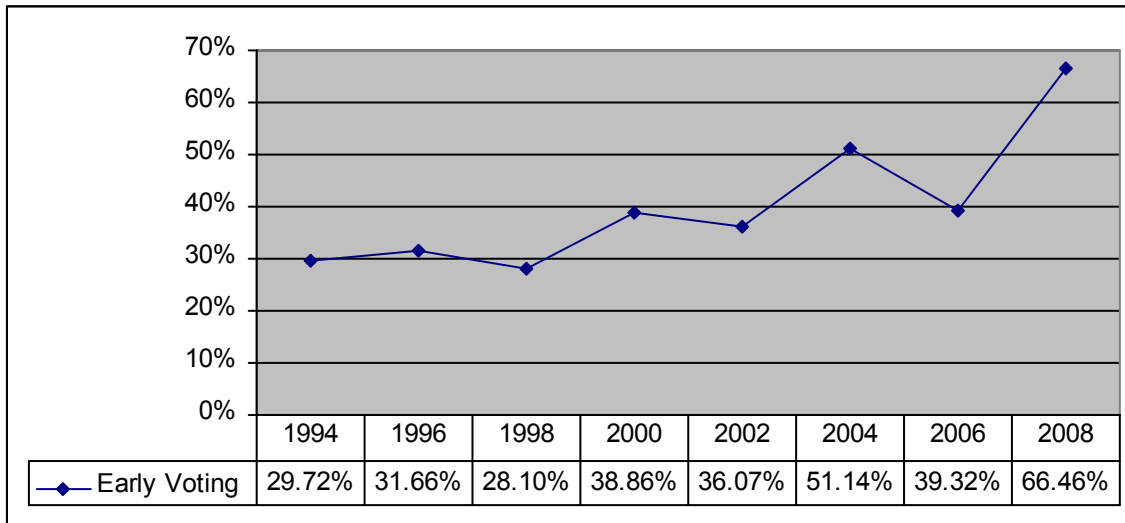


Early Voting in Texas: What Are the Effects?

In 1987, the Texas legislature passed legislation calling for no-excuse absentee voting and created the opportunity for Texans to vote in person at any one of each county’s permanent election office branch locations. In 1991, the law was amended to require a minimum number of early voting locations in each county and permitted the establishment of temporary early voting locations. As a result of these actions, Texas became a pioneer in early voting. Originally, the early voting period began twenty days prior to the election and ended four days prior to the election, providing seventeen days of early voting. Amendments have reduced the number of days for early voting to either twelve (for general elections and primary elections) or nine days (for elections held on the May uniform election date).

Since its inception in 1988, the percentage of the vote that is cast early has increased significantly. From 1988 to 1992, the percentage of the early vote increased from slightly more than 20 percent to approximately 33 percent (see Gronke 2008: 427). Figure 1 traces the rise of early voting since 1994, surpassing 50 percent in 2004 and culminating in nearly two-thirds of the vote in 2008. Early voting has dramatically changed the way Texans and many other Americans cast their ballots.¹

Figure 1: Early Voting in Texas, 1994-2008



Source: Texas Secretary of State, <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/historical/earlyvotinginfo.shtml>

The questions concerning early voting have focused on its effects: Has early voting increased turnout? Who votes early? Are early voters different from Election-Day voters? What are the benefits and

liabilities of early voting? This report attempts to answer these questions about early voting in Texas in recent general elections. In addition, this report describes the counties that had the largest percentage of early voters and the counties that had the smallest percentage of early voters in 2008. Furthermore, this report describes the counties that provided the largest number of early voters in 2008. In describing these counties, this report analyzes the characteristics of counties in each category. Finally, this report assesses the effects of early voting on political campaigns.

Literature Review

The initial studies of early voting focused on the effects of early voting of voter turnout. Most of the studies concluded that early voting made voting more convenient for voters, but it did not increase voter turnout appreciably (Berinsky 2005; Burden et al. 2009; Fitzgerald 2005; Giammo and Brox 2010; Gronke 2004; Gronke 2008; Gronke, Galanes-Rosenbaum, and Miller 2007; Kroft and Cooke 2009; Stein and Garcia-Monet 1997). Leighley and Nagler (2009: 17) found that "The effectiveness of no-excuse early voting appears to depend on the length of the voting period. A sufficient voting period appears to lead to increased turnout." Stein and Garcia-Monet (1997: 668) note that the number of early voting sites is less important than the location of those sites. The more convenient those sites are to potential voters—at grocery stores and malls, for example—the greater the impact on voter turnout. There is no doubt that the longer early voting is available, the more popular it becomes (see Figure 1). Overall, an increase in voter turnout of between two and five percent is common.

Researchers also focused considerable resources on determining the characteristics of early voters. The basis research questions were: Who votes early, and are they different from Election-Day voters? Stein (1998: 61), who studied early voters and Election-Day voters in the 1994 Texas gubernatorial election between the incumbent Texas governor, Democrat Ann Richards, and Republican George W. Bush, summarized the differences that he observed:

As expected, early voters are more likely than election-day voters to be strong partisans and older. Early voters are also considerably more conservative and more likely to be males than are election-day voters. Early voters are poorer than election-day voters, though this difference is slight. Furthermore, I do not observe any significant racial or ethnic differences

in the makeup of early and election-day voters, and education levels are indistinguishable between the two populations. Early voters are significantly more likely to report an interest in politics.

In conclusion, Stein (1998:67) noted that "the sharpest distinctions between election-day voters and early voters were observed for attitudinal (i.e., interest in politics, partisanship, and ideology) rather than demographic traits." Lyons and Scheb (1999) found that early voting in Tennessee was effective in mobilizing some voters, but they were mainly older voters. Another study of Tennessee voters found few differences between early voters and Election-Day voters (Neeley and Richardson 2001). Barreto, Streb, Marks, and Guerra (2006) found absentee voters to be older and better educated than Election-Day voters. Gronke, Bishin, Stevens, and Galanes-Rosenbaum (2005) found early voters in Florida's 2004 election to be older and more likely to be female. Hansen (2001:4) notes that early voters are more interested in politics and more partisan than Election-Day voters: "Strong partisans vote early because they have already made up their minds and see nothing to gain from waiting." Gronke, Galanes-Rosenbaum, Miller and Toffey (2008: 444) maintain that "These studies all suggest the same pattern: Voters who use convenience voting are more politically aware, more partisan, and more ideologically extreme." Thus, they would likely have voted anyway; early voting just made voting more convenient.

If early voters are somewhat older, more partisan, more interested, and more ideologically extreme than Election-Day voters, then early voting does little to alleviate the socioeconomic bias in voter turnout in the United States. Berinsky (2005: 482) argues that electoral reforms, which include early voting, ". . . do not correct the biases inherent in the electorate, and in some cases, reforms may even worsen these biases." This conclusion is supported by Gronke, Galanes-Rosenbaum, and Miller (2008), who conclude that "Early voting reforms, far from equalizing past inequities, instead show some signs of reinforcing them, encouraging turnout among habitual voters but failing to draw new voters into the system." More specifically, Rigby and Springer (2009:22) find that in-person early voting "had a net positive increase in inequality on average, as well as the potential to more substantially increase inequality in states with more stratified rolls." The consensus is that electoral reform does not alleviate the socioeconomic bias in voter turnout.

Two additional concerns about early voting are raised by Fortier (2006: 60-61). The first concern involves the loss of a civic day of election. He notes that contacts by individuals and political parties with potential voters are important in getting people to vote. His concern is that a long period of early voting reduces the likelihood of such contacts. The second concern involves the fact that many voters may have voted before the campaign ends, and, consequently, miss out on important information about the candidates that becomes available late in the campaign.

