



**General Meeting**  
**Vote by Mail**  
**Sept. 13**  
**11:30 AM**  
**2404 N.**

**Supreme Court Forum**  
**Sept. 28**  
**GU Moot Ct. Rm**  
**5:00 - 7:30 PM**

**FORUMS**  
**NOON**  
**Sept. 22 & 23**  
**Council Chambers**  
**City Hall**

# VOTER

## Who Votes?

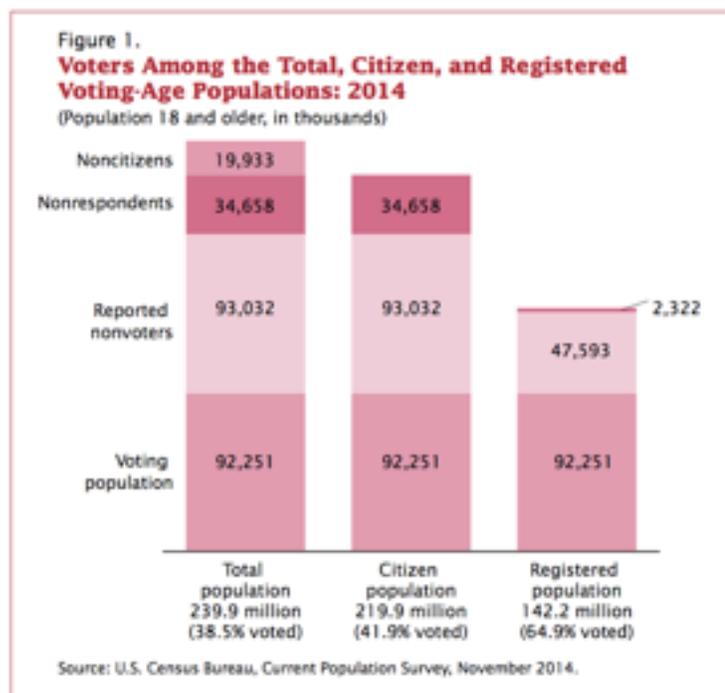
COMPILED BY PAM BEHRING

An interesting paper, “Who Votes? Congressional Elections and the American Electorate: 1978–2014 Population Characteristics” by Thom File (Issued July 2015) is available at [census.gov](http://census.gov). The data is from the Voting and Registration Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS) fielded by the U.S. Census Bureau every 2 years since 1964.

*“Voting is among our most fundamental domestic responsibilities and important civic opportunities. Without free and open elections, American democracy would not exist. Maintaining and improving our system of elections requires not only documenting election results, but also understanding the composition of America’s electorate, both historically and presently.”*

The author has focused on non-presidential year elections, that is “congressional elections” (2014, 2010, 2006, etc.).

Voting rates are calculated by dividing the total number of reported voters by the total number of eligible voters (i.e. citizens 18 years or older.) As you see in *Figure 1*, the percentage of voting is different if one looks at the registered population of voters, the citizen population or the entire population.



**Table 1.**  
**Reported Rates of Voting in Congressional Elections:**  
**1978 to 2014**

(Numbers in thousands)

