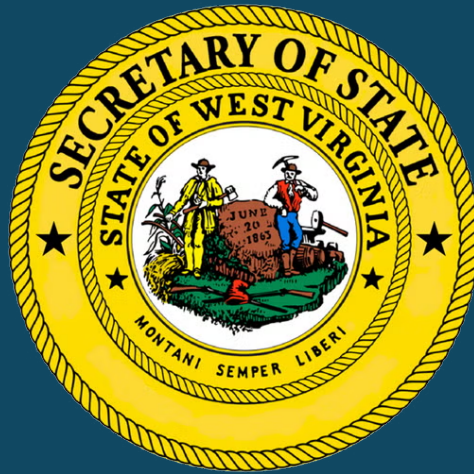




2026 Primary Election Report

State of West Virginia
Secretary of State
Kris Warner

West Virginia 2026 Primary Election Report

May 12, 2026 was West Virginia's Primary Election Day. For the West Virginia Secretary of State's Office, county offices, and poll workers across the state, it is one of the busiest days of the year. The 2026 Primary Report, prepared by the West Virginia Secretary of State's Office, is a comprehensive overview of key events leading up to the Primary Election cycle, voter registration history, information on the ballots cast, absentee ballot data, and reports received by election staff. Most of the information provided by this report can be found on [GoVoteWV](#). For many voters and election observers, the outcome of a few individual races is the primary focus. This report is a collection of data trends that helps show how elections are administered. The data presented is aggregated and does not reveal how an individual voted. By examining this data and administrative processes, this report offers an opportunity to evaluate election administration efforts and continued support of safe, free, fair, and secure elections in West Virginia.

The 2026 Primary in Motion:

Comparison of Voter Registration Numbers to the 2022 Primary:

In January 2025, the West Virginia Republican Party voted to close its primary election. Previously, non-affiliated voters could choose any party's ballot in the primary.

To prepare voters for the change, the Secretary of State's Office conducted a public information campaign encouraging voters to update their party affiliation before the primary election if needed. To help both voters and poll workers understand the new ballot options, the Office developed and distributed a [ballot-choice information sign](#) for inclusion in poll worker kits.

As of January 31, 2025, West Virginia had **304,759 non-affiliated voters**, declining slightly to **301,919** by April 30, 2026. During the same period, **Democratic registration decreased** from **352,260 to 326,962**, while **Republican registration increased** from **504,220 to 519,949**. The **Mountain Party** grew slightly from **2,679 to 2,718** voters, and the **Constitution Party** increased from **126 to 157**. **Libertarian registration** declined slightly from **10,943 to 10,770** voters.

The most appropriate comparison for the 2026 Primary Election is the 2022 Primary Election, as both occurred during midterm election cycles. Historically, voter turnout in midterm elections is lower than in presidential election years.

Following the close of the Republican primary, non-affiliated voter registration in 2026 remained higher than in 2022. Democratic voter registration has continued to decline since 2022, while Republican voter registration has continued to increase during the same period. Although the total number of registered voters has grown since 2022, overall voter

turnout in the 2026 Primary Election was approximately 2% lower than turnout in the 2022 Primary Election.

	2022 Primary	January 2025	2026 Primary	2022 and 2026 Difference	Percentage Increase or Decrease
Non-Affiliated	261,084	304,759	301,919	+40,835	+13.5%
Democrat	384,537	352,260	326,962	-57,574	-17.6%
Republican	440,631	504,220	519,949	+79,318	+15.3%
Mountain	2,305	2,679	2,718	+413	+15.1%
Libertarian	9,563	10,943	10,770	+1,207	+11.2%
Constitution	N/A	126	157		N/A
Other	37,317	40,570	35,561	-1,756	-.05%
Total Number of Registered Voters	1,135,437	1,215,557	1,198,036	+62,599	+.05%
Total Number of Ballots Cast	260,274	N/A	252,008	-8,266	-.03%

Near the close of registration for the primary election, West Virginia had 1,198,036¹ registered voters eligible to cast a ballot. Of them, 252,008 voted in the 2026 primary election. 21.03% of all eligible voters participated in the primary election.

Near the close of registration for the primary election, West Virginia had **1,023,569 active voters** (eligible and have not been flagged as moved or not voting in 2 or more years). 250,420 active voters voted in the primary election. 24.4% of all active voters participated in the primary election.