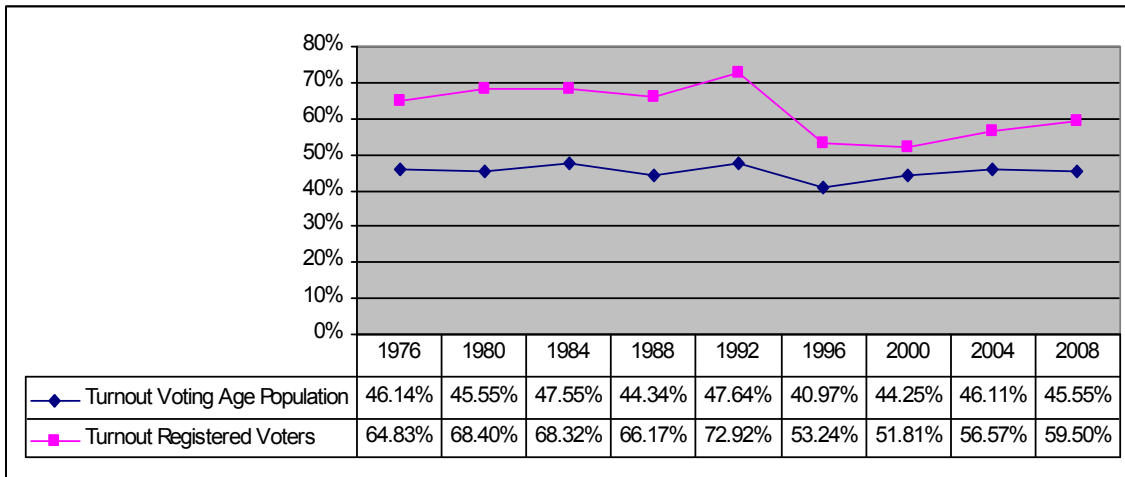
The Effects of Early Voting in Texas

In this section, we will consider the effects of early voting in Texas on voter turnout and discuss the characteristics of early voters and compare them with Election-Day voters.

Voter Turnout

Texans have been able to vote early since the 1988 general election. Early voting was fully implemented in 1992. What has been the effect of early voting on voter turnout in Texas? The data

Figure 2: Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections, 1976-2010



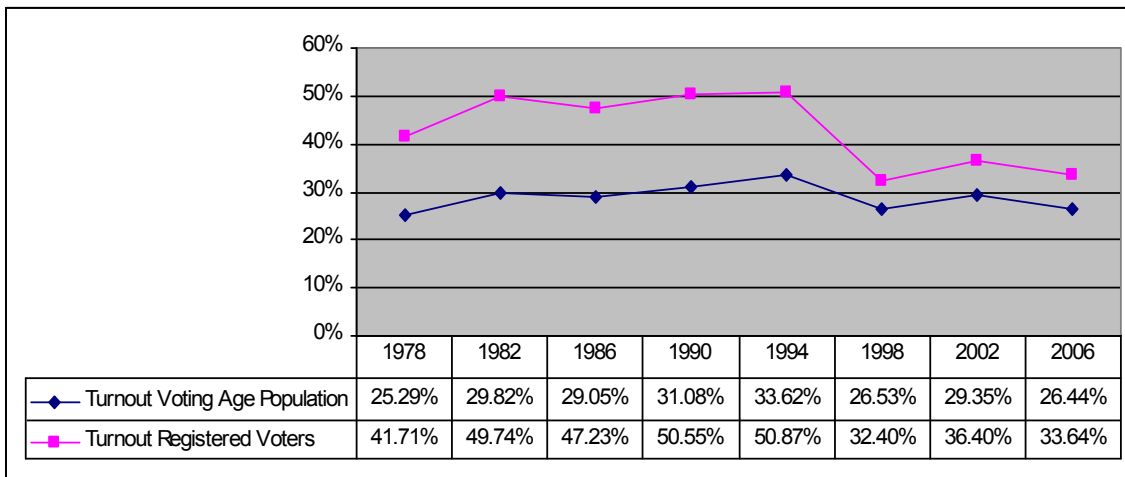
Source: Texas Secretary of State, <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/historical/70-92.shtml>

indicate that voter turnout, as a percentage of the voting age population, has remained relatively stable throughout the period, varying from a high of 47.64 percent in 1992 to a low of 40.97 percent in 1996 (see Figure 2). However, measured as a percentage of registered voters, voter turnout has shown greater fluctuation, but the trend has not in the direction that one would anticipate. In 1992, the first election in which early voting procedures were fully implemented, voter turnout peaked at nearly 73

percent. However, in the 1996 election, voter turnout fell to 53 percent and, in the 2000 election, to 52 percent. In the last two presidential elections, voter turnout has increased slightly to nearly 60 percent, but that is still more the 10 percent less than in 1992. Since early voting has no effect on voter registration, the best measure of voter turnout is percentage of registered voters. Although voter turnout increased in 1992, it declined in the next presidential election and has not increased to its previous zenith.

The turnout figures from non-presidential election years illustrate a similar trend. Voter turnout

Figure 3: Voter Turnout in Non-presidential Elections, 1978-2006



Source: Texas Secretary of State, <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/historical/70-92.shtml>

peaked in the 1994 election, when nearly 34 percent of age-eligible voters voted. However, since 1994, voter turnout has declined to levels similar to the 1970s. In terms of voter turnout among registered voters, turnout also increased from 1978 to 1994, but since 1994, voter turnout has declined to levels that are lower than in the 1970s (see Figure 3).

As others have noted, the effect of early voting on voter turnout in Texas is not significant, resulting in greater convenience for voters but not necessarily bringing new voters into the electorate.

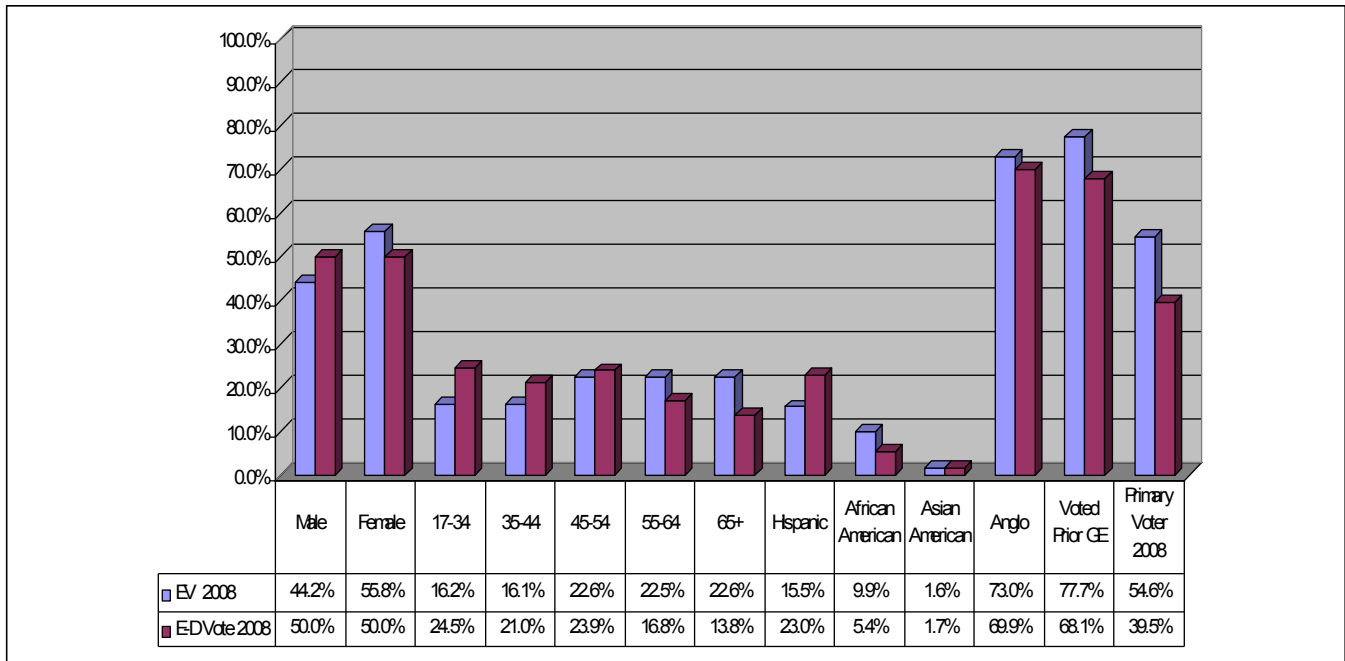
Who Votes Early?

In Texas, do early voters share the same characteristics as early voters in other states? That is, what demographic characteristics do early voters exhibit and are they different from early voters in other states? Comparing the early voter with the Election-Day voter during two recent presidential elections

(2004 and 2008) and two recent gubernatorial elections (2002 and 2006) provides a partial answer. Our data include gender, age, and ethnicity for in-person early voters and Election-Day voters in Texas during these four elections. We will compare in-person early voters and Election-Day voters in each of these elections.

