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## Automatic Voter Registration and Voter Turnout in Nevada Elections

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## AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION AND VOTER TURNOUT IN NEVADA ELECTIONS

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Prepared by: Dielle T. Telada, Caitlin J. Saladino, and William E. Brown, Jr.

### PURPOSE:

For the first time in Nevada’s history, voters who are not registered as Democrats or Republicans (i.e., nonpartisans and minor party registrants) constitute a majority of active registered voters.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the rapid growth in nonpartisan registrants corresponds with Nevada’s adoption of Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) in January 2020, resulting in the addition of more than 320,000 new voters to the electorate.<sup>2</sup> This fact sheet summarizes voter registration and voter turnout statistics reported by the Nevada Secretary of State for elections since 2012.

### ABOUT THE DATA:

This study utilizes voter registration and election turnout statistics published by the Nevada Secretary of State from October 2012 to March 2022. The voter registration statistics for 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020 are from the October report for those years.<sup>3</sup> The voter registration data for 2022 are from March 2022. The voter turnout data are from the Nevada Secretary of State for the 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020, general elections.

This fact sheet reports changes in active voter registration between 2012 and 2022 to show the growth of nonpartisan registration in Nevada. The Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles implemented AVR in January 2020 after Question 5 passed in 2018. Following the passage of Assembly Bill 345 (2019)<sup>4</sup> codifying AVR procedures, AVR was expanded to include other state agencies through Assembly Bill 432 (2021).<sup>5</sup>

### KEY FINDINGS:

1. Non-major party voters increased by 38.02 percent between the 2016 (269,556) and 2020 presidential elections (372,037) and these voters share of the total vote increased by over two percentage points.
2. Nevada’s nonpartisan active voter registrants increased by 25.90 percent between October 2018 (342,055) and October 2020 (430,635).
3. Democratic registered voters accounted for the largest share of voters (529,621) in the 2020 general election.
4. Republicans accounted for the largest total share of voters (44.24) in the 2014 midterm election.

Table 1 presents the statewide active voter registration statistics at the time voter registration closes before the general election for the 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020 (see note three) elections in Nevada. For 2022, data from the March 2022 Nevada Secretary of State report are used.

<sup>1</sup> Nevada Secretary of State, “Voter Registration Statistics,” 2022 (<https://www.nvsos.gov/sos/elections/voters/voter-registration-statistics>).

<sup>2</sup> Sean Golonka, “More voters, less party affiliation 2 years into automatic voter registration,” *The Nevada Independent*, January 16, 2022 <https://thenevadaindependent.com/article/more-voters-less-party-affiliation-2-years-into-automatic-voter-registration>.

<sup>3</sup> The 2020 election was the first cycle conducted after the implementation of automatic voter registration and same-day voter registration, which allows voters to register and cast their votes as late as Election Day. Prior to 2020, voter registration closed in early October. However, to maintain consistency in the data presentation, the October 2020 voter registration is used.

<sup>4</sup> NELIS “Assembly Bill 345,” 2022 (<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019/Bill/6643/Overview>).

<sup>5</sup> NELIS “Assembly Bill 432,” 2022 (<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/81st2021/Bill/8087/Overview>).

