

**Active Voter:** A voter registration designation indicating the voter is eligible to vote. See also Inactive Voter.

**Ballots Cast:** Total numbers of ballots submitted by all voters for counting, including by all voting methods (absentee, provisional, early, in a polling place, etc.). Note that there may be inconsistencies in the way the States reported this information, despite the definitions provided by the Election Assistance Commission in the survey instrument (see appendix C).

**Ballots Counted:** Number of ballots actually processed, counted, and recorded as votes.

**Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP):** Persons who are citizens and of voting age (18 years or older). These numbers are estimates generated by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. See also Voting Age Population.

**Drop-off:** The term used when a voter votes for some races but not others is called drop-off or roll-off. Typically, it occurs when voters cast ballots for offices high on the ballot but not for races lower down. See also Undervotes, Overvotes.

**Early voting:** Refers generally to any in-person voting that occurred prior to the date of the election at specific polling locations for which there were no special eligibility requirements. Early voting is not considered absentee voting under the State's definitions/requirements for absentee voting.

**Electorate:** A body of persons eligible to vote.

**HAVA:** The abbreviation for the Help America Vote Act of 2002. A copy of HAVA and additional information is available at [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov).

**Inactive Voter:** A voter whose registration status appears to no longer be current where he or she was registered and who has not attempted to re-register, has not voted, and has not presented himself or herself to vote using the address of record; or one whom election officials have been unable to contact or for whom election officials have been unable to verify registration status. According to Federal law, inactive voters are eligible to vote if proper identification is provided. See also Active Voter.

**Jurisdictions:** Generic term to signify various geographic areas that administer elections. The 3,123 jurisdictions in this study may include counties, parishes, independent cities, towns or cities (in New England), or an entire State (Alaska).

**Overvote:** Occurs when a voter makes more selections in a contest than are permitted (e.g., votes for two U.S. senatorial candidates). See also Drop-off, Undervotes.

**Polling place:** A facility staffed with poll workers and equipped with voting equipment, or paper ballots, at which persons registered in a precinct cast ballots in person on election day. Several precincts may be combined into one polling place.

**Precinct:** An administrative division representing a geographic area in which voters are provided ballots for particular races. Areas are broken down into manageable geographic units called electoral districts, precincts, voting districts, boxes, beats, or wards, depending upon State law. The number of registered voters in precincts will vary according to State law.

**Provisional Ballot:** A special ballot provided to an individual who claims he or she is registered and eligible to vote but whose eligibility or registration status cannot be confirmed when he or she presents himself or herself to vote. State law usually determines if the provisional ballots can be counted once the validity of the voter has been established.

**Section 5:** Some jurisdictions are required by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act to obtain preclearance from the Department of Justice or the United States District Court for the District of Columbia before implementing a change in a voting standard, practice, or procedure.

**Section 203:** Some jurisdictions are required by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act to provide supplemental voting information to language minority groups.

**Undervote:** Occurs when a voter makes fewer selections than are permitted in a contest (e.g., making no selection as to a candidate or ballot issue, or voting for only one candidate in a multimember office for which two or more members may be elected). This includes the choice to not vote for any candidate or the choice to not provide any response to a ballot question. See also Drop-off, Overvotes.

**Voting Age Population (VAP):** People who are 18 years of age or older, regardless of whether they are eligible to register to vote, based upon estimates made by the Bureau of the Census. Note that not all persons of voting age may be eligible to vote (e.g., felons, individuals judged to be mentally incompetent, non-citizens). See also Citizen Voting Age Population.