2008 Election. Figure 4 compares in-person early voters with Election-Day voters during the 2008 general election.

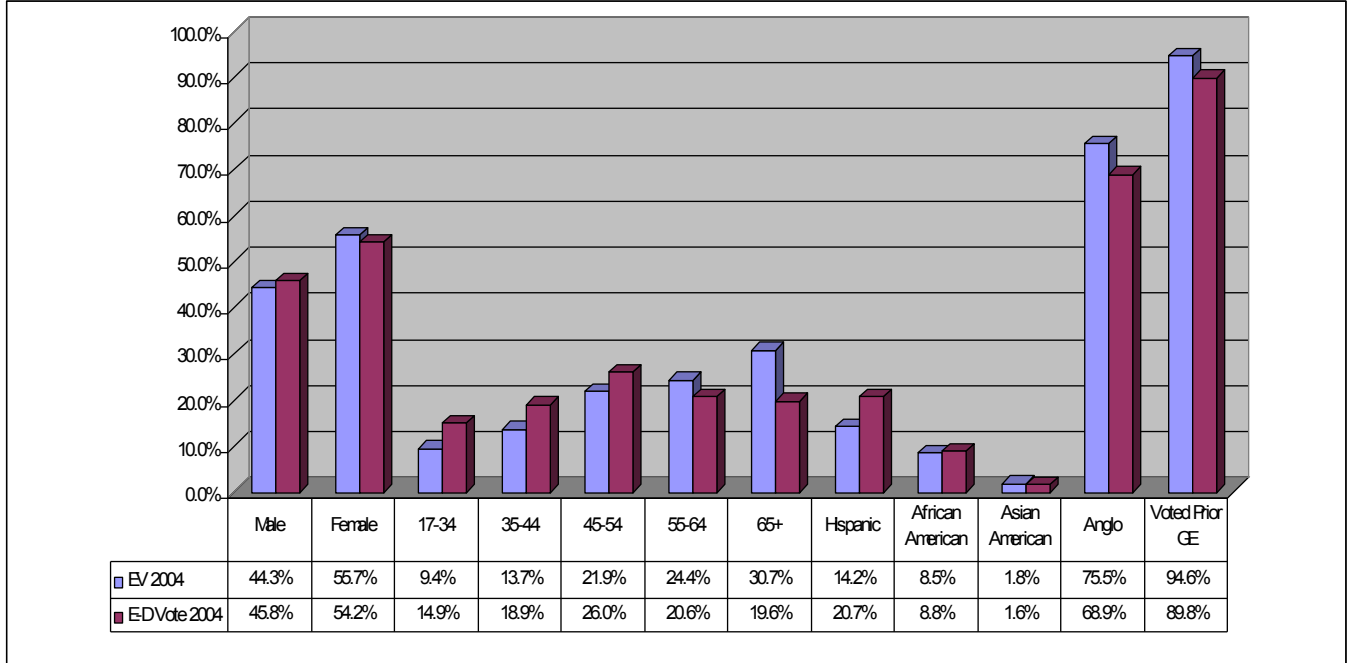
Figure 4: Early Voters and Election-Day Voters in 2008



Source: Data provided by Dr. Jeff Smith, Opinion Analysts, Inc.

2004 Election. Figure 5 compares in-person early voters with Election-Day voters in the 2004 general election.

Figure 5: Early Voters and Election-Day Voters in 2004

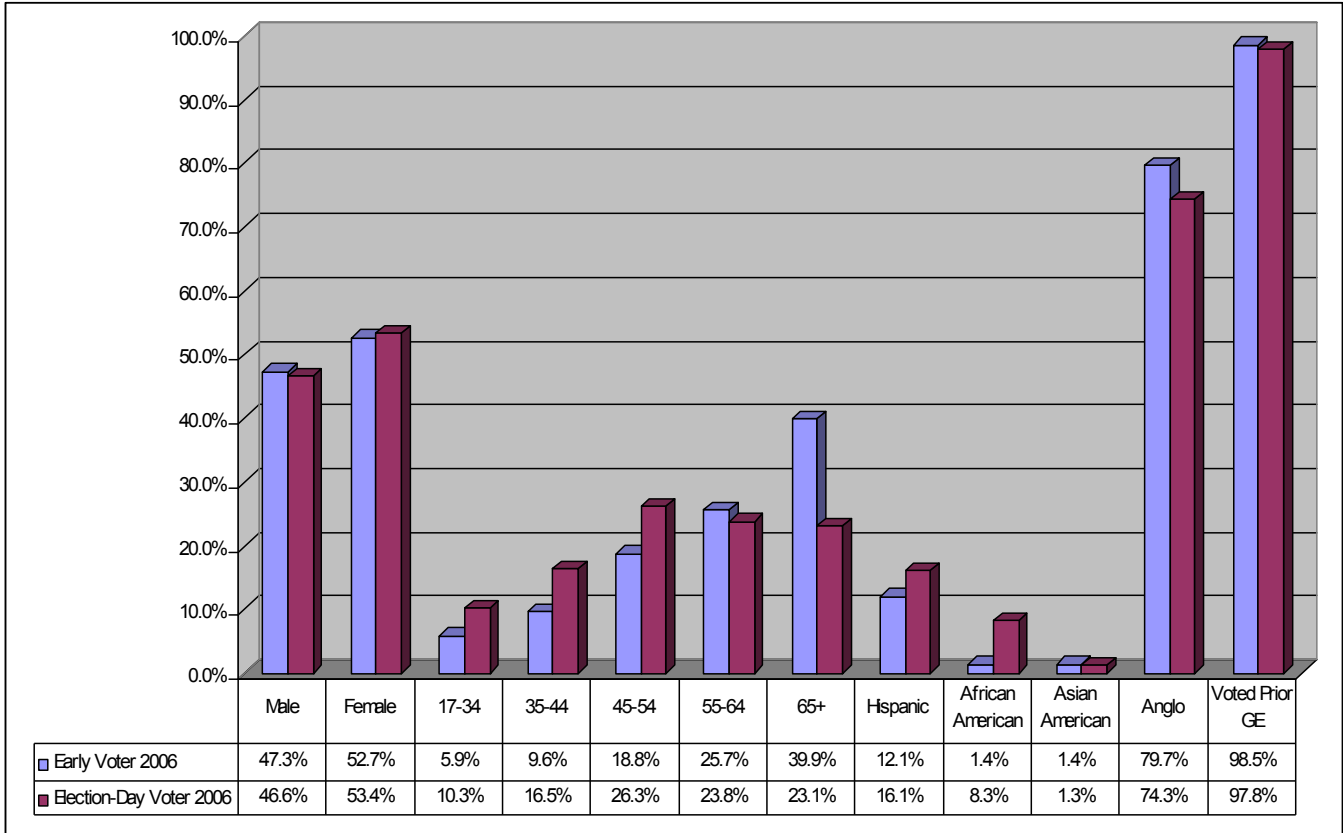


Source: Data Provided by Dr. Jeff Smith, Opinion Analysts, Inc.

A comparison of the early voters and Election-Day voters in 2004 and 2008 indicates several similarities and differences. In both 2004 and 2008, early voters were more likely to be female, over 65 years of age, and Anglo. Election-Day voters, on the other hand, were more likely to be younger than 45 and Hispanic. In 2008, African Americans were more likely to vote early. Also, females made up a larger percentage of early voters than males, but the percentages of male and female Election-Day voters were identical. Furthermore, in 2008, new voters made up a larger component of both early voters (22.3 percent) and Election-Day voters (31.1 percent) than in 2004, when slightly more than five percent of early voters were first-time voters and slightly more than ten percent of Election-Day voters were first-time voters. In 2004, voters 65 years of age and older made up a larger percentage of the early vote than in 2008, whereas in 2008, voters 44 years of age and younger made up a larger percentage of the early voters than in 2004. Barack Obama’s presidential campaign is the logical explanation for these differences as young voters and African Americans were targeted and mobilized by the campaign. Recent polls suggest that those mobilized in 2008 may not participate in 2010 (Thee-Brenan 2010).