**Table 1: Nevada Statewide Active Voter Registration, 2012 to 2022**

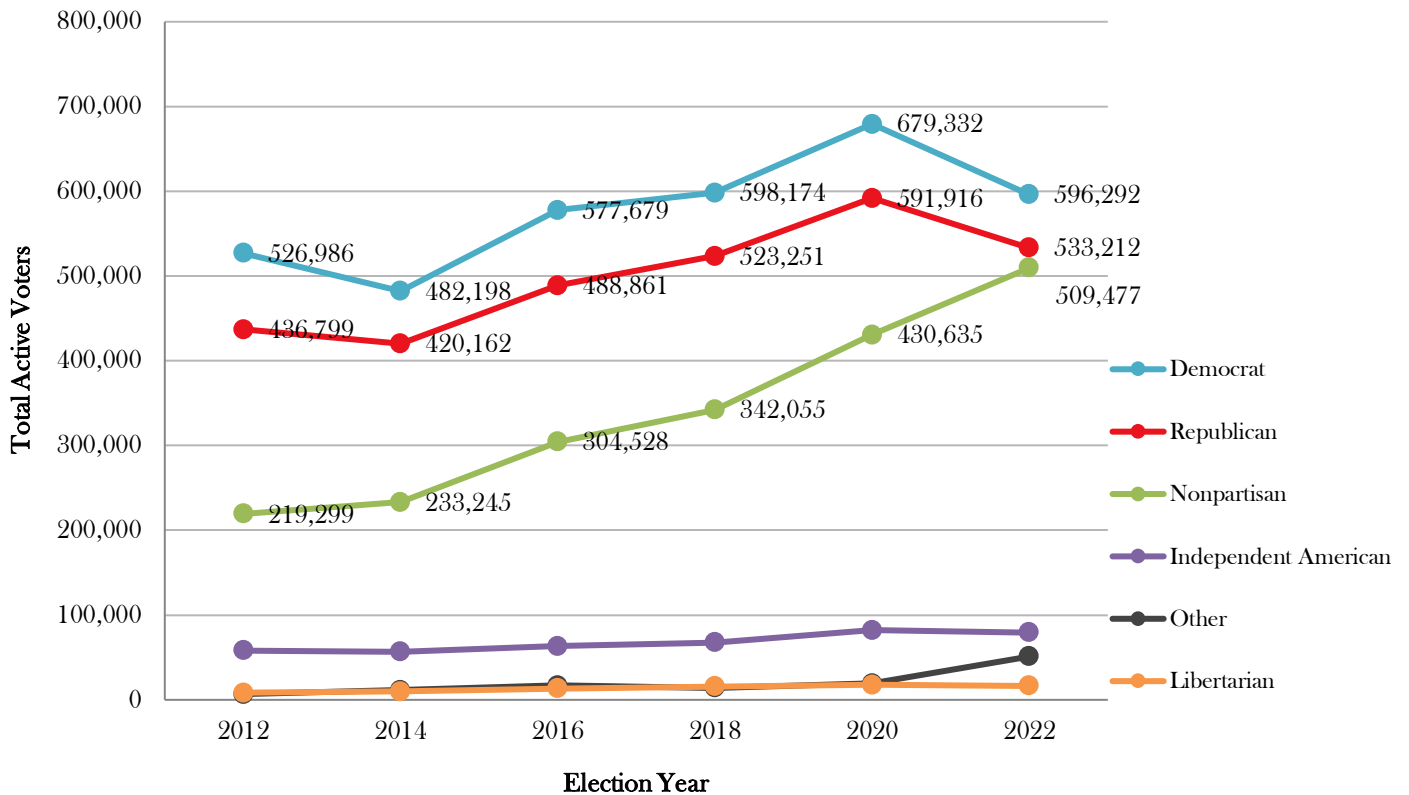
Year	Democrat	Republican	Independent American	Libertarian	Nonpartisan	Other	Total
2012	526,986	436,799	58,130	8,448	219,299	6,773	1,257,621
2014	482,198	420,162	56,628	9,739	233,245	11,221	1,213,193
2016	577,679	488,861	63,330	13,381	304,528	17,040	1,464,818
2018	598,174	523,251	67,644	15,588	342,055	14,216	1,560,928
2020	679,332	591,916	82,273	17,833	430,635	19,367	1,821,356
2022	596,292	533,212	79,527	16,522	509,477	51,013	1,786,043

Source: Nevada Secretary of State, “Voter Registration Statistics,” 2022 (<https://www.nvsos.gov/sos/elections/voters/voter-registration-statistics>).

Note: For 2022, registration totals are from March. For all other years, registration data are from October.

Figure 1 displays active voter registration statistics at the time voter registration closed before the 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020 (see note three) elections and through March 2022. Note that because voter registration typically increases in the fall of an election year, the 2022 data are incomplete. Since the 2020 election, the number of non-major party registrants increased by nearly 80,000. In comparison, the number of voters registered with the Democratic and Republican parties decreased.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 1: Nevada Active Voter Registration Trends, 2012 to 2022**



Source: Nevada Secretary of State “Voter Registration Statistics,” 2022 (<https://www.nvsos.gov/sos/elections/voters/voter-registration-statistics>).

Note: For 2022, registration totals are from March. For all other years, registration data are from October.

<sup>6</sup> Nevada’s voter maintenance program regularly removes ineligible persons from the voter rolls such as those who have died or changed their residency outside of the jurisdiction. Voters are moved to the inactive list if election mail is undeliverable and they do not update their addresses within 30 days. Voters who are moved to the inactive list can still vote but if they fail to do so at least one within the next two general elections, their registration is canceled.

Table 2 displays the number and percentage of statewide voter turnout by party during the 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020<sup>7</sup> general elections in Nevada. After the adoption of AVR in 2020, non-major affiliated active registered voters increased by 38.01 during the 2020 presidential election compared to the 2016 presidential election. Overall, voter turnout increased by 26.6 percent between the 2012 and 2020 presidential elections.

