

North Carolina data-net

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2008 North Carolina Election Primer

JUSTIN MARTIN, TODD BRANTLEY AND THAD BEYLE

North Carolina, a state that hasn't supported a Democratic candidate for president since 1976, has become one of the nation's electoral-vote battleground theaters.

While neither the Democratic nor the Republican presidential campaigns purchased a single primetime advertisement in North Carolina in 2004, North Carolina voters now see the presidential-campaign entreaties familiar to TV viewers in swing states like Florida, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Competitive races for open seats in both the presidential and gubernatorial elections will work to elevate turnout.

In order to provide guidance in navigating the political trends and changes in the Tar Heel state, this issue of *North Carolina DataNet* offers statewide electorate information to scholars, journalists, and voters.

Here are some findings to supplement the data we've pulled together:

➤ Voter registration has passed 6 million, a new peak for the state. Overall voter registration in North Carolina is up 9.4¹ percent from November 2004, and most of the new voters have registered since the first of this year.

¹ From 11/2004–10/6/2008

➤ However, the increase in North Carolina voter registration in the first nine months of 2008 (7.8) is less than the increase in registration during roughly the same period in 2004 (9.8² percent).

² From 1/1/2004–11/2004

➤ From January to October 2008, Democratic voter registration in North Carolina was up 9.2³ percent — an increase of 230,848 registrants — to more than 2.7 million. Republican registration increased by just 2.2 percent in the same time period. Registration of unaffiliated voters in North Carolina is up nearly 14 percent since the beginning of 2008.

³ From 1/5/2008–10/6/2008

➤ The rate of increase in registered African American voters has recently outpaced the rate for white registration. While white voters still outnumber black voters in North Carolina by more than three million, the number of black registrants in the state has increased by 12.5⁴ percent since January 2008. Registration of white voters is up 5.1 percent in the same period. Hispanic registration is up sharply this year — by more than 40 percent — although Hispanics currently represent fewer than one percent of all eligible voters in North Carolina.

⁴ As of 9/27/2004

➤ Neither the Democratic Party nor the GOP enjoys a majority of public support in North Carolina. As of October 6, 2008, Democrats comprised about 45.3⁵ percent of registered voters in the state, while 32.4 percent were registered Republicans.

⁵ As of 10/4/2008

continued on page 2

✎ The big story in registration trends involves unaffiliated voters, who now represent more than one-fifth of the North Carolina electorate. While the actual numbers rose within the major parties, both Democratic and Republican affiliation decreased between late 2004 and October 2008 as a share of the total electorate. Unaffiliated voters, meanwhile, now account for 22.1 percent of all registrants, up from 18.5 percent in 2004.

✎ This is an historic election in terms of gender and race, in the nation and in North Carolina. Among the candidates in the three major campaigns on the ballot, there are four women: Sarah Palin, the Republican candidate for vice president; Elizabeth Dole, the Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate; Kay Hagan, the Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate; and Beverly Perdue, the Democratic candidate for governor. In the presidential election, Barack Obama, the first black candidate of a major political party, has targeted North Carolina and made the state highly competitive in his race against Republican John McCain.

✎ North Carolina is among a minority of states that conduct statewide elections simultaneously with presidential elections. So the 2008 elections bring back a 12-year pattern: elections for president, U.S. senator and governor at the top of the ballot. The Republican Party last swept all three in 1984. The Democratic Party hasn't won all three since 1960.

✎ As was the case in 2000, metropolitan areas largely account for statewide election turnout. In 2004, 15 of 100 North Carolina counties accounted for 51.1 percent of votes in the presidential election. In 2000, Bush won 12 of the top 15 counties, while Gore took three. In 2004, however, Bush won just six of the top 15 counties, and Kerry won 9. The 2008 presidential election will reveal whether Democrats can continue to win in the state's major metropolitan areas while attracting new voters in rural areas.

✎ The partisan line-up of North Carolina's delegation to the U.S. House currently stands at seven Democrats and six Republicans. Incumbents are expected to win re-election in 12 of the 13 districts. The 8th District re-match between Republican incumbent Robin Hayes and Democratic challenger Larry Kissell is considered a toss-up among political analysts in a year in which polls have reported leads for both candidates. In the 2006 election, Hayes defeated Kissell by only 329 votes out of 121,523 cast.

