » I was worried about the COVID-19 virus
- » Other
- » Don’t know

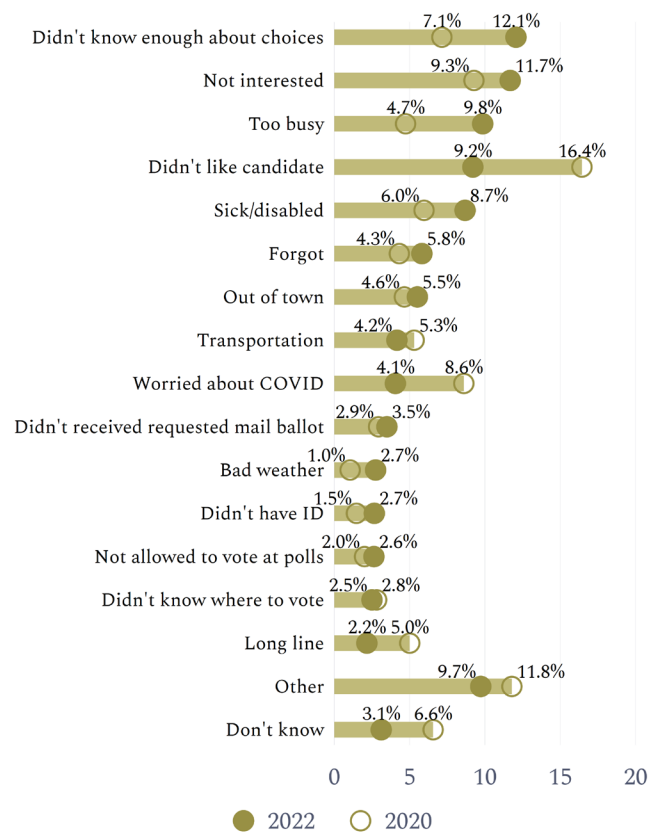
Respondents who answered “other” were invited to write in their reason.

The three most common responses in 2022 were “didn’t know enough about choice” (12.1%), “not interested” (11.7%), and “too busy” (9.8%). A sizeable number of respondents, 9.7 percent, chose the “other” response. This was truly a catch-all category, but significant numbers of respondents who chose this category mentioned believing the election was rigged, having to work, and a belief that elections were one-sided in their state.

It is notable that reasons for not voting due to election administration reasons, such as not receiving a mail ballot, not having an ID, not knowing where to vote, and long lines, were given less often in 2022 than reasons associated with the respondent’s own situation, including being disengaged from the process or being sick or out of town. The excuse of not voting because of long lines was given less often in 2022 (2.2%) than in 2020 (5.0%).

The frequencies of reasons given for not voting in 2022 were similar to those in 2020, with a few notable exceptions. Not liking the candidates was mentioned much less often in 2022 (9.2%) than in 2020 (16.4%) as was a fear of COVID (4.1% vs. 8.6%). With these reasons being reduced in 2022, excuses related to the voter’s own circumstances and disengagement from the process took on a more prominent role in 2022, as is true in most midterm elections.

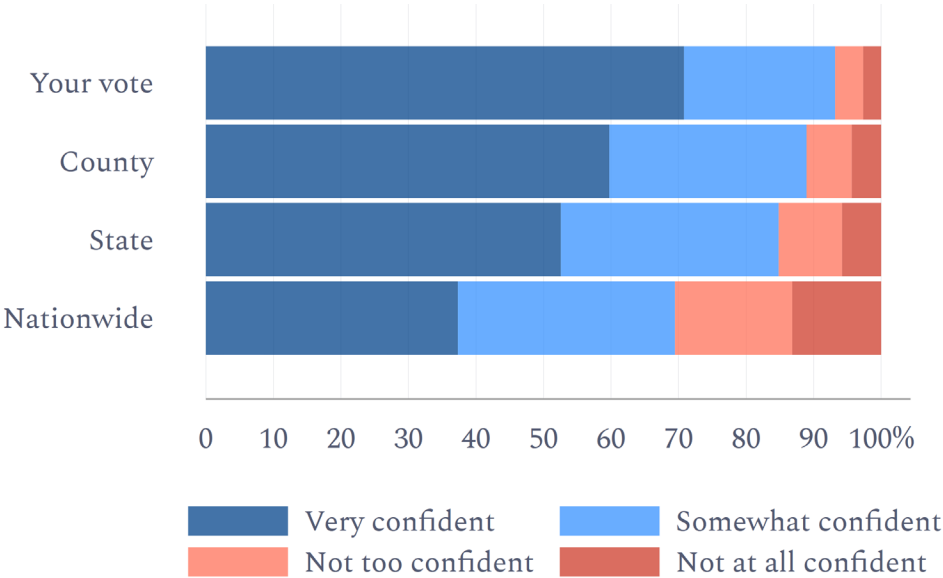
WHAT WAS THE MAIN REASON YOU DID NOT VOTE?



CONFIDENCE IN THE ELECTION

With all of the discord over the postelection period, there has been renewed attention to confidence in the electoral process and confidence in our democracy. The SPAE asks a series of questions that takes a very focused approach to the issue of confidence. It asks whether voters were confident that their vote was counted as intended. In addition, it asks all respondents whether they voted or not, and whether they were confident that votes in their city, county, and nationwide were counted as intended. The general pattern of responses in 2022 was similar to that of past years. Respondents were the most confident that their own vote was counted as intended, less confident that votes in their county were counted as intended, slightly less confident about votes in the state, and the least confident about votes nationwide.

HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU THAT VOTES [AT LEVEL] WERE COUNTED AS INTENDED?



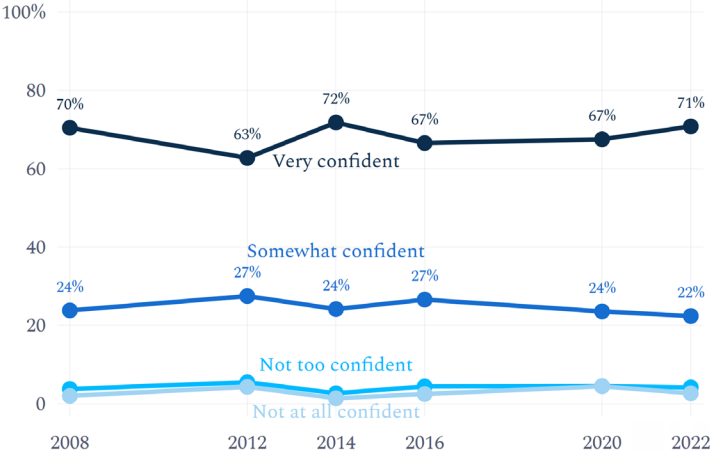
CONFIDENCE IN ONE'S OWN VOTE VS. THE COUNTY, STATE, AND NATION

Beneath these general patterns are important dynamics that reflect how confidence has changed over time and how it varies across groups.

thirds of respondents were very confident that their own personal votes were counted as intended in 2022. The results on this score have been virtually unchanged over the past two decades.