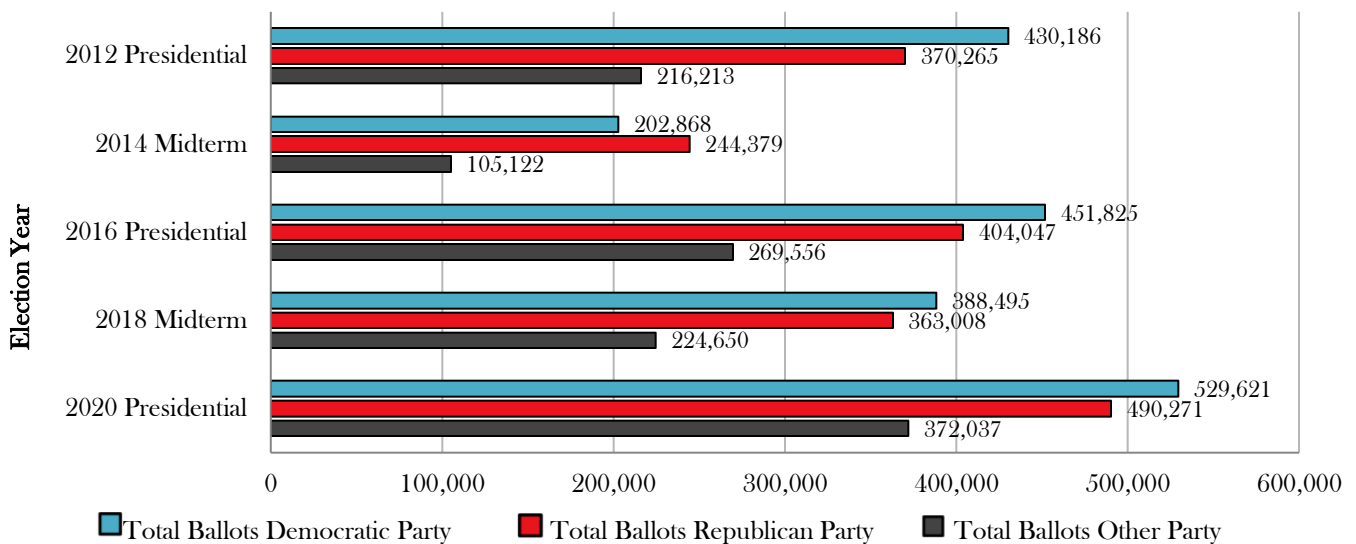
**Table 2: Nevada Statewide Voter Turnout by Party, 2012 to 2020**

Election	Active Registered Voters	Total Ballots Cast	Percent of Active Voters	Total Ballots Cast by Party					
				Dem. Total		Rep. Total		Other Total	
				Total	Percent of Ballots Cast	Total	Percent of Ballots Cast	Total	Percent of Ballots Cast
2012 Presidential	1,258,409	1,016,664	81.00%	430,186	42.13%	370,265	36.42%	216,213	21.26%
2014 Midterm	1,212,327	552,369	45.56%	202,868	36.73%	244,379	44.24%	105,122	19.03%
2016 Presidential	1,464,819	1,125,429	76.83%	451,825	40.15%	404,047	35.90%	269,556	23.95%
2018 Midterm	1,561,321	976,320	62.53%	388,495	39.79%	363,008	37.18%	224,650	23.01%
2020 Presidential	1,821,864	1,425,026	78.22%	529,621	37.17%	490,271	34.40%	372,037	26.11%

Source: Nevada Secretary of State, "Election Results Turnout Statistics," 2022 (<https://www.nvsos.gov/sos/elections/voters/election-turnout-statistics>).

Figure 2 presents voter turnout data for the 2012 through 2020 general elections. The number of non-major affiliated voters who participated increased by 113.7 percent from the 2014 midterm election to the 2018 midterm election.

**Figure 2: Nevada Election Turnout by Party, 2012 to 2020**



Source: Nevada Secretary of State, "Election Results Turnout Statistics," 2022 (<https://www.nvsos.gov/sos/elections/voters/election-turnout-statistics>).

<sup>7</sup> The votes cast in 2020 that are assigned to the three groups differ from the total votes reported by approximately 33,000, and as a consequence the total vote by party in the Secretary of State's data adds to 97.68%, see Nevada Secretary of State, "Voter Registration Statistics," 2020 ([www.nvsos.gov/sos/elections/voters/voter-registration-statistics](http://www.nvsos.gov/sos/elections/voters/voter-registration-statistics)).