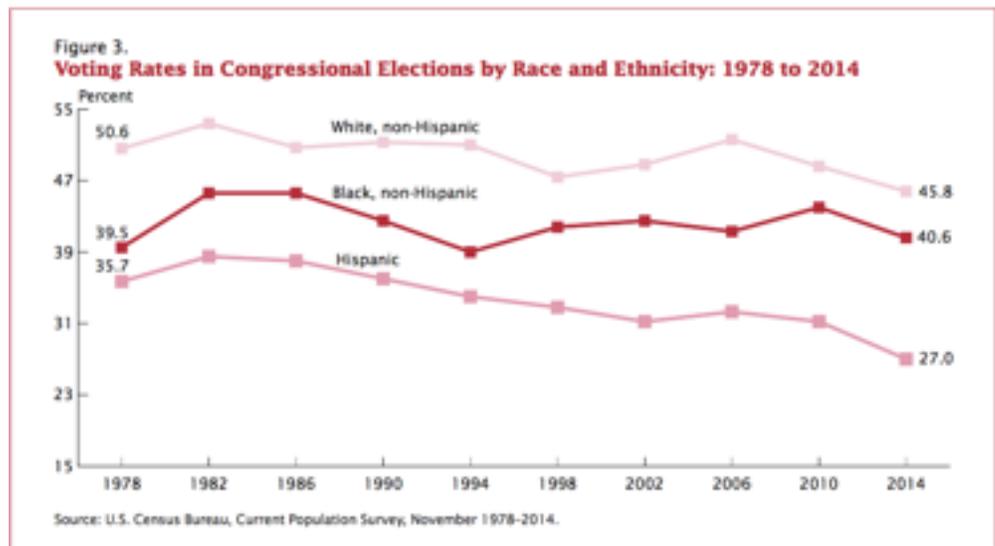
Congressional election year	Population 18 and older	Citizens		
		Population 18 and older	Voted	
			Number	Rate
1978.....	151,646	142,308	69,587	48.9
1982.....	165,483	154,858	80,310	51.9
1986.....	173,890	161,944	79,954	49.4
1990.....	182,118	166,151	81,991	49.3
1994.....	190,267	177,260	85,702	48.3
1998.....	198,228	183,451	83,098	45.3
2002.....	210,421	190,250	87,762	46.1
2006.....	220,603	201,073	96,119	47.8
2010.....	229,690	210,800	95,987	45.5
2014.....	239,874	219,941	92,251	41.9

Note: Voting rates are calculated by dividing the number of reported voters by the number of eligible voters.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November, select years.

The number of eligible voters has increased every election since 1978 and the number of citizens who reported voting has increase but the voting rate in the 2014 congressional election was the lowest since 1978. (Table 1) The note at the bottom of Table1 explains how the rate is calculated.

During this same period, voting has decreased among White, non- Hispanic and Hispanic voters while remaining constant among Black voters. (Figure 3)

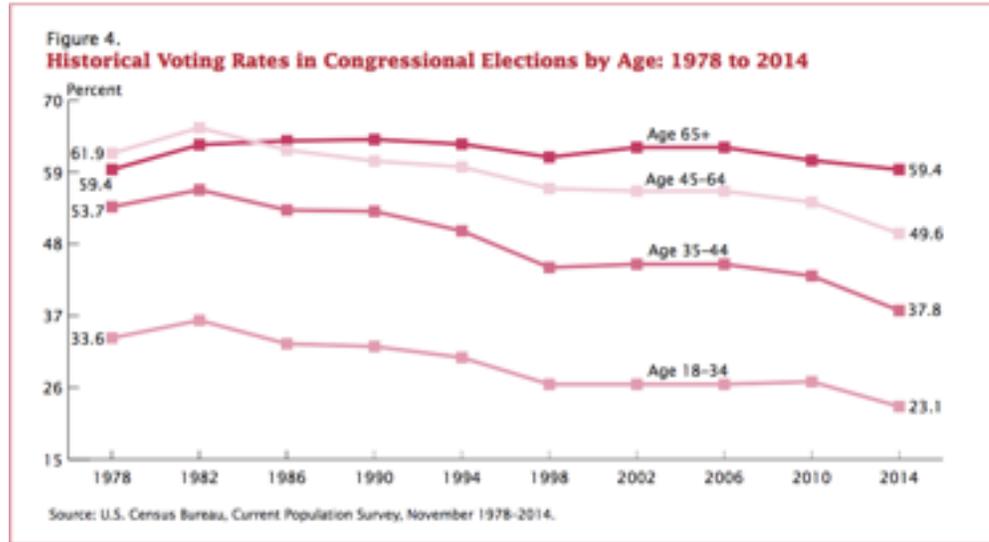


When looking at age groups, voting has declined among all age groups except age 65 and older. (Figure 4)

