

Democracy North Carolina

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Early Voting Hits Record, Nearly 500,000 Ballots Cast

The State Board of Elections posted a database of voters participating in One-Stop Early Voting. Here are some observations about who voted during the Early Voting phase of the 2012 primary election. See data for all 100 counties [on this spreadsheet](http://www.democracy-nc.org/downloads/EarlyVoteRegisTurnoutPrim2012.xls): <http://www.democracy-nc.org/downloads/EarlyVoteRegisTurnoutPrim2012.xls>

- One-Stop Early Voting ended Saturday, May 5th, with a record turnout of North Carolina voters – 490,540 ballots were accepted by the end of the day or about 4% more than the 473,800 cast during the 2008 primary. (*Excludes cancelled, spoiled or duplicate ballots.*)
- This number only includes ballots cast at the Early Voting sites – technically called “in-person absentee ballots.” An additional 16,600 absentee ballots were received by Saturday through the mail, etc., bringing the total absentee ballots cast thus far to over 500,000. More mail-in absentee ballots are expected.
- Democrats and Republicans essentially matched each other in turnout rates – 8.2% of registered Democrats and 8.3% of registered Republicans used One-Stop Early Voting to participate in the 2012 primary. Libertarian and Unaffiliated voters had lower turnout rates.
- 8.6% of white registered voters and 5.6% of black registered voters used One-Stop Early Voting; women outperformed men, with an 8.0% versus 7.6% turnout rate.
- The top 10 counties for turnout of their registered voters are Alleghany, Transylvania, Mitchell, Chatham, Bladen, Orange, Alexander, Watauga, Durham and Caldwell, with turnout rates reaching 17% of registered voters.
- The 7 counties with the highest number of ballots cast during One-Stop Early Voting provided about 36% of the total cast; they are in order: Wake, Mecklenburg, Durham, Guilford, Buncombe, Orange, and Forsyth. All are strong Democratic counties – but several had turnout rates below the 7.8% state average.
- The 9 counties with the biggest percent increase in One-Stop Early Voting over the 2008 primary are: Mitchell, Alexander, Stokes, Davie, Gaston, Randolph, Caldwell, Burke, and Ashe. All are strong Republican counties.
- Of the 100,000 Unaffiliated voters who participated in One-Stop Early Voting, 45% chose to cast a ballot in the Republican primary, 35% cast a Democratic ballot, and 20% cast Unaffiliated ballots.
- Voters over age 65 outnumbered voters 25 and younger by more than 5 to 1 (167,600 to 28,000). While more NC voters are registered as Democrats, a GOP tilt among the older and Unaffiliated primary voters narrowed the partisan gap: Of the 490,540 voters, 260,260 cast Democratic ballots; 209,430 Republican; 19,350 Unaffiliated; and 1,500 Libertarian ballots.