

West Virginia (WV) (5 votes)

Capital:	Charleston
Area:	24,230 sq mi. / 62,755 sq km
Population:	1,805,832
Nickname:	"Mountain State"
State motto:	"Montani Semper Liberi" ("Mountaineers Are Always Free")
Governor:	Jim Justice (R)
U.S. Senators:	Shelley Moore Capito (R), Joseph Manchin (D)



Wikimedia Commons

How will your state vote?

Predicting a vote is a challenging task. Political researchers have different opinions on how to predict an election outcome. Different formulas and methods are used, however none is perfect. Each prediction is a snapshot of the voters' opinion at a certain point in time. But with election issues and current events changing so fast, it is quite a challenge to have an accurate prediction of how the election will turn out. In the 2016 election, most political pundits and polls before Election Day had Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton in the lead. Yet, while Clinton won the majority of the popular vote, the Republican candidate Donald J. Trump won the Electoral College votes of key swing states and thus the Presidency.

What are the most common predictors to determine how citizens will vote? Socio-economic factors are among the most important ones. They include, but are not limited to, citizens' education, income, and ethnicity. While these are often mentioned as decisive, others are important to consider as well. For example, many Americans cast their vote based on a single issue like health care, women's reproductive rights, the economy, or the environment. These voters choose their preferred candidate based on the issue most important to their identity, their social network, or personal biography, for example religious affiliation, ideology, or health. Americans also often cast their vote in a local context and are influenced by political and social issues affecting their own state. Finally, calculating voter turnout is key to an accurate prediction.

Some key variables for predicting the election outcome



Voting history

How have people in the state voted in the past? Is the state solidly red, blue, or purple? What is the expected turnout?



Ethnicity

What ethnic group does a citizen belong to? What is the ethnic make-up of the state?



Religion

How important is religion to the citizens? How often do they pray or attend worship service?



Economy

What's the current economic situation in the state? How many citizens live in poverty? How many are without a job?



Income inequality

How wide is the gap between wealthy and poor people? How much income does the top 1% in the state take home?



Education

How many people graduate from high school in your state? How many have a college degree?

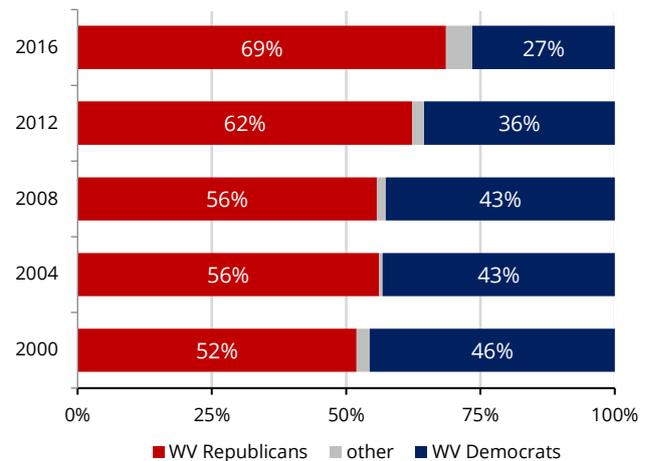


Voting history ^[2]

West Virginia shifted several times between supporting the Democratic or Republican party in its history, with each shift tending to last a generation or more.

Primarily Republican from 1900 until the Great Depression, the state was then reliably Democratic, with few exceptions through Bill Clinton's 2nd election in 1996. Since then, the state has become solidly Republican, with that party winning by an increasing margin in each election from 2000 through 2016. In the most recent election, Donald Trump's populist message deeply resonated with voters in a state that is struggling economically. The state has been growing more slowly than the country for more than 50 years; its electoral vote total has dropped from 8 in 1960 to 5 today.