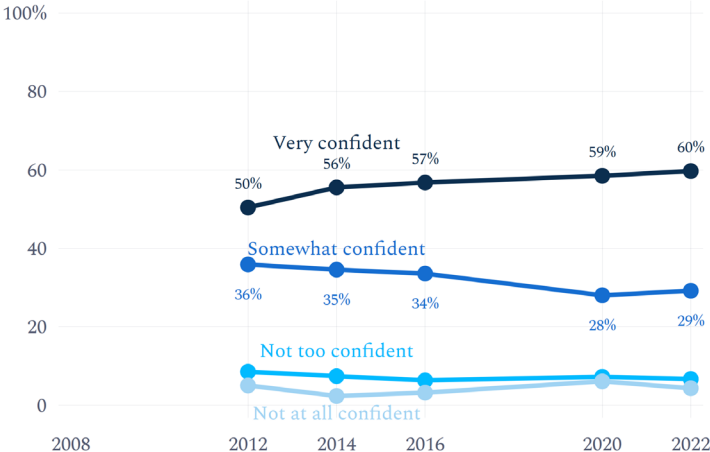
We start this discussion with the respondent's own vote. As was true with the past several years, two-

HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU THAT YOUR VOTE IN THE GENERAL ELECTION WAS COUNTED AS YOU INTENDED?



Although confidence in the vote count at the county level has been lower than confidence in one's own vote, the time trend also remained stable in 2022 compared to past years.

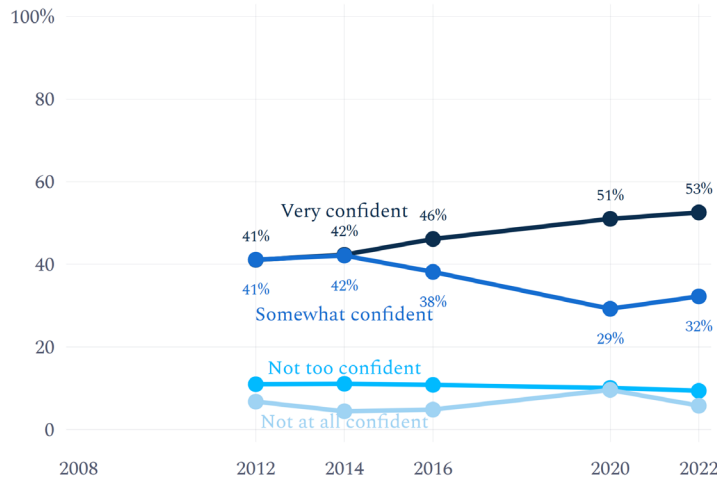
HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU THAT VOTES IN YOUR CITY OR COUNTY WERE COUNTED AS INTENDED?



It is in asking about confidence that votes in the state were counted as intended where the movement in the time trend becomes apparent. Confidence that votes were counted as intended softened in 2020 when respondents were asked about their state. The percentage of voters who were very confident actually rose, but the percentage of those who were somewhat confident

fell significantly, from 38 percent to 29 percent. In addition, the percentage of respondents who answered “not at all confident” doubled, rising from 5 percent to 10 percent. The results in 2022 were very similar to those in 2020, although overall confidence (very confident + somewhat confident) edged up five points.

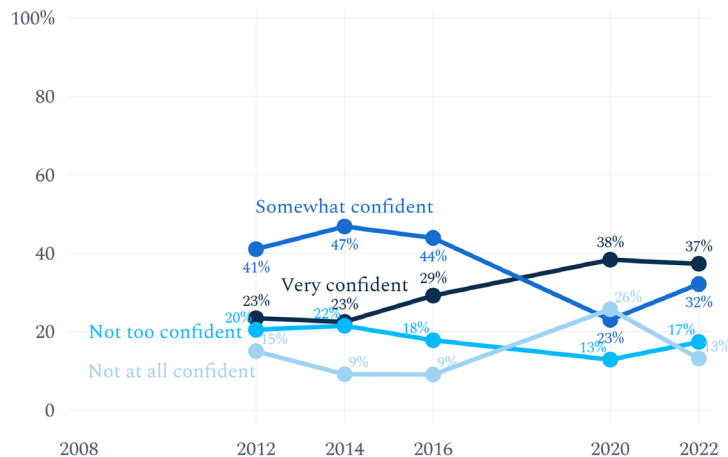
HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU THAT VOTES IN YOUR STATE WERE COUNTED AS INTENDED?



Respondents’ answers to the questions about confidence in votes nationwide most clearly reflect the political polarization on the issue. In 2020, both the percentage of respondents saying they were very confident that votes were counted as intended nationwide and the percentage reporting that they were not confident at all rose from 2016. In 2022, the fraction of respondents who stated they were not at all confident

fell back to 13 percent, in line with the results prior to 2020. The share of respondents who were somewhat confident also grew by nine points. On the whole, then, more respondents expressed at least some degree of confidence in voting nationwide in 2022 than in 2020, although overall confidence did not return to pre-2020 levels.

HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU THAT VOTES NATIONWIDE WERE COUNTED AS VOTERS INTENDED?

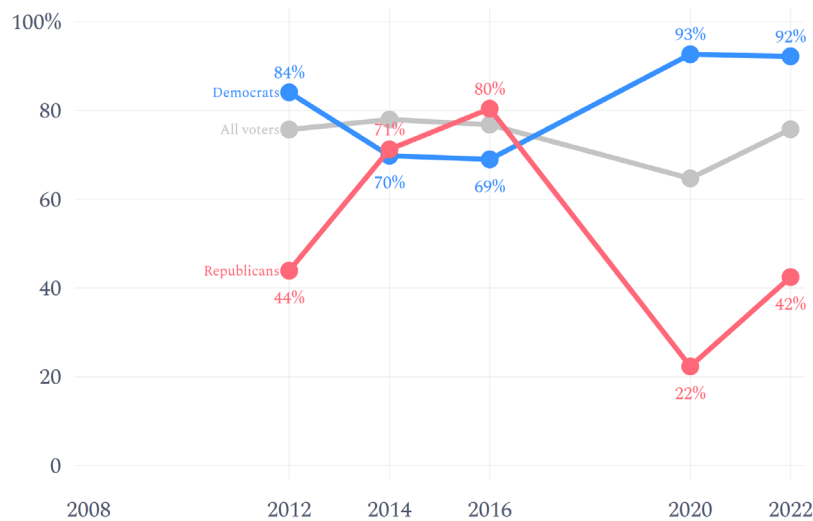


PARTISAN POLARIZATION OF CONFIDENCE IN STATE AND NATION

Recent patterns in voter confidence, especially at the state and national levels, are a product of the polarization of attitudes about the electoral process along partisan lines. In 2016, Democrats and Republicans gave similar responses to the question about nation confidence. In 2020, confidence among Democrats rose from 69 percent to 93 percent, while the percentage of

Republicans who were either very or somewhat confident in the nationwide vote count fell from 83 percent to 22 percent. Democratic confidence remained essentially unchanged in 2022, whereas Republican confidence jumped twenty points.

HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU THAT VOTES **NATIONWIDE** WERE COUNTED AS VOTERS INTENDED? (VERY OR SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT)

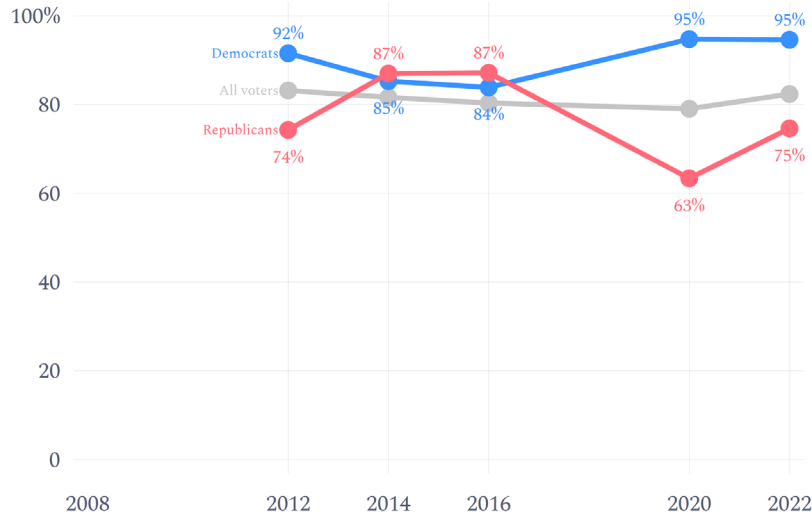


Of particular interest here is confidence about vote counting in the states. It is the states, after all, that administer elections, and that therefore bear the brunt of controversy in close and contested elections. Dissatisfaction with election administration in many states, especially battleground states, led to intense state legislative activity in 2021 and 2022.

In 2020, we reported that the gap between Democrats and Republicans in state confidence grew to a 32-point difference, after being nearly zero in 2016. While large, it was much less than the 71-point partisan gap in national confidence. In 2022, the partisan gap in statewide confidence closed somewhat, to 20 points, which was more in line with the partisan gap following the 2012 presidential election when Barack Obama defeated Mitt Romney.

In reporting on the results of the 2020 SPAE, we noted that in some states, the partisan gap in confidence about state voting was enormous, whereas in others, it was tiny or non-existent. The states that had the largest partisan gaps shared one of two characteristics: they were either states where Donald Trump barely lost (Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Nevada, and Georgia), or where the state used universal vote-by-mail (Nevada, New Jersey, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, and California).

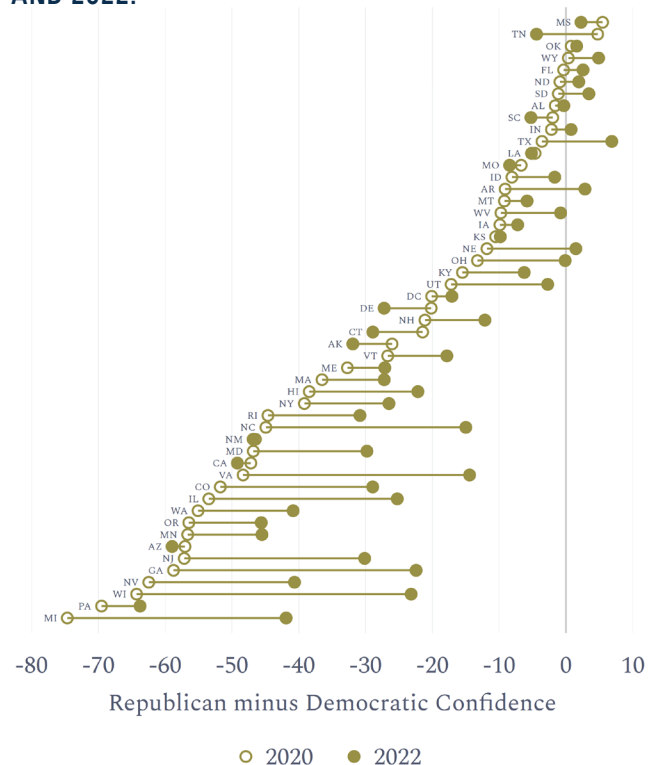
HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU THAT VOTES IN YOUR STATE WERE COUNTED AS VOTERS INTENDED? (VERY OR SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT)



In 2022, the Democratic-Republican gap closed in most states, most notably in the battleground states where Trump barely lost. The Democratic-Republican gap closed by at least twenty points in nine states—Nevada (22 points), Colorado (23), New Jersey (27), Illinois (28), North Carolina (30), Michigan (33), Virginia (34), Georgia (36), and Wisconsin (41). A few of these states, notably Georgia, saw significant state legislative activity in 2021 that may have garnered the notice of skeptical Republicans. However, in most of these states, the only major development between 2020 and 2022 was the passage of time and the holding of more elections.

The Democratic-Republican gap did not close in all states, and in a few cases, grew. Among states with significant Republican skepticism in 2020 compared to Democrats, Pennsylvania, Arizona, New Mexico, and California saw little-to-no movement in the partisan divide. In four states, Republicans became notably more skeptical in 2022: Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, and Tennessee. Finally, it is worth noting that in Texas, where there was virtually no divide between the parties in state-level trust, a gap did open up in 2022, with Democrats moving to a clearly less trustful position relative to Republicans.

DIFFERENCE IN THE PERCENTAGE OF DEMOCRATS EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE IN STATE-LEVEL VOTING COUNTING MINUS REPUBLICAN CONFIDENCE, 2020 AND 2022.



INCREASING THE SECURITY OF ELECTIONS

With the 2016 election came a heightened awareness of the security threats that surround elections. Prior to 2016, those threats had mostly been physical and related to protecting ballots from being stolen or tampered with; concerns had also been expressed about the accuracy of voting equipment and the ability to catch efforts to compromise that equipment. These concerns led to a movement to require paper ballots and post-election audits. During the 2016 election, a new form of threat became salient, that of cyber-attacks against election administration infrastructure. These concerns led to new attention to cybersecurity.

Whether cyber or physical, security has become a more salient issue to the public over the past few years. To gauge where voters are on this issue, the SPAE added a battery of questions in 2022 that sought to measure how much voters know about the efforts officials take to secure the election, as well as assess which of these measures are the most reassuring to voters. The first question measured voter knowledge. All respondents were asked, “Which of the following actions, if any, are you aware of that occur to ensure elections are secure and free from fraud locally and in [your state] (Check all that apply).” The response categories were the following:

- » Election officials test every machine used in the election to ensure they are secure.
- » Non-partisan poll watchers observe the election to ensure it’s fair.
- » Poll watchers affiliated with the political parties or candidates observe the election to ensure it’s fair.
- » Election officials conduct audits of ballots after every election to confirm the results were accurate.
- » Paper ballots are stored in secure facilities so there is always a paper trail and audits and recounts can be conducted.
- » Election officials work with law enforcement to prosecute those who commit voter fraud.
- » Impartial teams of election judges conduct signature verification on each mail-in ballot received.
- » Election officials work closely with national security agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security, and the military to prevent foreign interference.
- » Election officials work with the [state] National Guard on Election Day to prevent cyber-attacks.