NC Voter Registration & Turnout in General Elections, 1960–2006

Year	Total NC Voting Age Population	Total NC Registered		North Carolina Turnout			Party of Winner		
		# of Voters	% of Voting Age Pop.	# of Voters	% of Reg. Voters	% of Voting Age Pop.	Pres.	Sen.	Gov.
1960	2,585,000	N/A	N/A	1,268,556	---	52.9	D	D	D
1962	2,647,000	N/A	N/A	813,155	---	30.7	-	D	-
1964	2,723,000	N/A	N/A	1,424,983	---	52.3	D	-	D
1966	2,798,000	1,933,763	69.1	901,978	46.6	32.2	-	D	-
1968	2,921,000	2,077,538	71.1	1,587,493	76.4	54.4	D	D	D
1970	3,043,000	1,945,187	63.9	932,948	63.9	30.7	-	-	-
1972	3,541,399	2,357,645	66.6	1,518,612	64.4	42.9	R	R	R
1974	3,725,037	2,279,646	61.2	1,020,367	44.8	27.4	-	D	-
1976	3,884,477	2,553,717	65.7	1,677,906	65.7	43.2	D	-	D
1978	4,053,977	2,430,306	59.9	1,135,814	46.7	28.0	-	R	-
1980	4,222,654	2,774,844	65.7	1,855,833	66.9	43.9	R	R	D
1982	4,416,444	2,674,787	65.1	1,330,630	49.7	30.1	-	-	-
1984	4,585,788	3,270,933	71.3	2,239,051	68.5	47.4	R	R	R
1986	4,738,687	3,080,990	65.0	1,591,330	51.6	33.6	-	D	-
1988	4,887,358	3,432,042	70.2	2,134,370	62.2	43.7	R	-	R
1990	5,016,747	3,347,635	66.7	2,070,585	61.9	41.2	-	R	-
1992	5,182,321	3,817,380	73.7	2,611,850	68.4	50.4	R	R	D
1994	5,359,333	3,635,875	67.8	1,533,728	42.2	28.6	-	-	-
1996	5,499,000	4,330,657	78.8	2,618,326	60.5	47.6	R	R	D
1998	5,620,000	4,740,272	84.3	2,012,143	42.4	35.8	-	D	-
2000	6,085,266	5,122,123	84.2	3,015,964	58.9	49.6	R	-	D
2002	6,085,281	5,043,334	82.9	2,330,454	46.2	38.3	-	R	-
2004	6,483,010	5,519,992	85.1	3,552,499	64.4	54.8	R	R	D
2006	6,490,000	5,567,424	85.8	2,036,451	36.6	31.4	-	-	-
2008	7,148,000	6,041,289	84.5	-----	---	---	-	-	-

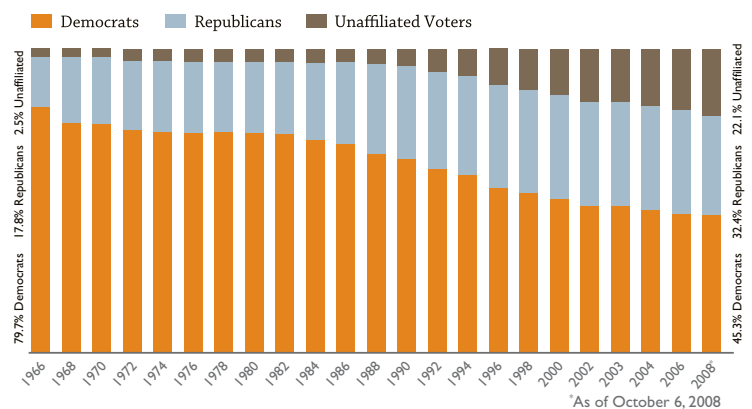
Sources: Michael Barone and Grant Ujifusa, *The Almanac of American Politics* (Washington, DC: National Journal, 1972–2004); US Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (various years); Federal Elections Commission; Office of the Secretary of State, *North Carolina Manual* (Raleigh: Department of State, since 1966); NC State Board of Elections web site, "General Voter Registration and Election Statistics"; (Note: while the figure for NC voting-age population in 2008 was pulled from the State Board of Elections web site on 10/7/08, the BOE did not report the month in 2008 in which the figure was estimated); NC Center for Public Policy Research, *North Carolina Focus* (1989) and "The Two Party System in North Carolina," (Raleigh, December 1987); and Curtis Gans, *Committee for the Study of the American Electorate*.