Near the close of registration for the primary election, West Virginia had **174,467 inactive voters** (eligible and have been flagged as potentially moved or not voting in 2 or more years). 2,037 eligible voters flagged as inactive voted in the primary election. 1% of all inactive voters participated in the primary election. A registration flagged as inactive will revert to active status once the voter updates the registration or votes in the election.

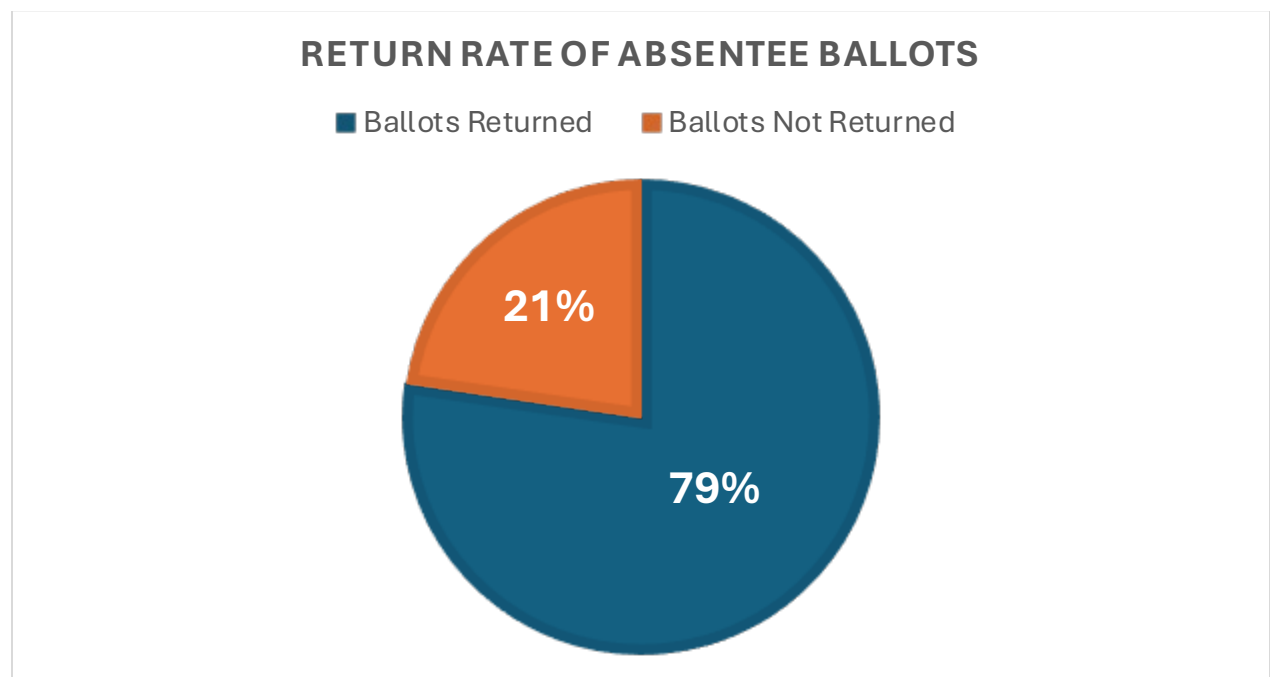
Disclaimer: As of July 31, 2026, the data presented are preliminary and subject to change. Voters who changed their party affiliation after Election Day may affect the accuracy of party-based analyses and totals. The West Virginia Secretary of State's Office is currently reviewing the data for anomalies and reconciling any discrepancies between ballots cast and voter party affiliation records. This review is intended to determine whether any

inconsistencies are attributable to clerical errors, data processing issues, or matters requiring further investigation.

Party Ballots Cast in 2022 vs. 2026

	2022 Primary	2026 Primary	Difference in 2022 Primary and 2026 Primary	Percentage Increase or Decrease
Democrat Ballots Cast	100,440	104,028	+3,588	+0.3%
Republican Ballots Cast	154,140	126,365	-27,775	-22%
No Party Ballots Cast	5,620	21,576	+15,956	+74%
Other	74	39	-35	-90%
Total	260,274	252,008	-8,266	-.03%

Number of Cumulative Ballots Requested by Voters and Returned back to the Clerks:



A total of **5,073 absentee ballots** were requested by voters in West Virginia, and **3,998 (79%)** were returned to county clerks.