It remains, however, that ages of 45 and up made up a higher percentage of voters than other age groups. This is largely attributable to the fact that the overall population of this age group is larger than the other age groups. *But is population the only factor to explain these changes?*

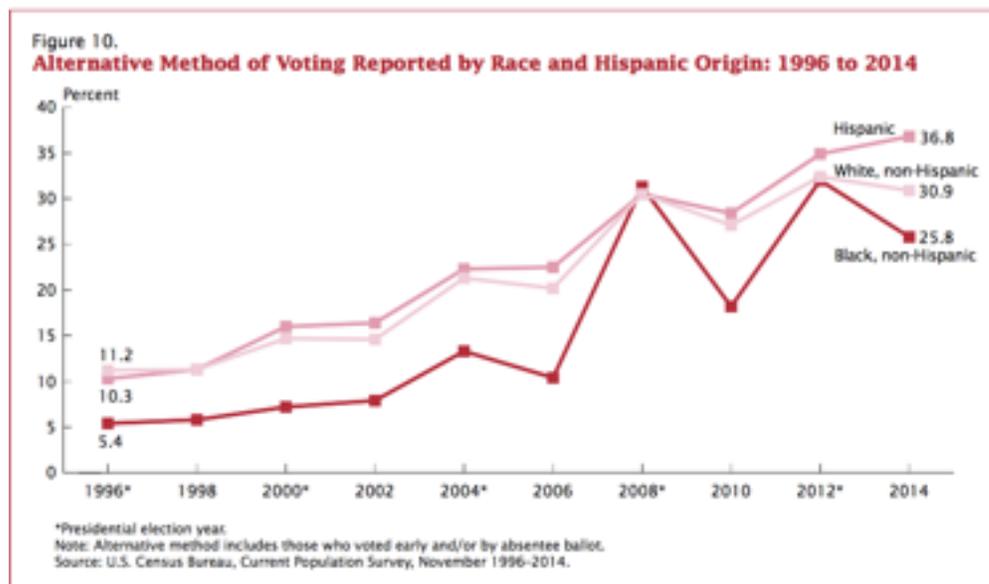
One must look closer at race, Hispanic origin and age to better understand the dynamics of recent congressional elections. In the 2006 elections, non-Hispanic Whites made up 74.5% of the voting-eligible population and 80.4% of the population that actually voted. In 2010 and 2014, they continued to make up the larger share of voters than of the eligible population. Meanwhile, in 2006, minority groups made up a smaller share of the electorate than they did of the eligible population. By 2010, non-Hispanic Blacks' share of the vote grew to a level consistent with their eligibility. During this same period, Hispanics' share of the vote and share of the eligible population had fallen.

If one looks at age, in 2006, young people age 18 to 34 made up 28.9% of the voting eligible population and 17.3% of the population that actually voted. In the congressional elections of 2010 and 2014, young people continued to vote at rates lower than their eligibility. Over the course of the last three congressional elections, people age 35 to 44 also made up a smaller share of voters than they did of the eligible population although to a lesser degree than 18 to 34-year-olds. People aged 45 to 64 accounted for a larger proportion of voters than of eligible population in each election, while individuals 65 and older have made up a larger share of voters than their share of eligible population in every congressional election since 2006.



This increased electoral engagement among older Americans is not simply the product of the American population aging as a whole, as the low levels of voting among young people and the high levels of voting among older Americans have increased in recent congressional elections, even after accounting for changes in age distributions. In 2014, 43.0% of women reported voting, compared with 40.8% of men. Reported voting rates were also higher for non-Hispanic Whites (45.8%) than for non-Hispanic Blacks (40.6%), non-Hispanic Asians (26.9%), and Hispanics (27.0%). Being married with a spouse living in the same household corresponded to higher voting rates (50.9% ), particularly in comparison with those who reported having never been married (25.9%). Native-born citizens were more likely to report voting than naturalized citizens (42.7% and 34.1%, respectively).