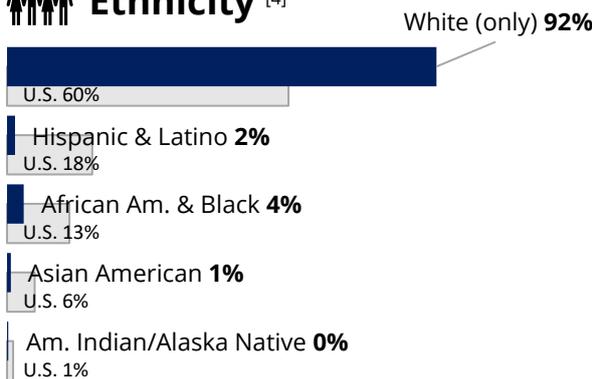
Election results in West Virginia (2000–2016): ^[3]



Voter turnout 2016:



Ethnicity ^[4]



(U.S. average in grey)

Religion ^[5]

WV is the 7th most religious state overall

69% of adults in WV are "highly religious," based on an overall index

Religious profile of West Virginia

64% (7th) say religion is very important in their lives

46% (6th) say they attend worship at least weekly

68% (4th) say they pray daily

77% (4th) say they believe in God w/ absolute certainty

Economy ^[4]

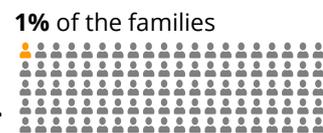
17.2% (5th highest) poverty rate

5.0% (48th lowest) unemployment rate

Income inequality ^[6]

The top 1% take home 13% of all the income in WV.

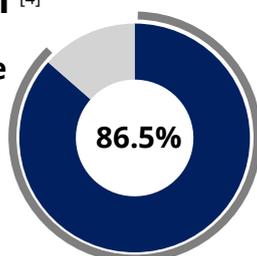
(U.S. average: 21%)



Education ^[4]

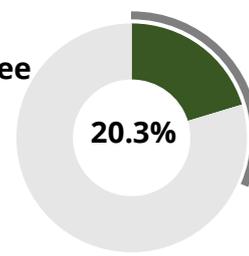
High school degree or higher persons 25+ yrs. old

U.S. average: 87.7%



Bachelor's degree or higher persons 25+ yrs. old

U.S. average: 31.5%





More information on West Virginia*



State information

Infoplease.com: <http://www.infoplease.com/states.html>

Official state website: <http://www.wv.gov>



Government information:

Governor: www.wvgov.org/

State and Local Government on The Net: <http://www.statelocalgov.net/>

U.S. Senators from the state: <http://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/>

U.S. Representatives from the state: <https://www.house.gov/representatives>



Election 2020

270twin.com: <http://www.270twin.com/states>

Rock the Vote – voting information: <https://www.rockthevote.org/voting-information/>

Vote.org – voter registration rules: <https://www.vote.org/voter-registration-rules/>



Statistics

Quick Facts from the US Census Bureau (select state): <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/>

Economic Policy Institute – The Unequal States of America: <https://epi.org/108519>



Media



Media Collection by the U.S. Embassy:

<http://usa.usembassy.de/media.htm>



50states.com – Local newspapers:

<http://www.50states.com/news>



OfficialUSA.com – Local TV stations:

<http://www.officialusa.com/stateguides/media/television/states.html>



Democrats and Republicans in the state

Democratic Party



<http://www.wvdems.org/>



<http://www.facebook.com/wvdemocrats>



no official site



<http://twitter.com/wvdemocrats>

Republican Party

<http://www.wvgop.org/>

<http://www.facebook.com/WVGOP>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/TheWVGOP>

<http://twitter.com/wvgop>

* For most web-resources, you will have to select your state from a list or type in your state name in a search field. Please note, these are third-party resources, Teach About U.S. is not responsible for this content.

Sources: 1. State map: [Wikimedia Commons](#); 2. Voting history text: adapted from [270twin.com](http://www.270twin.com); 3. U.S. election history: [David Leip's Election Atlas](#); 4. Ethnicity, economy, and education data: [U.S. Census Bureau](#); 5. Religion data: [Pew poll: How religious is your state?](#); 6. Wealth and income inequality data: [Economic Policy Institute – The Unequal States of America](#).