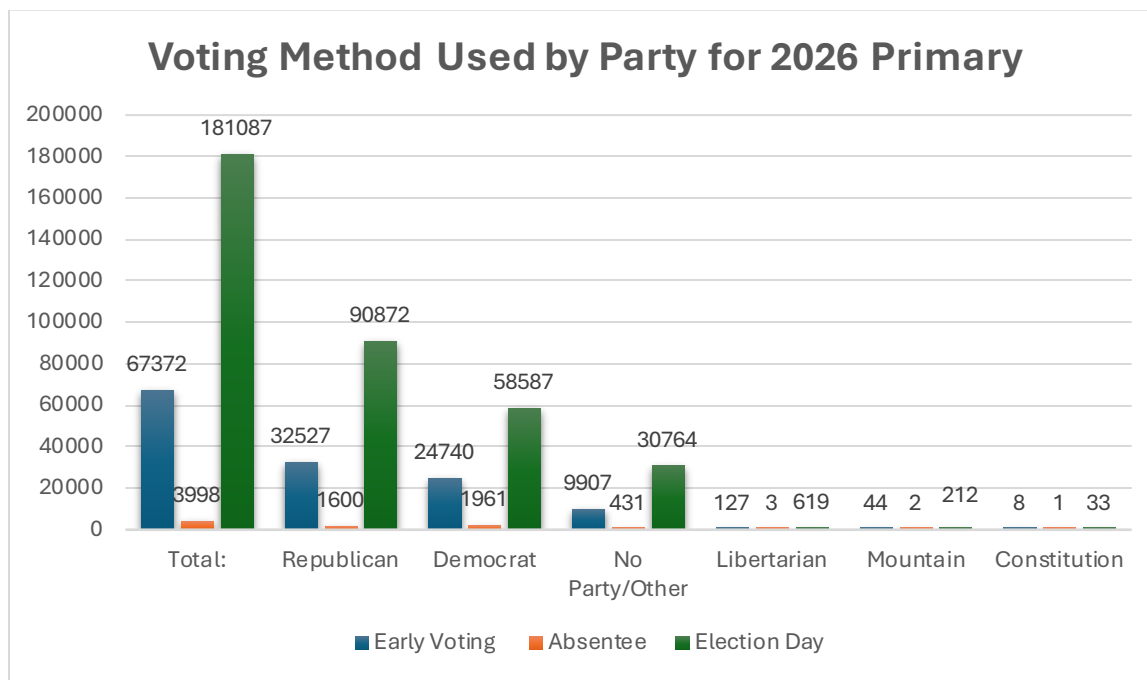
By party affiliation:

- **Democrats:** 2,457 requested; **1,961 (80%)** returned.
- **Republicans:** 1,972 requested; **1,600 (81%)** returned.

- **Mountain Party:** 3 requested; **2 (67%)** returned.
- **Libertarians:** 8 requested; **3 (38%)** returned.
- **Constitution:** 2 requested; **1 (50%)** returned.
- **Other Party:** 174 requested; **133 (76%)** returned.
- **No Party:** 457 requested; **298 (65%)** returned.

Absentee ballots requested and returned in each county are provided in Appendix A.

Voting Method Used by Party for the 2026 Primary Election:

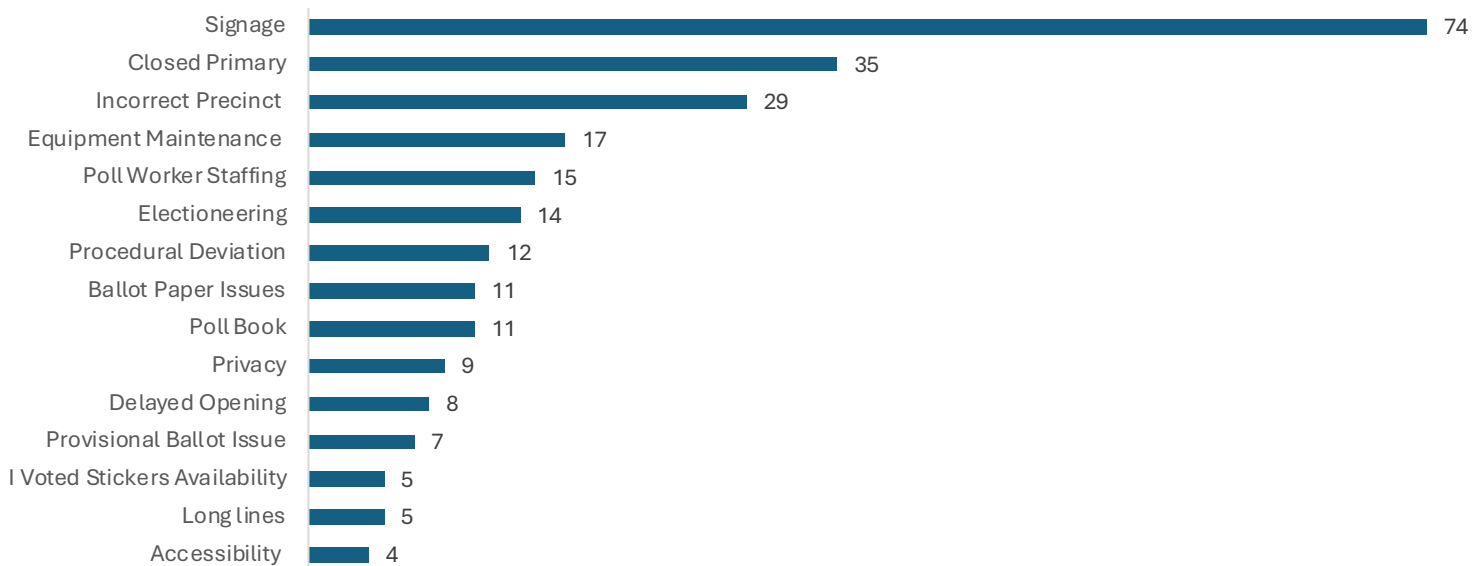


This data is collected from the State Voter Registration System and includes all provisional ballots cast

Voter participation was highest on Primary Election Day, accounting for 72% of all ballots cast. Approximately 56% of Democrats voted on Election Day, although they had the highest number of absentee ballots requested. 72% of Republicans voted on Election Day and 26% voted early. No Party voters also favored Election Day voting, with 64% casting ballots that day. Only one Mountain Party voter returned an absentee ballot; the remaining voters split their participation between early voting and Election Day.

Election Day Reporting:

Breakdown of Reports Received by Staff



Examples of Report Categories:

Signage Issues: Reports of missing, incomplete, or unclear polling place signage.

Closed Primary Concerns: Comments or complaints regarding closed primary election requirements.

Incorrect Precinct: Reports that voters appeared at the wrong precinct location.

Equipment Maintenance: Reports requiring equipment recalibration, repair, replacement, or technical support.

Poll Worker Staffing: Reports of poll worker absences on Election Day.

Electioneering Complaints: Reports of potential electioneering activity near polling locations.

Procedural Deviation: Reports of deviations from established election procedures in poll worker training.

Ballot Paper Issues: Reports of card stock not feeding properly through voting equipment.

Poll Book: Reports involving poll book equipment, accessories, or usability concerns.

Voter Privacy: Reports regarding voting station spacing.

Delayed Opening: Reports of polling locations opening later than scheduled.

Provisional Ballot Issue: Reports involving the handling or processing of provisional ballots.

"I Voted" Sticker Availability: Reports that voter stickers were unavailable at certain precincts.

Long Lines: Reports of long voter lines at polling locations.

Accessibility: Reports of inaccessible or unusable accessibility features, such as entrance ramps.

On Primary Election Day, the Secretary of State's Office deployed staff members to multiple precincts in **every county** throughout the state. In addition, personnel at the State Capitol were available throughout the day and night to answer calls from county clerks, poll workers, or members of the public and provide guidance and support as needed. Reports concerning Election Day activities may be received through multiple channels, including email, telephone calls, social media posts, and verbal communication.

Staff were assigned specific counties and conducted random visits to polling locations to ensure poll workers were able to perform their duties without disruption and report any observations or suspected issues that may prevent a citizen from exercising their right to vote. Many reported issues involved improper signage. Most reports concerned electioneering signs that could not be placed the required 100 feet from polling locations due to roadways or other physical obstructions. Signage issues were typically resolved on-site by staff or investigators. Since signage is the most frequently reported issue at polling places, we will work with the poll kit vendor to consolidate all required information onto a single sign. This allows poll workers to post one sign on the door rather than multiple signs, improving consistency and making election day morning easier.