Reported voting rates were also high among those with advanced degrees (62.0%), those who had lived in their current home for 5 years or longer (57.2%), and those living in households making over \$150,000 in family income



(56.6%). The top tier of the voting rate distribution also included government workers (56.5%) and military veterans (54.2%).

One change that has occurred is alternative voting methods, i.e., early voting, absentee voting and mail voting. (Fig. 10) Since 1996, Americans have reported about a threefold increase in alternative voting methods. In most elections, alternative voting has been significantly higher among non-Hispanic Whites and Hispanics than for non-Hispanic Blacks, with exceptions observed in both 2008 and 2012, when alternative voting for non-Hispanic Blacks increased.

There is a great deal more information in the paper if you would like clarification on any of the points but to summarize: the younger the population, the greater the dis-engagement from voting. And alternative voting methods does increase participation in voting.

**Supreme Court Forum**

Three Supreme Court positions are open this year, and you have a chance to come and bring friends to the LWVWA forum at the Barbieri Moot Court Room at Gonzaga University School of Law on September 28, 2016 from 5 PM to 6:30 PM. Often people don't understand the role of this third branch of government, or know much about the justices, so hearing and meeting the candidates is a special opportunity. The mission of the Washington Supreme Court is to protect the liberties guaranteed by the constitution and laws of the state of Washington and the United States; impartially uphold and interpret the law; and provide open, just, and timely resolution of all matters. You have no doubt kept track of the cases in which the LWV has been involved, so these are particularly important to us. It is also a great way to introduce people to the work of the League. There's still time to volunteer by contacting Lunell Haight 509-443-1319 or [Lunellh@aol.com](mailto:Lunellh@aol.com)

The Washington Office of Secretary of State has compiled statistics on the number of ballots counted per registered voters for the general elections beginning 1980. The trend has been for increased participation in voting. The congressional election's lowest voter turnout was 54% in 2015, the highest was 71.24% in 2010. For a presidential election; the lowest turnout was 75.52% in 1996, the highest was 84.61% in 2008. ([sos.wa.gov/](http://sos.wa.gov/))

**Calendar**

<b>September</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>General Mtg, 11:30 AM @ office. Dr. Kevin Henrickson, GU School of Business Administration. Topic: Vote By Mail.</b>
	<b>21</b>	<b>Board Meeting, 9 AM @ office.</b>
	<b>22</b>	<b>Candidates Forum, NOON @ City Hall, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.</b>
	<b>23</b>	<b>Initiatives Forum, NOON @ City Hall.</b>
	<b>28</b>	<b>Supreme Court Candidates Forum, 5 PM @ GU Law School, Moot Court Room.</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>General Mtg, 11:30 AM @ office. Money &amp; Politics and Ballot Issues.</b>
	<b>25</b>	<b>League Drinks, 5:30 @Saranac Public House</b>

## LWV National Convention, Report from Bev Austin

Representing the LWV Spokane Area chapter in Washington, DC I was honored to be a part of a terrific convention attended by over 700 delegates from forty seven states, Washington D.C. and the Virgin Islands.

The theme of the League of Women Voters of the United States 52nd National Convention was “ Making Democracy Work For All”.

Thursday we were able to meet with our senators and legislators on Capitol Hill. Members from our state met with their respective congressional legislators. Unfortunately for those from the 5th District, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers was unable to meet with us. However in the afternoon we spoke with Senator Patty Murray outside of the Vice President’s office when she was able to take a brief break from casting votes on the Senate floor. Expressing our concerns over voter’s rights restrictions in many states as well as money in politics, we were encouraged by her willingness to listen and to work in Senate to make a difference.