Director's Note

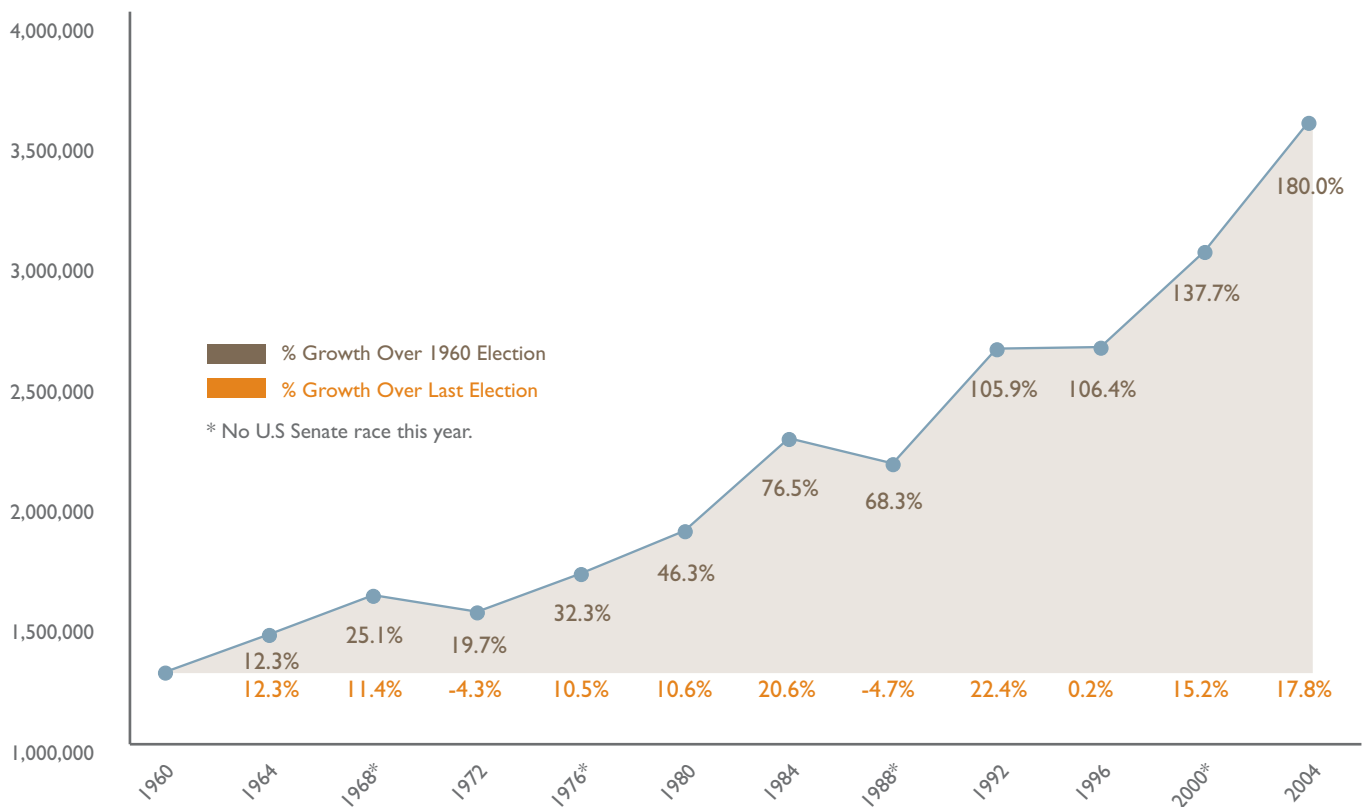
This issue of *North Carolina DataNet* reflects the work of Thad Beyle, associate director of the Program on Public Life who recently retired from full-time teaching in the UNC Department of Political Science. Throughout his career, Thad has compiled an extensive data base on North Carolina politics. Justin Martin, a third-year Ph.D. student in the UNC School of Journalism and Mass Communication, and Todd Brantley, a master's student in the School of Journalism & Mass Communication and a graduate associate in the Program, assisted in compiling charts and writing the essay of findings.