Another common report was poll workers not showing up on Primary Election Day. For the last few elections, there has been a downturn in poll worker participation. However, the staff and investigators are starting to observe interest from younger individuals in working the polling places on election day. In addition, to innate interest, [House Bill 4865](#), will be in effect for the general election. This will allow juniors and seniors in high school, who are not yet 18, as well as homeschool and private school students, the opportunity to serve as election official trainee. The student must be a junior or senior with an accumulative GPA of at least 3.0 and have written consent from a parent or legal guardian. The principal of the school must give permission if the student attends a public or private institution and will require the student to work on a day that school is in session. The student shall not be counted as absent from school on days they serve as election officials. No more than one election official may serve per political party per precinct.

Following signage concerns, complaints about the closed primary accounted for the next largest category of reports. There were very few reports on accessibility and privacy issues.

On May 1, 2025, the Governor signed [House Bill 3016](#), requiring voters to present **photo identification to vote**. The Secretary of State's Office had just over one year to implement the law before the 2026 primary election and focused on educating county officials and voters to ensure a smooth rollout.



Example of a free Voter Identification Card

In addition to drivers licenses, passports, military IDs, the Secretary of State's Office, in coordination with the county clerks, provides free voter ID cards. Voters complete an application, and the Office prints and mails the ID at no cost. County clerks also received informational cards outlining the new law, acceptable forms of identification, and alternative voting options. In addition to county clerks receiving informational cards outlining the new law, an educational video was produced called "[A Helpful Guide to West Virginia's Voter ID Law](#)". **Notably, despite this being the first election conducted under the state's new voter identification law, neither the Secretary of State's Office nor its investigators received any complaints related to the implementation or enforcement of the law.**

Election Night Reporting:

Election Night Reporting is a collaborative effort between county clerk offices and the Secretary of State's Office to provide accurate and timely election results to the public on election night. Reporting does not begin until after the polls have closed.

County clerks and their designated staff enter election results into the Election Night Reporting system, while Secretary of State personnel monitor submissions and communicate with counties to ensure all available results have been reported. The results displayed through the Election Night Reporting system are unofficial.

Official election results are not certified until all [canvassing procedures](#) have been completed and any election contests or related hearings have been resolved. The official returns are subsequently submitted to the Secretary of State's Office and serve as the final certified results of the election.

Remedies for Candidates:

- Once a county (single county election) or counties (last county in multi-county election) declares results a candidate has 48 hours to request a recount.
- An election contest must be brought within 10 days after the election results are certified.
- For an election contest challenging specific votes cast, votes rejected, or voters who participated in the election – a recount is necessary before challenging the election.
- For an election contest challenging an elected candidate's eligibility, the legality of the election, or fraud – a recount is not required before challenging the election.
- For state offices (except governor) and judges, the contests are handled by a special court appointed by the contestee, contestor, and Governor.
- For governor – the contest is handled by the legislature.
- All other offices are handled by the circuit court with jurisdiction over where the election took place.
- Any decision is appealable to the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia.

Appendix A:

COUNTY	ABSENTEE REQUESTED	ABSENTEE RETURNED
BARBOUR	60	46
BERKELEY	250	135
BOONE	59	42
BRAXTON	35	31
BROOKE	61	52
CABELL	294	242
CALHOUN	23	20
CLAY	17	13
DODDRIDGE	23	22
FAYETTE	187	128
GILMER	19	17
GRANT	14	14
GREENBRIER	57	44
HAMPSHIRE	42	36
HANCOCK	96	87
HARDY	30	27
HARRISON	288	226
JACKSON	49	44
JEFFERSON	116	82
KANAWHA	654	471
LEWIS	38	31
LINCOLN	23	18
LOGAN	44	30
MARION	249	204
MARSHALL	72	55
MASON	77	60
MCDOWELL	45	37
MERCER	225	205

COUNTY	ABSENTEE REQUESTED	ABSENTEE RETURNED
MINERAL	17	10
MINGO	24	22
MONONGALIA	185	158
MONROE	47	42
MORGAN	55	36
NICHOLAS	64	56
OHIO	207	136
PENDLETON	31	27
PLEASANTS	21	18
POCAHONTAS	39	30
PRESTON	88	70
PUTNAM	131	104
RALEIGH	225	167
RANDOLPH	93	83
RITCHIE	16	16
ROANE	45	42
SUMMERS	47	38
TAYLOR	51	38
TUCKER	82	79
TYLER	31	30
UPSHUR	73	67
WAYNE	102	87
WEBSTER	13	11
WETZEL	32	28
WIRT	6	6
WOOD	161	144
WYOMING	40	34
Total	<u>5,073</u>	<u>3,998</u>