After riding the small “train” that runs between the two office buildings, we met with Senator Maria Cantwell for a good thirty minutes in the large meeting room in her office. Here again we expressed our views on protection of voter’s rights and the recent Supreme Court ruling that allowed for some seventeen states to add new voting requirements which disenfranchised over 600,000 voters. During the course of her remarks Senator Cantwell brought up the issue of the significant impact of money in politics. Like Senator Murray, Senator Cantwell listened to our positions and assured us that she was in full support of voting rights protections and to work on addressing the issue of money in politics. Both of our Senators told us of their high regard for the League and the work that we do. The smiles you see in our pictures with these two very bright and articulate women expressed our experience of League Lobby Day.

Throughout the three day event, we heard from nationally acclaimed speakers on a number of topics all related to the issues surrounding voting rights legislation and current restrictions, voter protections, election reforms, supreme court rulings, money in politics, involvement of young people in politics and public service, protecting the right to vote and expanding the electorate for African-Americans, Latinos, Asian Pacific Islanders and the complex systems and forces at play in 2016. Each speaker brought expertise, knowledge, and wide experience to these presentations which deepened our understanding of how the LWV members can effectively carry out our Campaign for Making Democracy Work across the states and in local communities.

Turning our attention to program adoption, position on redistricting and a proposal from Colorado to include behavioral health, a term which includes mental health and substance abuse

disorder, to be included on the LWVUS Health Care position were passed by a floor vote. The following resolutions were presented, discussed and passed:

- support for gun violence and safety research by the Center for Disease Control,
- support of statehood for the District of Columbia.,
- support of the Amicus Brief of 21 youth and Our Children’s Trust,
- support for the US ratification of the UN COP 21 Paris Agreement,
- implementation of the EPA Clean Power Plan on the state level,

- and finally a call on the White House to implement a science based Climate Action Plan.

The League bylaws concerning membership were amended so that voting members must now be at least 16 years of age. The age of 18 was deleted. The proposed budget was passed and dues were not changed.

In general, attendees seemed to have had a positive and energizing experience. Although the three days focused on serious issues and league business, opportunities for socialization abounded. Tickets were available to see the Capitol Steps perform. Dressing up a bit on Saturday evening we enjoyed a social hour and banquet which gave me a chance to meet many League members from our state .

I, for one, was impressed by the depth of presentations, informative workshops and training available to enable League members to make democracy work for everyone especially in this turbulent election year. We were reminded that our credibility in the community is based on not supporting any party or candidate. The League studies and adopts positions of support for a variety of public policy decisions. Because of this our reputation at local, state and national levels continues to be highly acclaimed.

### [Book Review](#) by Susan Gray

#### ***AMERICAN GIRLS - Social Media and the Secret Lives of Teenagers***

*Nancy Jo Sales*

Expanded from a 2013 article published in *Vanity Fair* magazine and written to explore whether then-recently reported instances of girls' suicides following patterns of cyberbullying suggested the existence of a crisis in the world of girls, this is a profoundly disturbing book. Nancy Jo Sales, a journalist who has covered teenagers for twenty years and is the mother of a teenage girl, spent over two and a half years getting to know girls from ten states, ages thirteen to nineteen, and following them on their social media accounts. The result is a riveting report of what is happening in the lives of teenage girls as they try to navigate the unprecedented challenges presented by social media.

Like many adults observing groups of teens interacting with their phones instead of each other, I have wondered how difficult this smartphone-centric generation will find it to concentrate or to develop intimate personal connections. But as to the dual worlds that teens actually inhabit today, I had no clue. For example, I had no idea that:

- 73% of kids have smartphones; teens spend up to eleven hours per day plugged into an electronic device; and teenage girls, the biggest users of social media, exchange as many as 100 texts a day, according to some studies.
- "Social media" covers a lot of territory. Sales spoke to parents who had "virtually no idea what their daughters were doing on social media," which apps they were using and how they were using them. Her book listed a dozen "social media platforms your children are probably using" in addition to Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.
- Kids begin seeing online porn as young as age six and most boys and girls have watched it before they turn eighteen.