2006 Election. Figure 6 compares in-person early voters with Election-Day voters in the 2006 general election.

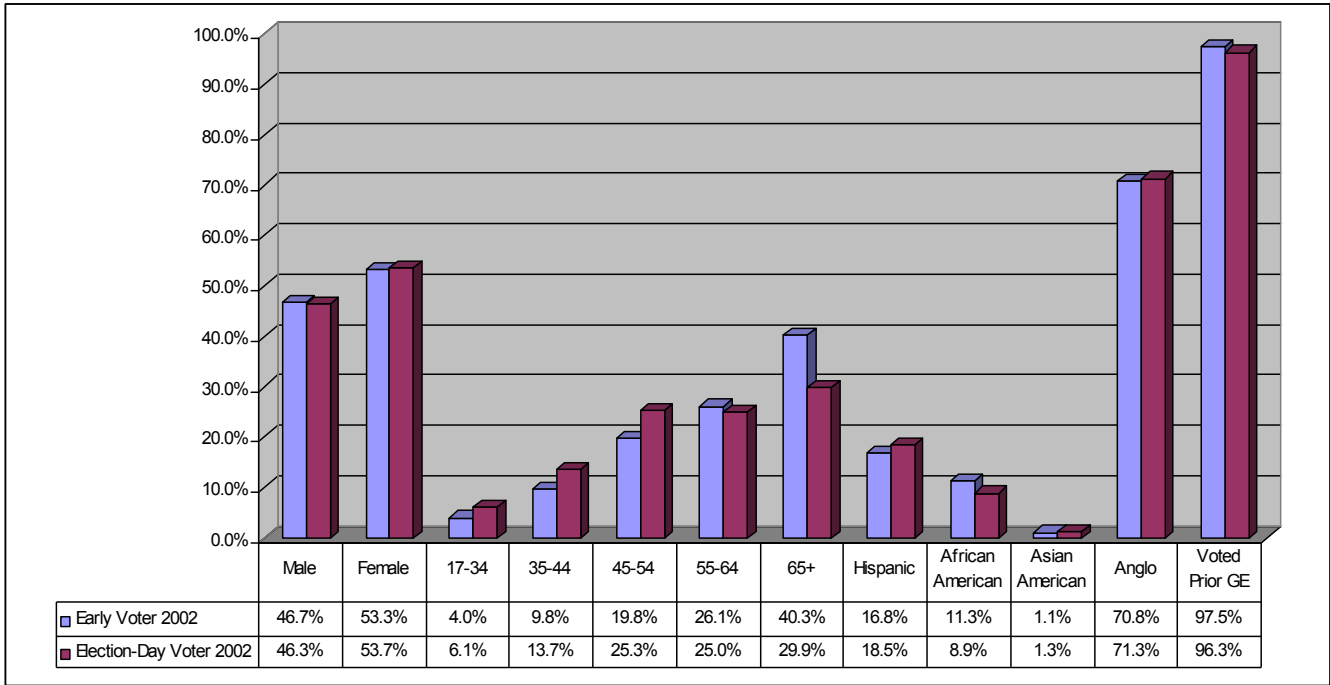
Figure 6: Early Voters and Election-Day Voters in 2006



Source: Data provided by Dr. Jeff Smith, Opinion Analysts, Inc.

2002 Election. Figure 7 compares in-person early voters with Election-Day voters in the 2002 general election.

Figure 7: Early Voters and Election-Day Voters in 2002



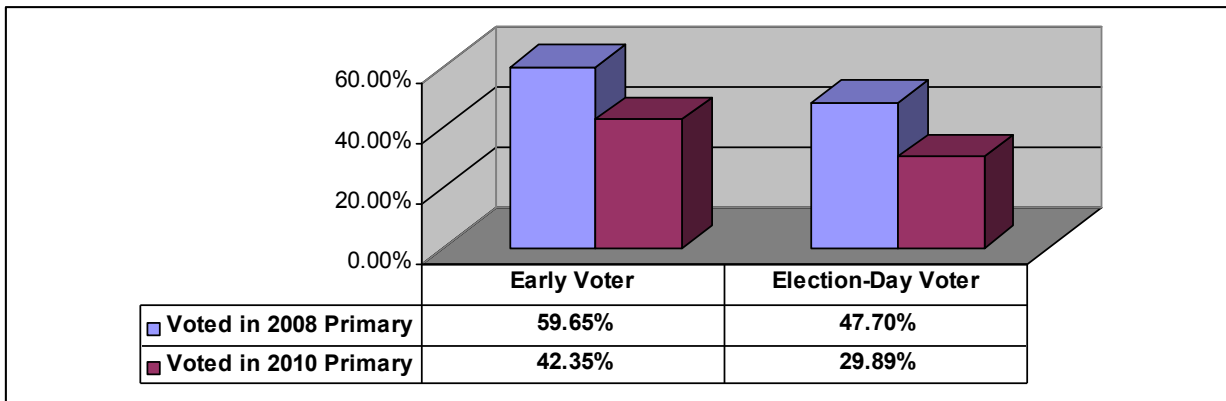
Source: Data provided by Dr. Jeff Smith, Opinion Analysts, Inc.

A comparison of early voters and Election-Day voters reveals the differences in the electorate that distinguishes presidential elections from midterm, or non-presidential general elections. The electorate tends to be smaller in midterm elections, and those people who are likely to vote are habitual voters, tending to be older, to be more highly educated, and to be higher in socioeconomic status. Furthermore, massive voter mobilization efforts that occur in presidential elections, especially in the so-called battle ground states are not as massive in midterm general elections. Thus, both in 2002 and 2006, the early voters are older and slightly more likely to be Anglo than Hispanic, African American, or Asian American. Young and middle-aged voters (under 55 years of age) make up a larger percentage of Election-Day voters than of early voters. Older voters, aged 55 and older, make up a larger percentage of early voters than of Election-Day voters. Females make up a larger percentage both of early and Election-Day voters than males do. Both early voters and Election-Day voters in 2002 and 2006 were habitual voters, more than 95 percent had voted in a previous general election.

We are also interested in whether in-person early voters in Texas are stronger partisans than Election-Day voters, which is the finding of most comparisons (see Gronke and Toffey 2008). Since we lack any data on party

identification by county, we decided to consider voting in either the Democratic or Republican Party’s primary as an indication of strong partisanship, which is, by the way, how the Texas Election Code defines partisanship. Figure 8 displays the results of that comparison. The T-test statistic for voting in the 2008 primary is -2.68, which is significant at the .01 level of confidence. For voting in the 2010 primary, the T-test statistic is -3.04, which is also significant at the .01 level. In other words, in-person early voters in 2008 were more partisan than Election-Day voters in 2008. On another indicator of partisanship—straight-ticket voting, there was not a statistically

Figure 8: Early Voters and Election-Day Voters Participation in Primary Elections, 2008 and 2010



Source: Data provided by Dr. Jeff Smith, Opinion Analysts, Inc.

significant difference between in-person early voters and Election-Day voters. In eighteen high vote counties in 2008, 57.6 percent of in-person early voters cast a straight-ticket vote, and 55.7 percent of Election-Day voters cast a straight-ticket vote. In seventeen high vote counties in 2006, 44.9 percent of in-person early voters cast straight-ticket ballots, and 44.1 percent of Election-Day voters cast straight-ticket ballots.

In conclusion, as the percentage of voters who take advantage of in-person early voting has increased, the differences between in-person early voters and Election-Day voters in Texas have become less pronounced. For example, older voters are still prominent among early voters, but they are not as large a percentage in 2008 as they were in 2002, 2004, or 2006. In 2008, the differences between early voters and Election-Day voters were statistically significant in terms of several voter characteristics, but the statistical significance was not as great as in 2002, for example (see Tables 1-4).

Table 1: T-test of Differences between Early Voters and Election-Day Voters, 2008.

	Gender		Age					Ethnicity			
	Male	Female	17-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Hispanic	African Am	Asian Am	Anglo
Early Voter	44.2%	55.8%	16.2%	16.1	22.6%	22.5%	22.6%	15.5%	9.9%	1.6%	73.0%
E-D Voter	50.0%	50.0%	24.5%	21.0	23.9%	16.8%	13.8%	23.0%	5.4%	1.7%	69.9%
T-stat	1.82	2.01*	0.63	1.09	1.71	2.62**	3.72***	.064	1.83	1.11	2.16*

*=Significant at the .05 level **=Significant at the .01 level ***=Significant at the .001 level

Table 2: T-test of Differences between Early Voters and Election-Day Voters, 2004

	Gender		Age					Ethnicity			
	Male	Female	17-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Hispanic	African Am	Asian Am	Anglo
Early Voter	44.3%	55.7%	9.4%	13.7%	21.9%	24.4%	30.7%	14.2%	8.5%	1.8%	75.5%
E-D Voter	45.8%	54.2%	14.9%	18.9%	26.0%	20.6%	19.6%	20.7%	8.8%	1.6%	68.9%
T stat	-0.74	-0.54	-1.77	-1.51	-1.12	-0.09	0.93	-1.47	-0.43	-0.13	-0.35

*=Significant at the .05 level **=Significant at the .01 level ***=Significant at the .001 level

Table 3: T-test of Differences between Early Voters and Election-Day Voters, 2006

	Gender		Age					Ethnicity			
	Male	Female	17-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Hispanic	African Am	Asian Am	Anglo
Early Voter	47.3%	52.7%	5.9%	9.6%	18.8%	25.7%	39.9%	12.1%	1.4%	1.4%	79.7%
E-D Voter	46.6%	53.4%	10.3%	16.5%	26.3%	23.8%	23.1%	16.1%	8.3%	1.3%	74.3%
T stat	-1.42	-1.50	-2.57*	-2.62**	-2.25*	-1.21	0.42	-1.90	-1.14	-0.73	-1.32