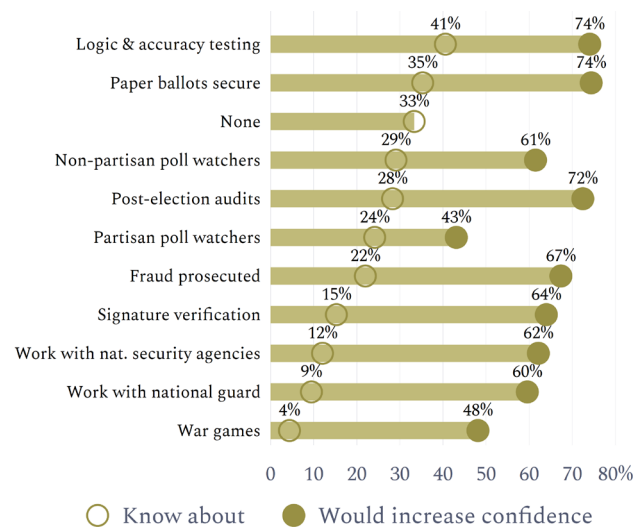
- » Election officials conduct “war games” with election officials across the state and the National Guard to protect the election from cyber-attacks.
- » None of the above.

Respondents were then asked, “Which of the following actions, if any, are you aware of that occur to ensure elections are secure and free from fraud locally and in [your state]? (Check all that apply).” The response categories were the same as the knowledge question.

Responses to the knowledge question reveal that voters are not very aware of the measures election officials undertake to secure elections. One-third of respondents stated that officials understood none of these measures. (Twenty-three percent of Democrats gave this response compared to 41 percent of Republicans.) Only 41 percent of respondents stated they knew that logic and accuracy testing was conducted and 35 percent were aware that paper ballots were stored securely.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS, IF ANY, ARE YOU AWARE OF THAT OCCUR TO ENSURE ELECTIONS ARE SECURE AND FREE FROM FRAUD LOCALLY AND IN [YOUR STATE]? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOUR STATE DOES THE FOLLOWING, HOW WOULD KNOWING THAT [YOUR STATE] TOOK THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS IMPACT HOW MUCH CONFIDENCE YOU HAVE IN THE SECURITY AND INTEGRITY OF [YOUR STATE]’S ELECTION SYSTEM?



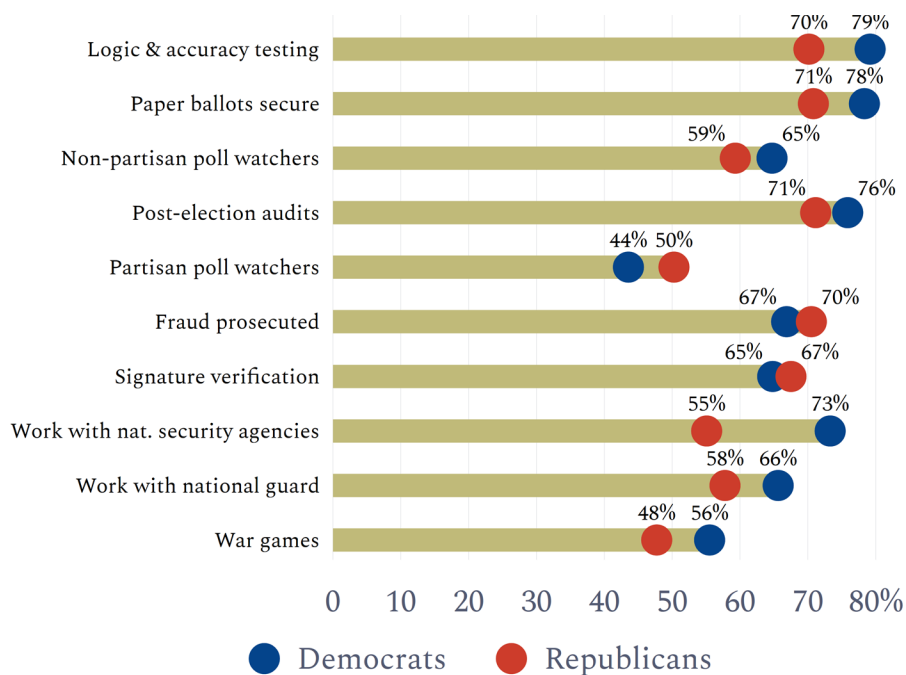
Even these percentages must be regarded skeptically. Like all areas of public policy, it is likely that few voters are highly knowledgeable about the details of election administration. This means that respondents may answer this question based on activities that sound like things election officials undertake, rather than out of actual awareness or knowledge of these activities.

The second question about security measures gets at which of these activities would be reassuring to the respondent. L&A testing, securing ballots, and post-election audits are at the top of the list when it comes to items that respondents said would assure them of the security and integrity of the election. At the bottom of the list is the presence of partisan poll watchers—nonpartisan poll watchers are much more highly regarded.

Because of the partisan divide that has opened up over confidence in elections and the longstanding partisan differences over the prevalence of fraud, it is informative to understand whether there is a partisan divide over which activities would instill trust in the security and integrity of elections. Overall, although there were some partisan differences over what increases

respondents’ confidence, these differences were small. For instance, Democrats were more likely than Republicans to be reassured by knowing election officials perform logic and accuracy testing, but the percentages were high for both parties (79 percent for Democrats and 70 percent for Republicans) and the difference is just nine points. The largest partisan difference, at 18 points, was about working with national security agencies to combat foreign interference in elections.

REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOUR STATE DOES THE FOLLOWING, HOW WOULD KNOWING THAT [YOUR STATE] TOOK THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS IMPACT HOW MUCH CONFIDENCE YOU HAVE IN THE SECURITY AND INTEGRITY OF [YOUR STATE’S] ELECTION SYSTEM?