We also thank Progress Energy for its sustained financial assistance in disseminating *DataNet* and *SouthNow* newsletters. ☒

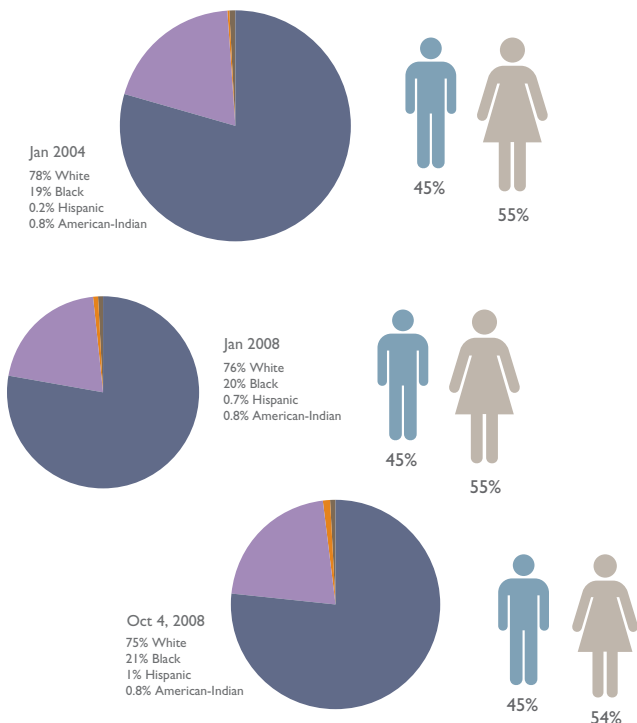
NC Voters' Party Registration: 1966–2008



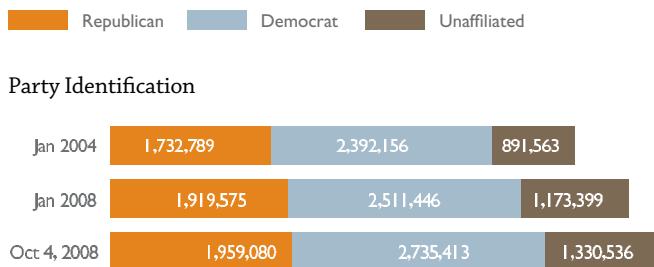
Growth of NC Voters in Presidential Election Years, 1960–2004



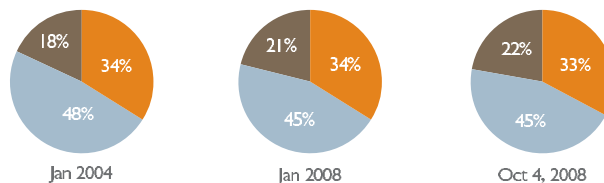
Change in N.C. Voter Registration by Race and Gender, 2004–2008