*=Significant at the .05 level **=Significant at the .01 level ***=Significant at the .001 level

Table 4: T-test of Differences between Early Voters and Election-Day Voters, 2002

	Gender		Age					Ethnicity			
	Male	Female	17-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Hispanic	African Am	Asian Am	Anglo
Early Voter	46.7%	53.3%	4.0%	9.8%	19.8%	26.1%	40.3%	16.8%	11.3%	1.1%	70.8%
E-D Voter	46.3%	53.7%	6.1%	13.7%	25.3%	25.0%	29.9%	18.5%	8.9%	1.3%	71.3%
T stat	-3.39***	-3.38***	-3.36***	-3.41***	-3.48***	-3.24**	-3.31***	-2.98**	-1.77	-1.90	-3.55***

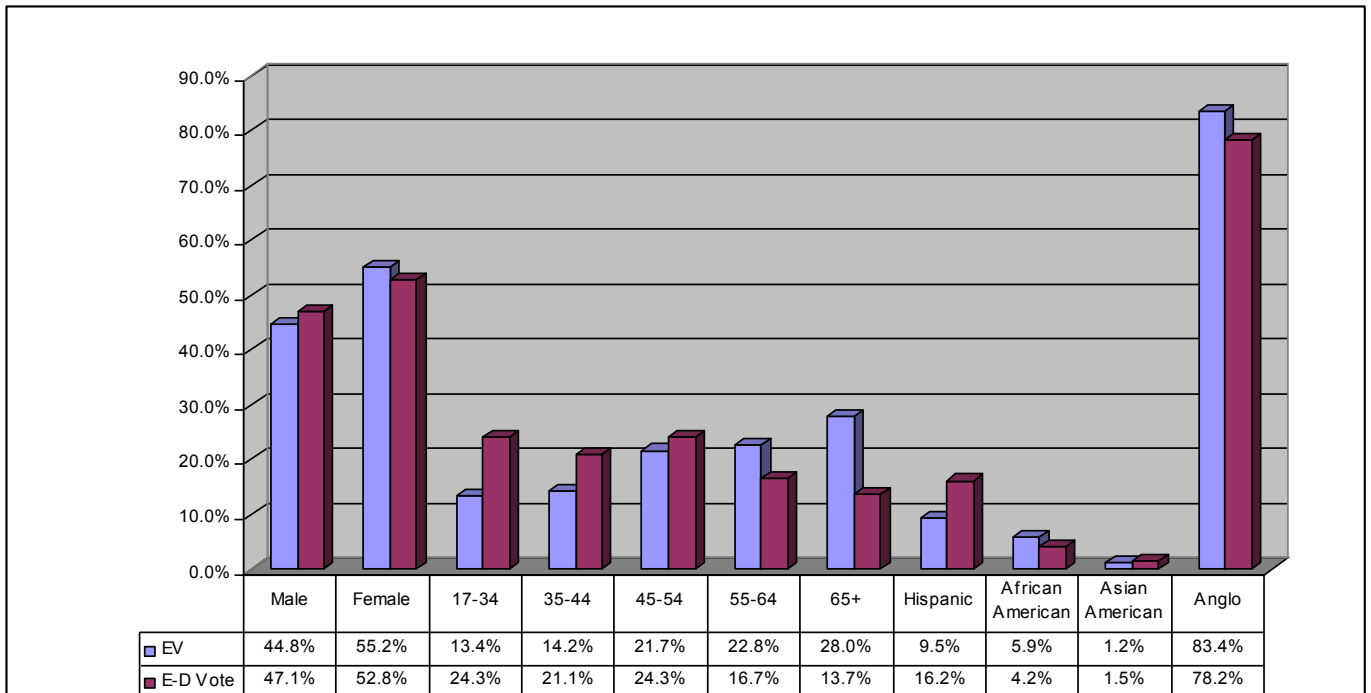
*=Significant at the .05 level **=Significant at the .01 level ***=Significant at the .001 level

To this point in the report, we have compared in-person early voters to Election-Day voters in all 254 Texas counties. Now, we are going to concentrate on three subsets of counties: (1) the top twenty-five counties in percentage of in-person early voters in the 2008 general election, (2) the bottom twenty-five counties in percentage of in-person early voters in the 2008 general election, and (3) the eighteen counties that cast the largest number of in-person early votes in 2008. There are two research questions: Do these subsets of counties differ significantly from all in-person early voters and Election-Day voters in terms of differences between in-

person early voters and Election-Day voters? Second, are there differences in the counties that are associated with the percentage of in-person early voters? In other words, does the composition of the county’s population affect the percentage of in-person early votes cast in the county?

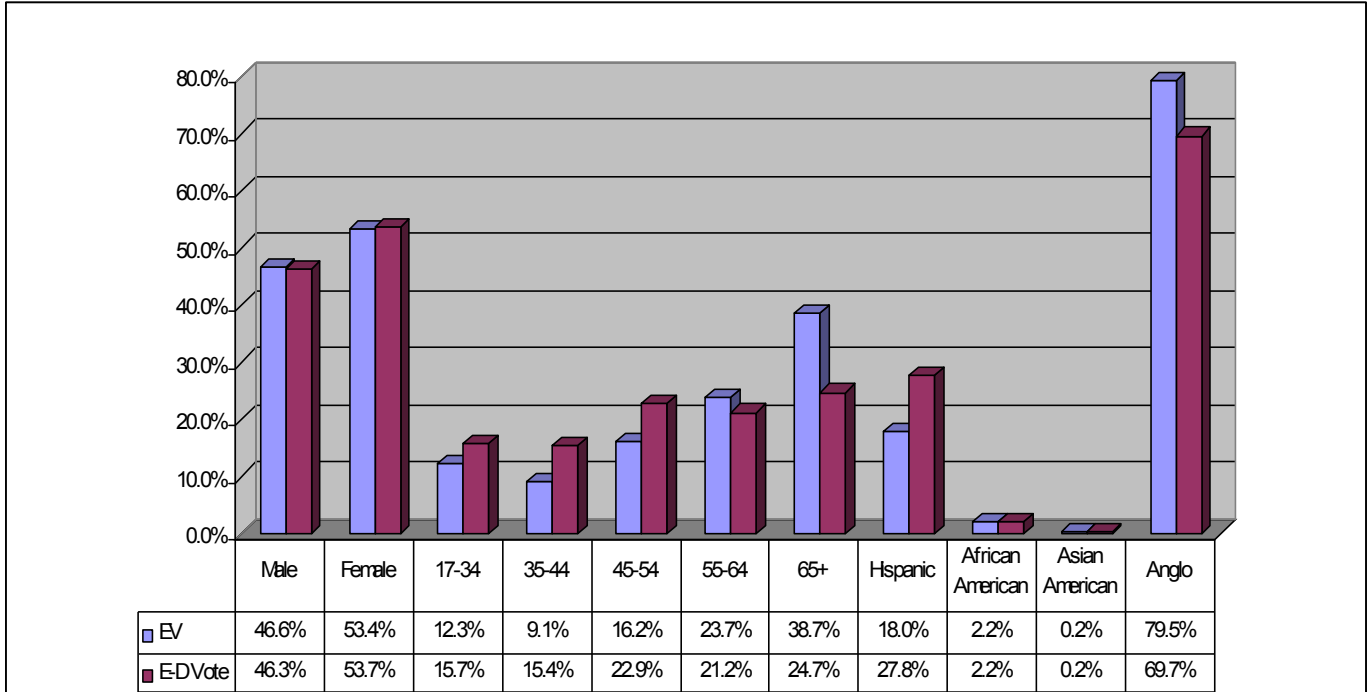
In 2008, the twenty-five counties with the largest percentage of in-person early voters averaged nearly 73 percent of their votes cast during in-person early voting. The percentage of votes cast early ranged from a high of 80.3 percent in Wichita County to a low of 69.6 percent in Howard County. Most of these counties were metropolitan or urban counties, with few rural counties. Figure 9 compares in-person early voters and Election-Day voters in those counties. On the other hand, the twenty-five counties with the smallest percentage of in-person early voters averaged 30.2 percent of their votes cast during in-person early voting. The percentage of votes cast early ranged from a low of 1.7 percent in Dickens County to a high of 37.7 percent in Borden County. Nearly all of these counties were rural counties. Figure 10 compares in-person early voters and Election-Day voters in those counties. The eighteen counties with the largest number of in-person early voters provided 69 percent of all in-person early votes cast in 2008. Figure 11 compares in-person early voters and Election-Day voters in those counties.