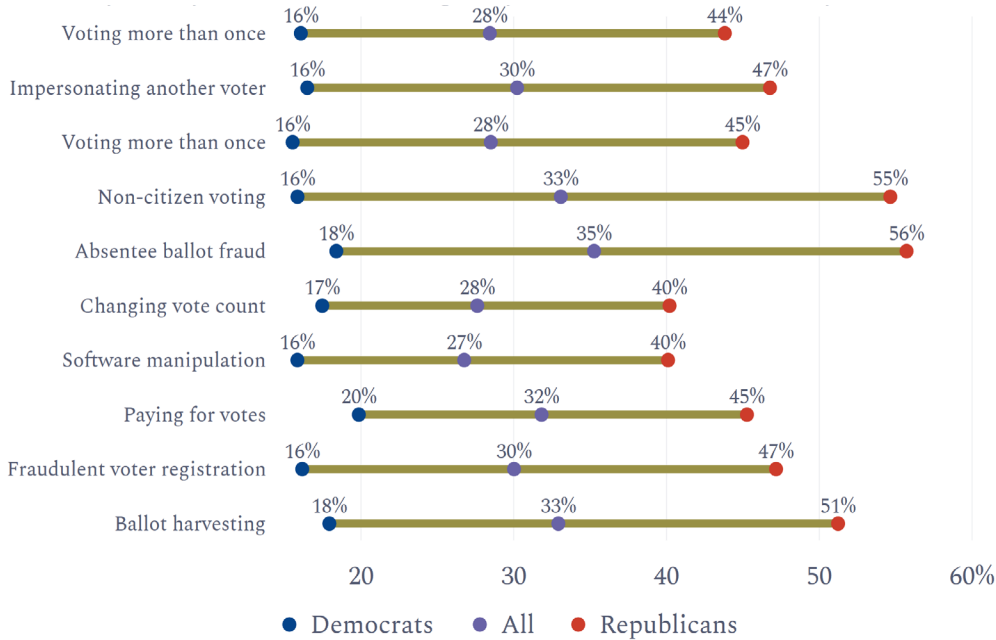
FRAUD

For over a decade, the SPAE has asked respondents to indicate how often they believe certain fraudulent or illegal activities occur in their city or county. These activities include people voting with an absentee ballot intended for another person, noncitizens voting, voter impersonation, people voting more than once, election officials fraudulently changing the reported vote count, and people stealing or tampering with ballots that had been cast. In 2022, three new items were added: vote counting software manipulated in a way to not count ballots as intended, paying voters to cast a ballot for a particular candidate, voting under fraudu-

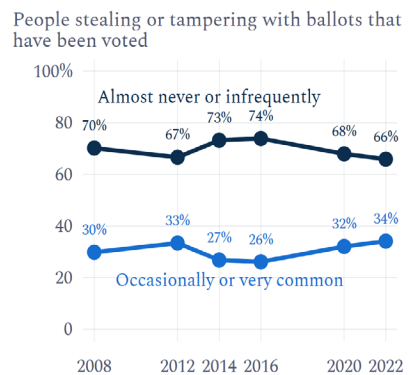
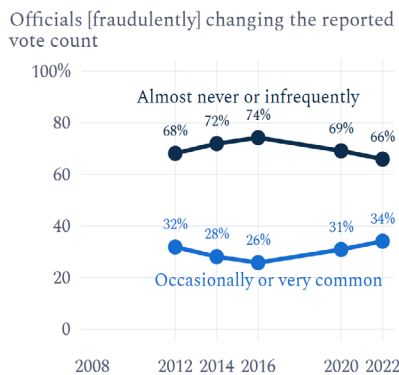
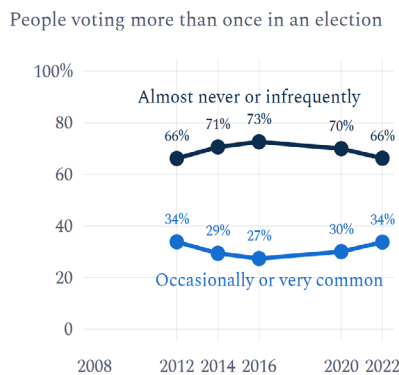
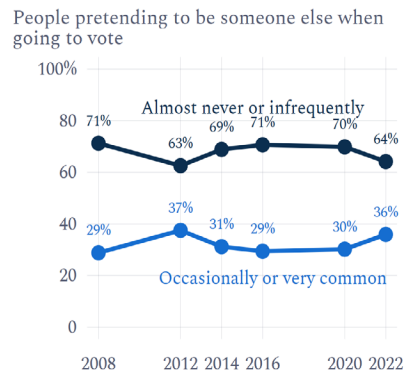
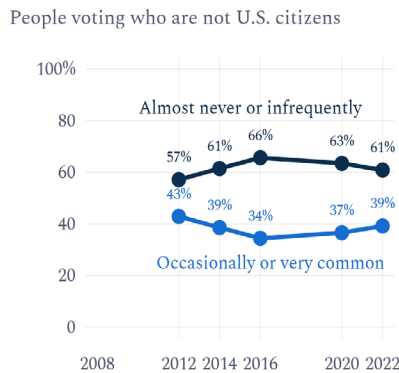
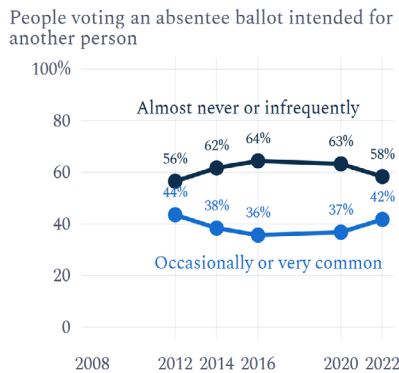
lent voter registrations, and submitting too many ballots in drop boxes.

The percentage of respondents who responded that these activities were very common or occurred occasionally ranged between 27 percent (software manipulation of the votes) to 35 percent (absentee ballot fraud), although the partisan divide over all these items was significant. The overall percentage of voters who believed these activities occurred remained very similar to what we've seen over the past dozen years.

PLEASE INDICATE HOW OFTEN YOU THINK THESE ACTIVITIES OCCUR IN YOUR COUNTY OR CITY. (PERCENT ANSWERING 'VERY COMMON' OR 'OCCASIONALLY')



PLEASE INDICATE HOW OFTEN YOU THINK THESE ACTIVITIES OCCUR IN YOUR COUNTY OR CITY:



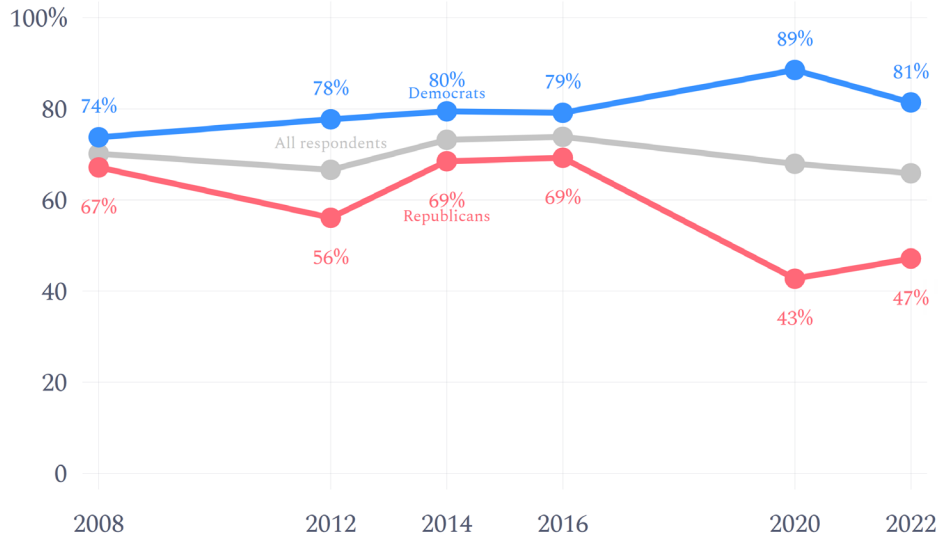
Note: Questions about software, vote-buying fraudulent voter registration, and ballot harvesting were first asked in 2022.