Though many of the social and emotional issues teens are grappling with will be familiar to adults from their own adolescence, kids' private use of social media through their smartphones has added a new dimension to the viciousness they are able to inflict on one another as they work out their place in their social world. Today's teens, posting photos of themselves on social media, can get a numerical score of their social success through their number of followers and "likes," not only from other kids in their school but from anyone in the entire social media universe who chooses to weigh in. Many teenage girls told Sales they feel "addicted" to social media—how else to keep up with everything going on in their world?

Even worse than not getting enough followers or "likes," social media provide a platform for the posting of anonymous personal and hurtful comments, often untrue but nevertheless widely believed and repeated by other credulous teens. This phenomenon known as "cyberbullying" often takes place below the radar of parents and schools, leaving the victims to handle this on their own though they are ill-equipped to do so. It is

estimated that 40% of girls are cyberbullied. A related statistic uncovered by a UCLA study in 2014 found that as kids spend more time online interacting with their friends and less time communicating face-to-face, their ability to pick up non-verbal cues such as tone of voice or facial expression is lessened and this results in less empathy among teens—40% less than teens in the 1980s according to the study.

But even worse is the huge problem in our culture of the way that the easy access to internet porn by any kid with a smartphone has become the way most teens learn about sex. Internet porn, far more violent and misogynistic than ever before, teaches boys to objectify girls as they copy the attitudes and behaviors of men they see in internet porn. By repeated exposure, not counteracted by information from parents or other adults, this becomes what teens, both boys and girls, see as normal sexual behavior. Girls feel pressure to look “hot” on social media in order to get “likes” and followers, and both boys and girls frequently make sexualized comments on one another’s “selfies.” Exchanging nude photos of themselves has become common among kids and Sales heard from many girls about “slut pages,” a kind of “amateur porn site consisting of aggregated nudes, most often nonconsensually shared” that are “common in their school communities.” With webcams kids can easily record and upload videos of their activities, sometimes including videos of themselves or their friends committing such acts as fights or even rapes and posting them online for “likes”.

Sales is a good reporter and her description of the situation is compelling, including several other topics I didn’t cover in this review, such as the “hook-up culture”. Her conclusions at the end of the book—a “national conversation about online porn and its effects on kids”; making women’s history a part of public high school curricula; encouraging Silicon Valley “players” to take responsibility for their role in cyberbullying and the exploitation and degrading of girls—are brief and lack a detailed plan of action (though who knows what that would look like anyway). She includes a list of discussion questions for parents that could give them a place to start.

I can’t remember reading another book that has affected me more deeply.

**\$75 Individual Dues: Local \$24 - State \$19 - Nat'l \$32**  
**\$105 Household; \$110 Sustaining Member; \$150 Benefactor**

Yes, I want to join/renew membership in LWV/ Spokane Area

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: H \_\_\_\_\_ W \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive the newsletter by  mail or  email (please check one)

Please indicate amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to & mail to: LWVSA 2404 N. Howard St., Spokane WA 99205

**[Pay by Credit Card through Pay Pal at www.lwvspokane.org/join.html](http://www.lwvspokane.org/join.html)**

**Thank you, AVISTA, for printing the LWV Spokane “TRY’s” and for supporting our Elected Officials Luncheon.**

**LWV Spokane Board of Directors:**

**Pres., Pam Behring; Vice-Pres., Linda Milsow; Sec., Sally Phillips; Treas., Jan Carrington; MLD Director, Lin McGinn; WEB page, Mary Hughes; Voter Service, Bev Austin; Forums, Susan Gray.**

**Look for LWV Spokane's updated web site:**

**New Face, Same Place**

**[LWVSpokane.org](http://LWVSpokane.org)**

**Help is needed at all the Forums so please call Mary Hughes @ 624-7258 for Sept. 22 and 23  
Or Lunell Haught @ 448-9852 for Sept. 28 if you would be available. Thank you.**



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
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**TO:**

*"The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and influences the public policy through education and advocacy."*