Figure 9: Early Voters and Election-Day Voters in the High Percentage Counties, 2008



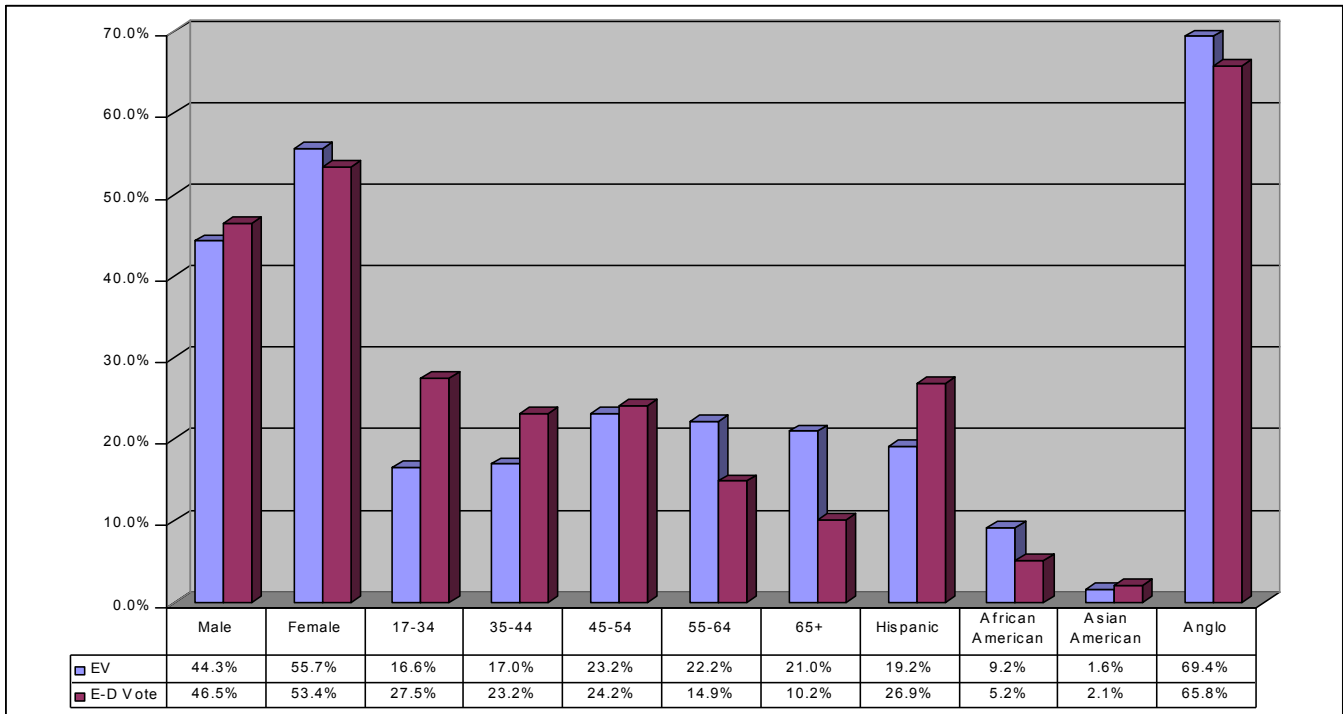
Source: Data provided by Dr. Jeff Smith, Opinion Analysts, Inc.

Figure 10: Early Voters and Election-Day Voters in the Low Percentage Counties, 2008



Source: Data provided by Dr. Jeff Smith, Opinion Analysts, Inc.

Figure 11: Early Voters and Election-Day Voters in the Counties with the Largest Number of Early Votes, 2008



The gender differences between in-person early voters and Election-Day voters were smallest in the low percentage early vote counties and largest in the high percentage early vote counties. In terms of age, early voters made up a smaller percentage of the 17-54 year old voters in all three subsets, and early voters made up a larger percentage of the 55 and older categories. In terms of ethnicity, Hispanics made up a greater percentage of Election-Day voters than of early voters. On the other hand, African Americans made up a greater percentage of early voters than of Election-Day voters. Anglos made up the larger percentage of early voters than of Election-Day voters, with the greatest difference in counties with the lowest percentage of early voters.

To determine whether the composition of a county's population affects early voting, county profile data were used to compute a correlation between each county characteristic and the percentage of early voters for each set of counties in the subset. The results are displayed in Tables 5-7. The interesting result is the fact that the correlations between the various factors that were examined and the percentage of in-person early votes were significant in only a few cases. Although a definitive interpretation of the data is not possible, the results suggest that county characteristics have little influence on the percentage of in-person early votes cast in the county. The data do suggest that mobilization efforts by political parties and candidates and potential voters' interest in the campaign are more important than county characteristics (Karp and Balducci 2001; Stein, Owens, and Leighley 2005).

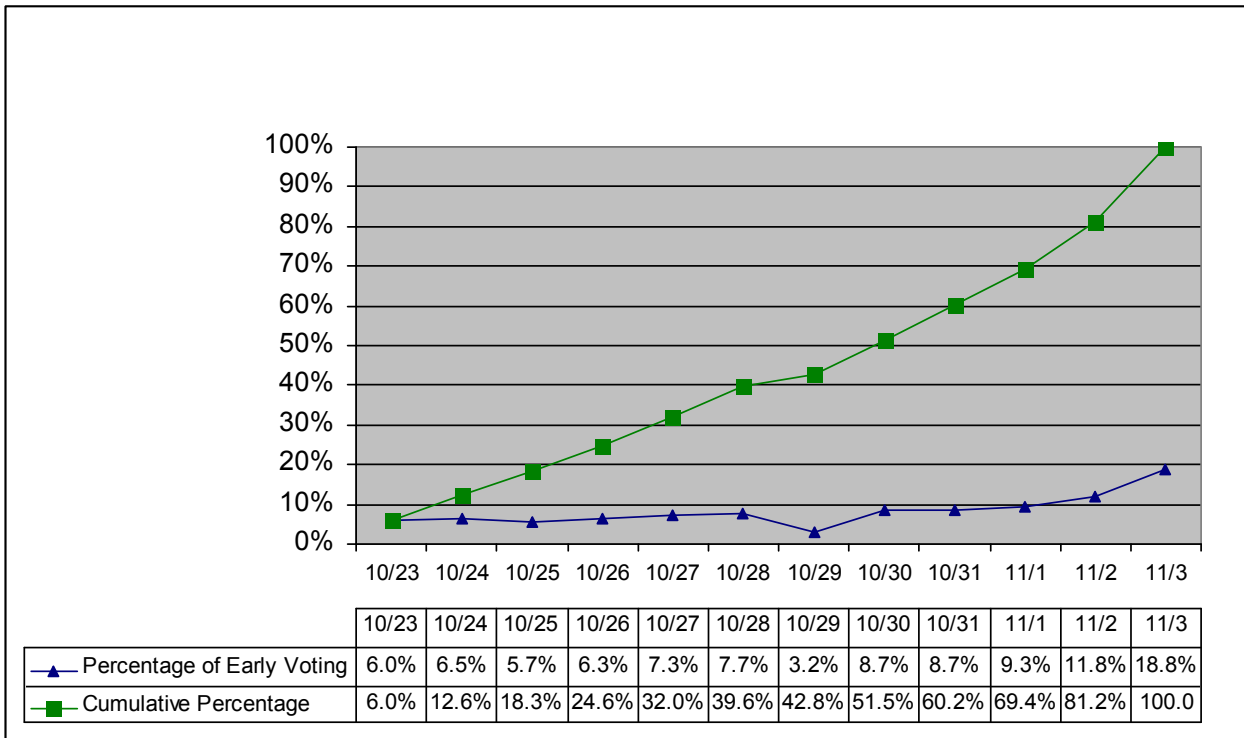
Early Voting and Political Campaigns

How has the growth of early voting affected political campaigns? As Nordlinger (2003: 27) notes, "Early voting is perhaps the single most important change in the administration of U.S. elections in decades." Political campaigns are now faced with two electorates—those who vote early and those who vote on Election-Day, and they must adjust the timing and sequence of campaign activities as well as tactics accordingly. As Stein, Leighley, and Owens (2004: 12-13) note, ". . . voters who ballot early are significantly more likely to base their vote choices on partisan affiliation and ideology and that election day voters are less likely to base their choices on partisan affiliation and ideology and rely more on candidate evaluations, issue positions and group affiliations. . . . Moreover, the reliance of early voters on partisan affiliation in making their vote choices appears to have grown since the adoption of early voting in Texas." The cost of campaigns is also increased as the campaign starts earlier, requires increased efforts to track voters, and elongated periods of media, phoning, and block-walking

(Broder 2006). Whereas a campaign’s get-out-the-vote (GOTV) effort was reserved for the final days before Election Day just a few years ago, the spread of early voting requires that a campaign’s field program must begin much earlier—identifying community activists, getting their ideas for the campaign, and preparing them for campaign activities—sometimes more than a year before the election (McPike 2009). Although early voting increases the cost of campaigns, it also allows campaigns to “bank” votes and to use supporters to help activate Election-Day voters.