PARTISAN PATTERNS IN BELIEFS ABOUT FRAUD

Throughout the history of the SPAE, Republicans have generally been more likely than Democrats to express a belief in the high frequency of voter fraud. That gap widened dramatically in 2020 and only moderated a bit in 2022. The following graph shows one example of this, with respondents' answer to a question about stealing or tampering with ballots that have been voted. In the 2016 election, the percentage of Democrats and Republicans saying this almost never or infrequently happened was only 10 percentage points apart — 79 percent for Democrats and 69 percent for Republicans. In 2020, the gap opened to 46 points (89 percent for Democrats and 43 percent for Republicans). In 2022, the gap fell to 34 points, as the percentage of Democrats saying tampering with ballots almost never or infrequently happened dropped to 81 percent while rising to 47 percent among Republicans. Thus, the gap narrowed compared to 2020, but it was still much greater than ever measured before 2020.

PLEASE INDICATE HOW OFTEN YOU THINK THESE ACTIVITIES OCCUR IN YOUR COUNTY OR CITY: PEOPLE STEALING OR TAMPERING WITH BALLOTS THAT HAVE BEEN VOTED.

Those saying 'almost never' or 'infrequently.'

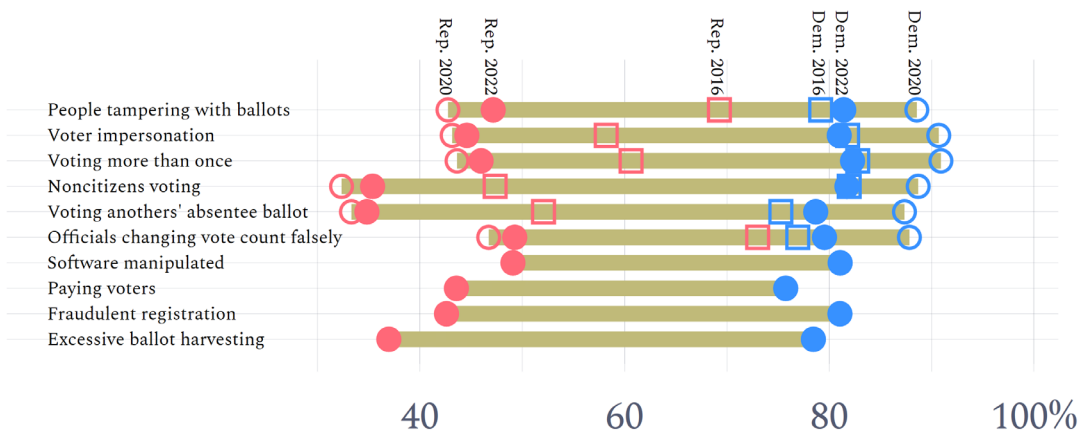


Similar patterns were evident in each of the six fraud items that were on the SPAE in 2016, 2020, and 2022. (Four items were new to 2022.) In 2016, Republicans were less likely to believe that fraud was infrequent than Democrats for each of the items on the survey instrument. In 2020, the partisan divide grew tremendously, with Republicans becoming much less likely to say that fraud was infrequent and Democrats much

more likely to say it was infrequent. In 2022, Democrats generally returned to the levels they expressed in 2016, whereas Republicans relented only slightly—if at all—in viewing fraud as an infrequent occurrence. Therefore, the slight narrowing of the partisan gap in 2022 was almost entirely due to Democrats becoming slightly more likely to say that fraud was frequent.

CHANGE IN ATTITUDES ABOUT FREQUENCY OF FRAUD AMONG PARTISANS BETWEEN 2016 AND 2022

Those saying these frauds happen 'almost never' or 'infrequently.'



Last four items only asked in 2022.

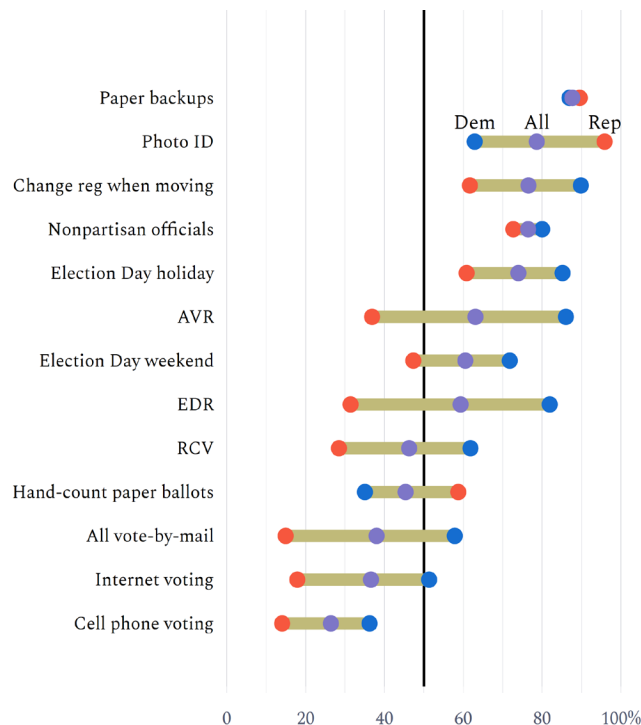
REFORM

Finally, there is the issue of election reform. For over a dozen years, the SPAE has asked respondents their opinions about eleven reform ideas that are pursued from time to time by various reform groups. These reforms range from voting over the Internet and voting by mail to establishing Election Day as a holiday or moving it to a weekend. In 2022, two new items were

added, counting all ballots by hand and ranked-choice voting (RCV).

Among the items that appeared in the SPAE previously, responses were similar to the past. The most popular reforms, by far, were requiring computerized voting machines to have paper backups, requiring voters

DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING PROPOSALS FOR NEW WAYS OF VOTING OR CONDUCTING ELECTIONS?



to show photo ID to vote, allowing automatic changes to a voter’s registration upon moving, electing officials on a bipartisan basis, and making Election Day a national holiday. The least popular reforms have long been voting by cell phone, followed by voting on the Internet and then universal voting by mail.

Among the items added in 2022, neither ranked-choice voting nor counting ballots by hand were supported by a majority of respondents. However, they each exhibited partisan support patterns, with a majority of Democrats favoring RCV and a smaller majority of Republicans favoring counting all votes by hand.

As in past years, opinions about most of these reforms were split along party lines. The only reforms without

a partisan split were requiring electronic machines to have paper backups and requiring that election officials be elected on a nonpartisan basis.

