

West Virginia (WV) (4 votes)

Capital: **Charleston**
 Area: **24,230 sq mi. / 62,755 sq km**
 Population: **1,770,071**
 Nickname: **"Mountain State"**
 State motto: **"Montani Semper Liberi"**
 ("Mountaineers Are Always Free")
 Governor: **Jim Justice (R)**
 U.S. Senators: **Shelley Moore Capito (R),**
Joe Manchin (D)



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 2020 election, most political pundits and polls before Election Day accurately estimated that Democratic candidate Joe Biden would receive more votes than the Republican candidate and former President Donald J. Trump. However, Biden's victory in the Electoral College was narrower than predicted because the polls overstated Biden's support relative to Trump.

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?

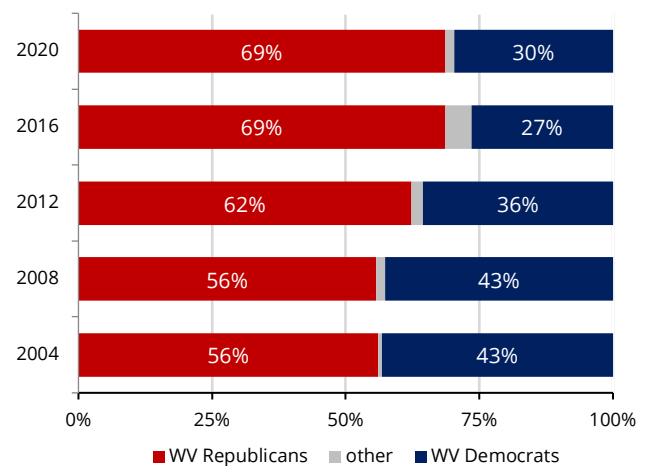


Voting history ^[2]

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. Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton by 42% in 2016 and Joe Biden by 39% in 2020. In both cases, it was Trump's 2nd largest margin, trailing only Wyoming.

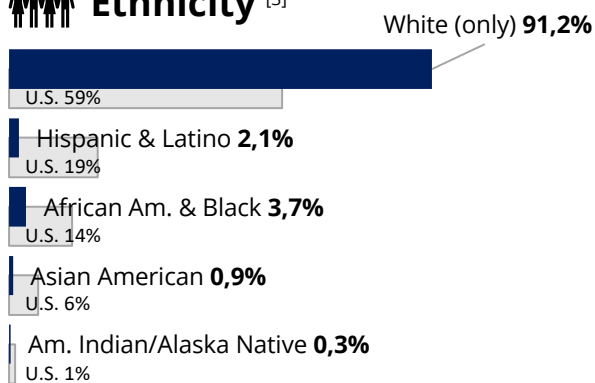
Election results in West Virginia (2004–2020): ^[2]



Voter turnout 2020:



Ethnicity ^[3]



(U.S. average in grey)



Religion ^[4]

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 ^[5]

17.9% (3rd highest) poverty rate

4.3% (42nd lowest) unemployment rate



Income inequality ^[6]

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

(U.S. average: 21%)

1% of the families



13% of the income

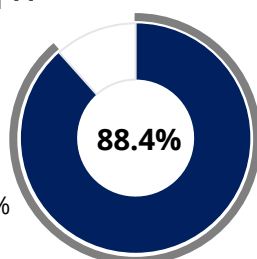


Education ^[3]

High school degree or higher

persons 25+ yrs. old

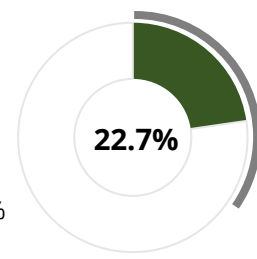
U.S. average (grey): 89.1%



Bachelor's degree or higher

persons 25+ yrs. old

U.S. average (grey): 34.3%





More information on West Virginia*



State information

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



Media



West Virginia Political News

<https://www.politico.com/news/west-virginia>



West Virginia Politics Podcasts:

https://podcasts.feedspot.com/west_virginia_political_podcasts/



Democrats and Republicans in the state

Democratic Party



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



<https://www.youtube.com/@wvdemocraticparty>



<http://twitter.com/wvdemocrats>



<https://www.instagram.com/wvdemocrats>



no official site

Republican Party

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

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

<http://twitter.com/wvgop>

<https://www.instagram.com/wvhousegop/>

no official site

* 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 270towin.com
3. Ethnicity, economy, and education data: [U.S. Census Bureau](#)
4. Religion data: [Pew poll: How religious is your state?](#)
5. Poverty and unemployment rate: [Poverty Rates by State & Unemployment Statistics Map](#)
6. Wealth and income inequality data: [Economic Policy Institute – The Unequal States of America](#)