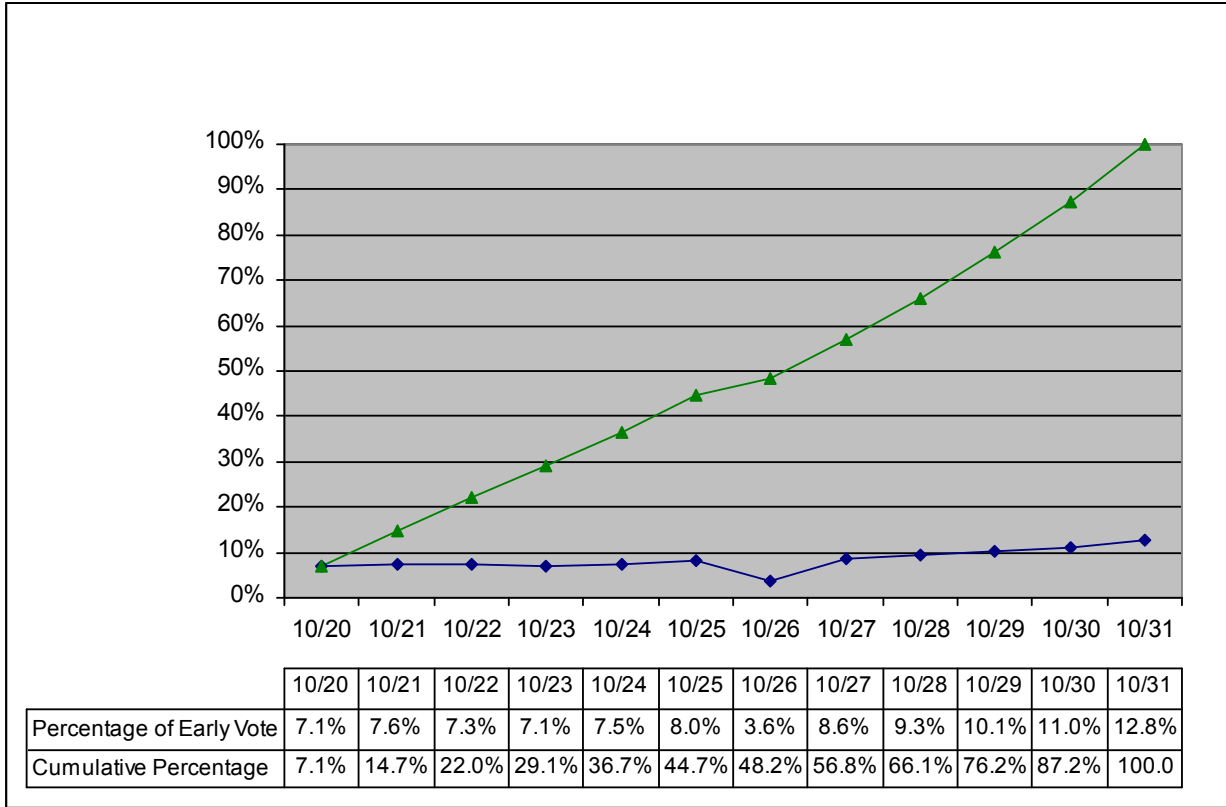
Some political observers are concerned that early voters may have already voted when important information about a candidate surfaces—the so-called “October surprise.” In Texas, with a shorter period for early voting than in some states, this concern is less likely to materialize. Also, tracking early voting in the 2008 and 2006 general elections indicates that few voters are likely to have voted when new information about a candidate appears (see Figures 12 and 13). In both 2006 and 2008, the heaviest early voting occurred during the last few days of early

Figure 12: Percentage of Early Vote by Day, 2006



Source: Texas Secretary of State, <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/earlyvoting/index.shtml>

Figure 13: Percentage of Early Vote by Day, 2008



Source: Texas Secretary of State, <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/earlyvoting/index.shtml>

voting, just a week before Election Day. This was especially true in 2006 when nearly 40 percent of early votes were cast during the final three days of early voting. In 2008, about one-third of the early votes were cast during the last three days of early voting. In both 2006 and 2008, the lowest percentage of early voting occurred on the Sunday during the early voting period.

Conclusions

Early voting has not yet increased voter turnout in Texas, but there are advantages to early voting that commend it. As a larger percentage of Texans vote early, the differences between early voters and Election-Day voters have lessened, although they have not disappeared. Perhaps the differences will never be eliminated, but the concerns that the biases in the electoral system are exacerbated by early voting may be unfounded. In 2008, new voters were more common among early voters in Texas than in the past. Also, African Americans were more prevalent among early voters than in previous elections (see Figures 4-7). Of course, the 2008 election may have

been an anomaly rather than the beginning of a trend. Nevertheless, we know that what motivates people to vote early are the candidates, campaign contacts, and the location of early voting sites (Stein and Vonnahme 2006). All of these can increase the percentage of new voters who are persuaded to participate in elections and, in the process, expand the electorate. That would result in a more vibrant and participatory democracy in Texas.

Table 5: Counties with the Highest Percentage of Early Voters, 2008

County	% Voting Early 2008	% Anglo	% Hispanic	% African American	% Asian American	% 18-65	% 65+	Poverty Rate	Median HH Income	VTO as % RV	R/U/Metro County
Wichita	80.3%	68.4%	15.1%	10.7%	1.2%	62.2%	12.8%	13.9%	\$44,392	54.6%	Metro
Lubbock	76.7%	58.5%	30.6%	7.6%	1.4%	63.5%	11.2%	15.7%	\$44,389	59.6%	Metro
Bexar	76.3%	29.2%	57.9%	7.7%	2.2%	61.6%	10.1%	17.1%	\$45,794	56.5%	Urban
Fort Bend	76.0%	38.5%	23.9%	20.9%	14.7%	65.4%	6.5%	8.0%	\$83,968	67.8%	Metro
Llano	75.0%	89.1%	8.2%	1.0%	0.4%	53.3%	29.5%	12.8%	\$44,370	66.5%	Rural
Travis	74.8%	50.1%	32.9%	8.8%	5.6%	68.4%	6.6%	14.4%	\$55,650	65.1%	Urban
Denton	74.5%	66.6%	17.1%	8.1%	5.6%	66.8%	5.6%	6.5%	\$73,678	66.3%	Metro
Gregg	74.4%	63.5%	13.4%	20.1%	0.9%	60.1%	13.4%	14.1%	\$45,792	57.9%	Metro
Collin	74.1%	65.4%	14.3%	8.0%	9.8%	65.0%	6.8%	6.4%	\$81,875	69.8%	Metro
Brazoria	73.9%	55.8%	26.4%	11.2%	4.6%	63.1%	9.0%	9.6%	\$63,959	61.0%	Metro
Tarrant	72.5%	52.8%	26.0%	14.2%	4.3%	63.4%	8.4%	12.1%	\$38,918	65.1%	Urban
Jefferson	72.3%	46.6%	14.4%	34.6%	2.8%	62.2%	13.3%	17.3%	\$44,155	58.2%	Metro
Young	72.3%	81.2%	14.4%	1.9%	0.4%	57.8%	18.5%	15.2%	\$39,898	63.1%	Rural
Kerr	72.2%	84.7%	14.3%	0.4%	0.0%	53.2%	25.4%	11.4%	\$35,804	65.6%	Rural
Aransas	71.9%	71.0%	22.6%	1.8%	2.5%	47.8%	23.2%	19.3%	\$40,789	59.8%	Rural
Taylor	71.3%	67.9%	21.0%	6.8%	1.5%	60.4%	13.3%	16.0%	\$41,232	59.5%	Metro
Rockwall	71.3%	73.2%	16.4%	6.3%	2.4%	63.8%	8.4%	6.2%	\$79,703	70.5%	Metro
Williamson	71.2%	65.7%	21.2%	6.5%	4.2%	62.9%	8.5%	6.2%	\$69,745	68.1%	Metro
Kendall	71.2%	76.5%	20.1%	1.2%	0.7%	60.8%	15.2%	7.7%	\$71,262	70.6%	Rural
Midland	70.8%	53.2%	36.9%	7.0%	1.0%	60.2%	11.7%	10.1%	\$56,320	62.1%	Metro
Guadalupe	70.4%	55.0%	34.9%	6.5%	1.4%	62.2%	11.9%	10.6%	\$61,979	64.2%	Metro
Martin	70.1%	52.7%	42.8%	2.0%	0.4%	56.9%	13.0%	15.9%	\$43,492	58.9%	Rural
Bell	69.8%	50.7%	19.7%	21.5%	2.9%	59.7%	9.0%	13.4%	\$49,448	55.7%	Metro
Polk	69.7%	72.7%	11.5%	12.2%	0.6%	58.5%	19.7%	15.5%	\$36,930	52.5%	Rural
Howard	69.6%	50.4%	42.0%	4.8%	0.8%	62.4%	14.4%	21.2%	\$38,661	54.5%	Rural
Pearson r		0.013	-0.098	-0.063	0.122	0.304	0.268	-0.146	-0.061	0.100	

Source: Texas County Profiles, <http://www.txcip.org/tac/census/CountyProfiles.php>.