The only reform where partisan attitudes have shifted notably in recent years has been universal vote-by-mail. Prior to 2020, Democrats were more likely to favor the reform compared to Republicans, but neither set of partisans gave it majority approval. For instance, in 2016, 14 percent of Republicans and 36 percent of Democrats responded that they favored universal VBM. That 22-point gap more than doubled in 2020, to 54 points, with 10 percent of Republicans favoring it compared to 64 percent of Democrats. The gap only slimmed somewhat in 2022, to 43 points,

with 15 percent of Republicans and 58 percent of Democrats favoring.

Support for universal vote-by-mail is an interesting topic to focus on because of the role of absentee/mail voting in 2020. Prior to 2020, respondents in Colorado, Oregon, and Washington — states that have conducted all vote by mail elections for several cycles — were much more supportive of voting by mail than in the rest of the nation. Although Republicans in these states tended to support voting by mail at much lower

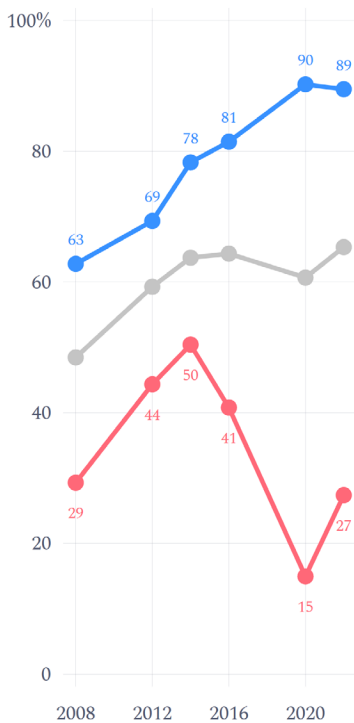
rates the Democrats, in the 2012 and 2016 elections, Republicans supported voting by mail in the range of 40-to-50 percent. In 2020, however, support among Republicans plummeted to 15 percent in these three states, while it continued to grow to among Democrats, rising to 90 percent support.

At the same time, seven states adopted universal vote-by-mail for the first time in 2020. Hawaii and Utah had already decided to go down this path prior to 2020 and New Jersey ended up doing so for only 2020.

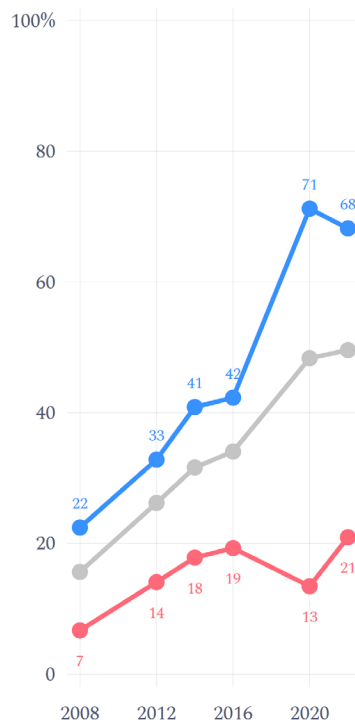
SUPPORT FOR HOLDING ALL ELECTIONS BY MAIL

Those supporting ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat.’

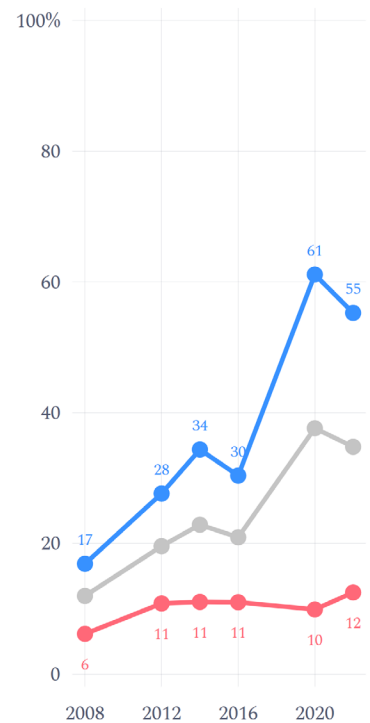
CO, OR, & WA



CA, DC, HI, NV, NJ, UT, & VT



Except CA, CO, DC, HI, NV, NJ, OR, WA, UT, or VT



Among these states, support for universal VBM had been low prior to 2020, even among Democrats. In 2020, support shot up to 71 percent among Democrats and declined among Republicans. Finally, in every other state, support for universal VBM had been lower still, among both Democrats and Republicans prior to 2020. Among Democrats in these states, support shot up to 61 percent in 2020 while staying flat among Republicans.

In 2022, the partisan divides that had opened up in 2020 receded by only a small amount. Republicans in

the legacy VBM states showed the biggest rebound in support, back to levels close to where they were in 2008, when the time series began. Still, there was a 62-point gap between the parties in these three states in 2022. Republican support grew a bit and Democratic support declined an even smaller amount in the “new” VBM states, but the gap was still at 47 points. Finally, in all the remaining states, Democrats retreated a small amount in support for universal VBM, but a majority still support it; Republican support is still barely in the double digits.

CONCLUSION

The 2022 election was held just two years after one of the most administratively challenging elections in American history. The administrative landscape in 2022 was much less fraught in 2020, as worries over the pandemic receded in the minds of most Americans. Election officials and voters had adapted to new patterns of voting.

The election of 2022 did not fully represent a “return to normal,” as it saw some new patterns that emerged in 2020 persist. In addition, the polarization that emerged over election administration during and in the aftermath of the 2020 election continued into 2022, abating only somewhat once all the ballots were counted. Polling place violence and disruptions did not appear on a widespread basis, as some had feared.

As the country prepares to vote in yet another presidential election, citizen attitudes are likely to rest on what was observed in 2022. Partisan divisions persist and may harden further as the next campaign season comes into full swing. News that election officials are expressing frustration with the negative environment in which they work and quitting in large numbers could have significant consequences for how voters experience the 2024 election—depending on how expert their replacements are and whether inexperienced election officials have a difficult time coping with the challenges that arise in administering presidential elections. Voters have expressed positive feedback from their voting experience for over a decade (at least); 2022 was no different. Whether this continues in 2024 remains to be seen.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

This report does not show the confidence intervals (“margins of error”) for the statistics reported. This is to increase the readability and flow of the report. Because of the large sample sizes used to compute most statistics, the margins of error are generally quite small, often the size of the data tokens used to display the statistics. This section gives the reader a guide to the approximate 95% confidence intervals of the statistics reported here.

The two major determinants of confidence intervals are (1) the size of the (sub)sample and (2) the size of the estimated statistics (e.g., percentage). The sample size of the complete SPAE is 10,100 for each year except 2008, when the District of Columbia was not sampled. In that year, the total sample size was 10,000. Some statistics are broken down by party. In 2022, there were 4,886 self-identified Democrats (47.9% of the sample), 3,773 Republicans (37.0%), and 1,541 either independents or identifiers of other parties (15.1%) in

the sample. Some analyses in this report break down the sample by voting mode. In 2022, the overall sample had 3,868 respondents who reported voting on Election Day, 1,719 who voted in person before Election Day, 3,080 who voted by mail, 1,502 who stated they did not vote, and 31 who stated they voted but did not remember how.