Table 6: Counties with the Lowest Percentage of Early Voters, 2008

County	% Voting Early 2008	% Anglo	% Hispanic	% African American	% Asian American	% 18-65	% 65+	Poverty Rate	Med HH Income	VTO as % RV	R/U/Metro County
Dickens	1.7%	58.2%	29.9%	9.7%	0.2%	64.4%	18.9%	26.8%	\$30,343.00	66.0%	Rural
Knox	15.7%	61.0%	26.3%	9.1%	0.5%	53.4%	21.8%	21.1%	\$31,469.00	54.1%	Rural
Carson	18.1%	88.0%	8.4%	1.4%	0.2%	59.1%	16.8%	8.5%	\$50,493.00	64.6%	Rural
Concho	21.4%	54.0%	43.4%	1.2%	0.1%	73.7%	13.6%	25.4%	\$37,505.00	59.7%	Rural
Lipscomb	24.6%	67.2%	29.5%	0.6%	0.1%	57.9%	15.7%	12.2%	\$46,490.00	64.0%	Rural
Parmer	26.6%	39.1%	56.2%	1.9%	0.6%	56.6%	13.4%	14.2%	\$40,346.00	74.3%	Rural
Clay	28.6%	91.2%	5.0%	1.1%	0.1%	64.7%	14.5%	11.0%	\$48,445.00	66.5%	Rural
Newton	30.6%	72.6%	4.1%	20.9%	0.6%	63.2%	14.9%	22.3%	\$35,524.00	57.0%	Rural
Willacy	30.7%	9.6%	86.4%	2.6%	0.4%	57.6%	12.5%	30.6%	\$29,079.00	43.5%	Rural
Haskell	31.0%	68.8%	24.5%	4.0%	0.3%	53.8%	26.2%	22.2%	\$32,817.00	54.7%	Rural
Hudspeth	31.2%	21.1%	75.4%	1.0%	0.2%	58.9%	13.3%	30.1%	\$26,625.00	55.1%	Rural
Oldham	32.4%	81.4%	13.0%	2.7%	0.5%	56.3%	11.2%	13.5%	\$44,765.00	62.8%	Rural
Falls	33.0%	52.3%	19.0%	27.0%	0.2%	58.7%	16.1%	24.2%	\$32,844.00	58.0%	Rural
McMullen	33.1%	61.0%	36.7%	1.2%	0.8%	63.7%	19.5%	13.6%	\$40,033.00	74.7%	Rural
Jones	34.0%	61.5%	23.4%	12.9%	0.5%	66.7%	13.8%	23.6%	\$37,797.00	56.6%	Rural
Jim Hogg	34.3%	8.6%	89.4%	0.6%	0.2%	56.8%	16.2%	22.8%	\$33,104.00	46.6%	Rural
Bosque	34.7%	80.5%	14.8%	2.8%	0.2%	57.5%	19.9%	13.8%	\$41,871.00	60.6%	Rural
Atascosa	35.2%	36.0%	60.5%	1.3%	0.6%	60.0%	11.4%	18.2%	\$41,883.00	40.5%	Rural
Frio	35.9%	18.6%	73.9%	5.5%	0.8%	61.5%	11.7%	28.2%	\$31,072.00	38.6%	Rural
Karnes	36.3%	37.4%	49.0%	11.6%	0.4%	66.0%	13.8%	27.5%	\$33,394.00	55.7%	Rural
Red River	36.3%	75.1%	5.8%	17.0%	0.1%	59.2%	19.7%	18.8%	\$32,902.00	62.2%	Rural
Zapata	36.3%	10.1%	88.3%	0.6%	0.3%	54.0%	13.1%	26.2%	\$32,249.00	39.7%	Rural
Archer	37.4%	89.1%	7.3%	1.4%	0.1%	51.4%	14.7%	8.5%	\$51,616.00	67.3%	Metro
Lavaca	37.6%	76.7%	15.1%	7.1%	0.2%	56.0%	21.7%	13.1%	\$43,814.00	61.0%	Rural
Borden	37.7%	82.1%	15.9%	0.2%	0.0%	68.2%	16.4%	9.0%	\$44,822.00	82.4%	Rural
Pearson r		-0.114	0.115	0.000	0.092	-0.145	-0.196	-0.101	0.106	-0.177	

Source: Texas County Profiles, <http://www.txcip.org/tac/census/CountyProfiles.php>.

Table 7: Counties with the Largest Number of Early Voters, 2008

County	% Voting Early	% Anglo	% Hispanic	% African American	% Asian American	% 18-65	% 65+	Poverty Rate	Med HH Income	VTO as % RV	R/U/Metro County
Harris	62.0%	34.2%	39.3%	18.7%	5.6%	63.4%	7.8%	15.3%	\$52,393	59.8%	Urban
Dallas	68.8%	33.6%	38.9%	20.7%	4.6%	63.4%	8.4%	17.3%	\$47,155	61.2%	Urban
Tarrant	72.5%	52.8%	26.0%	14.2%	4.3%	63.4%	8.4%	12.1%	\$56,265	65.1%	Urban
Bexar	76.3%	29.2%	57.9%	7.7%	2.2%	61.6%	10.1%	17.1%	\$45,794	56.5%	Urban
Travis	74.8%	50.1%	32.9%	8.8%	5.6%	68.4%	6.6%	14.4%	\$55,650	65.1%	Urban
Collin	74.1%	65.4%	14.3%	8.0%	9.8%	65.0%	6.8%	6.4%	\$81,875	69.8%	Metro
Denton	74.5%	66.6%	17.1%	8.1%	5.6%	66.8%	5.6%	6.5%	\$73,678	66.3%	Metro
Fort Bend	76.0%	38.5%	23.9%	20.9%	14.7%	65.4%	6.5%	8.0%	\$83,968	67.8%	Metro
El Paso	61.2%	10.8%	81.8%	3.6%	1.2%	58.4%	10.5%	25.2%	\$36,519	47.7%	Urban
Williamson	71.2%	65.7%	21.2%	6.5%	4.2%	62.9%	8.5%	6.2%	\$69,745	68.1%	Metro
Montgomery	65.4%	73.0%	18.3%	5.0%	1.8%	63.3%	9.3%	9.4%	\$65,801	64.8%	Metro
Hidalgo	66.3%	7.1%	89.6%	1.2%	0.9%	54.6%	9.5%	34.8%	\$30,513	42.8%	Metro
Brazoria	73.9%	55.8%	26.4%	11.2%	4.6%	63.1%	9.0%	9.6%	\$63,959	61.0%	Metro
Lubbock	76.7%	58.5%	30.6%	7.6%	1.4%	63.5%	11.2%	15.7%	\$44,389	59.6%	Metro
Galveston	66.4%	59.3%	21.5%	14.4%	2.8%	63.3%	10.8%	11.9%	\$57,950	55.5%	Metro
Nueces	64.9%	32.5%	59.5%	4.4%	1.4%	61.4%	11.6%	17.4%	\$45,371	50.9%	Metro
Jefferson	72.3%	46.6%	14.4%	34.6%	2.8%	62.2%	13.3%	17.3%	\$44,155	58.2%	Metro
McLennan	61.4%	59.9%	21.8%	14.9%	1.5%	61.9%	12.3%	20.1%	\$40,223	59.1%	Metro
Pearson r		0.312	-0.380	0.110	0.460*	0.518*	-0.382	-0.482*	0.479*	0.532*	

*= Significant at the .05 level

Source: Texas County Profiles, <http://www.txcip.org/tac/census/CountyProfiles.php>.

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ENDNOTES

¹ The literature on early voting, or convenience voting, is large and growing. For more information, the place to start is Paul Gronke's excellent Web site entitled "The Early Voting Information Center." <http://www.earlyvoting.net> and Greenberg, Stan, James Carville, Anna Greenberg, and John Brach. 2009. "The 2008 Early Vote." Democracy Corps. <http://www.democracycorps.com>.