The following table reports the confidence intervals of various proportions depending on the sample size and the estimated proportion. The sample sizes correspond to the overall sample size in 2022 (10,200) and the various partisan and vote-mode subsamples. For example, if an estimate of the entire SPAE sample indicates that 10 percent of respondents responded in a certain way, then the 95% confidence interval (or margin of error) would be + 0.59 percentage points. If the statistic was calculated from among Democrats alone, the 95% confidence interval would be + 0.84 points.

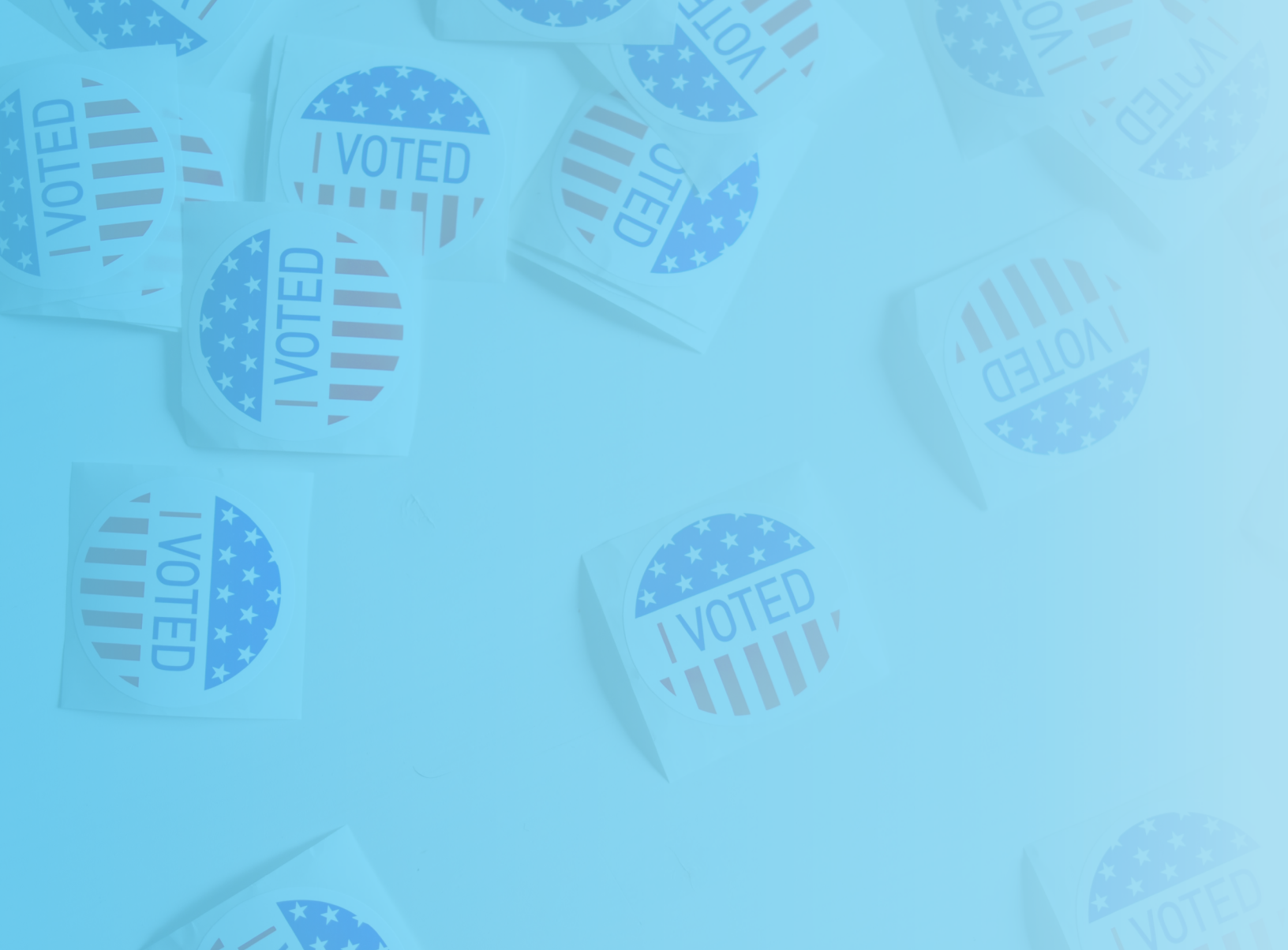
Basis of sample size	Sample size	Probability				
		10%	25%	50%	75%	90%
Overall	10,100	0.59	0.84	0.98	0.84	0.59
Democrats	4,886	0.84	1.21	1.40	1.21	0.84
Republicans	3,773	0.96	1.38	1.60	1.38	0.96
Independents	1,541	1.50	2.16	2.50	2.16	1.50
Election Day	3,868	0.95	1.36	1.58	1.36	0.95
Early	1,719	1.42	2.05	2.36	2.05	1.42
Mail	3,080	1.06	1.53	1.77	1.53	1.06
Non-voters	1,502	1.52	2.19	2.53	2.19	1.52

This table shows that in most cases, the 95 percent confidence intervals of the percentages reported in this report are between 1 and 2 percentage points.

This report also compares differences between subsamples, for instance, the percentage of Democrats who said they were very confident their vote was counted as intended versus the percentage of Republicans. The 95% confidence interval of the difference of two proportions is calculated using the size of the two samples being compared and the percentage statistics associated with each sample. The following table shows examples 95% confidence intervals for a variety of percentages associated with Republican and Democratic samples. For instance, if 10 percent of Democrats agreed with a particular question and 25 percent of Republicans agreed, the confidence interval of this difference (15 points) would be + 1.6 percentage points. To be on the conservative side, percentage differences in this report of less than 3 percentage points should not be considered a statistically significant difference.

A second methodological issue, aside from that of confidence intervals, is the matter of mis-reporting whether someone has voted. It is well established in the political science literature that respondents to public opinion surveys often mis-report that they voted, a phenomenon explained by the term “social desirability bias.” (That is, non-voters often do not want to admit that they did not vote.) Therefore, it is likely that the non-voting rate among SPAE respondents was much greater than the 16 percent reported. As a part of the SPAE project, the official state voting records of SPAE respondents are double-checked and a code is added to the dataset indicating which respondents were validated as having voted. As of the writing of this report, that validation has not been completed—it usually takes a year to complete this task—therefore the statistics concerning the experience of reported voters undoubtedly includes individuals who did not vote, but said they did.

Democratic %	Republican %				
	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%
10%	1.3	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.3
25%	1.5	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.5
50%	1.7	2.0	2.1	2.0	1.7
75%	1.5	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.5
90%	1.3	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.3



++ ● ● ● ● MIT ELECTION DATA
++ ● ● ● ● + SCIENCE LAB
● ● ● ● ● ●