Change in N.C. Voter Registration by Party, 2004–2008

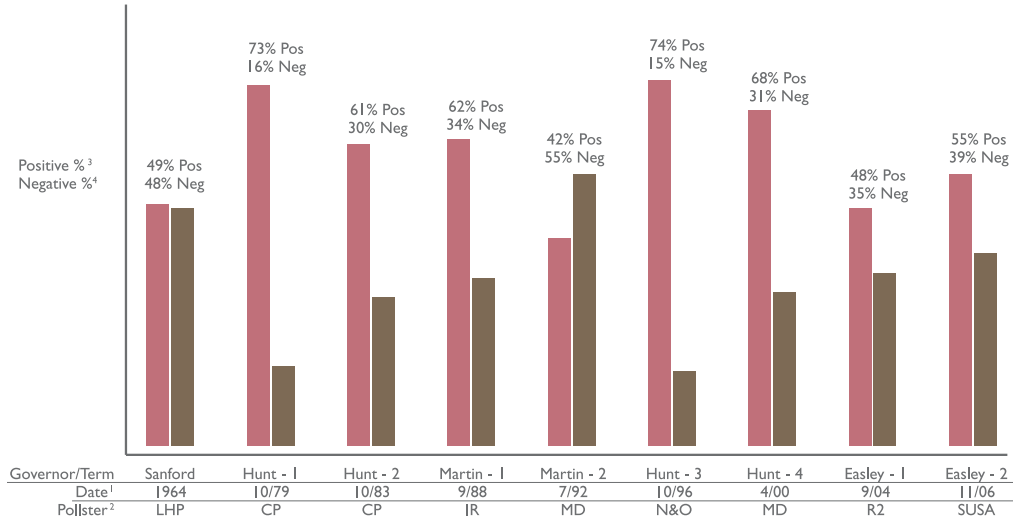


Percentage of Total Registered Voters



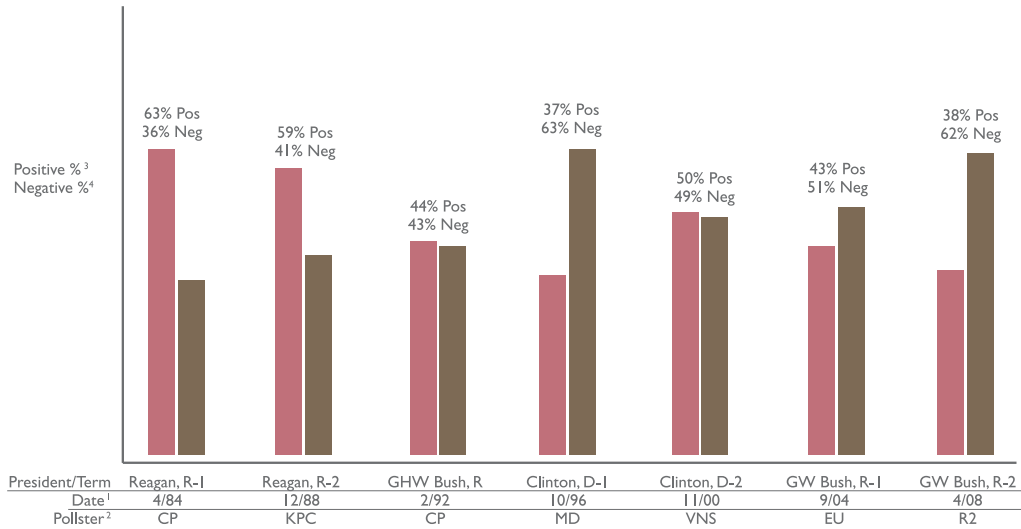
Source: NC State Board of Elections 2004, 2008

Late Term NC Governor Job Approval Ratings in Polls



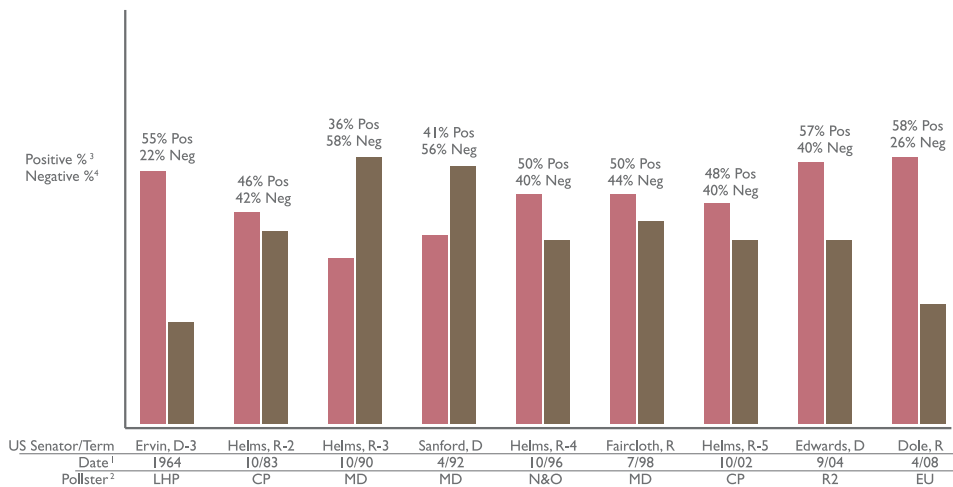
¹ Month and year the poll was conducted.
² Pollster = who conducted the poll:
 CP - Carolina Poll (UNC-CH);
 IR = Independent Research Poll;
 LHP = Louis Harris Poll; MD Mason-Dixon Poll;
 N&O -News & Observer/FGI Poll;
 R2 = Research 2000 Poll; SUSA Survey USA Poll.
³ % Pos. = % of the respondents giving the governor positive marks for his performance — approve, excellent/good, etc.
⁴ % Neg. = % of the respondents giving the governor negative marks for his job performance — disapprove, fair/poor, etc.

Late Term NC Presidential Job Approval Ratings in Polls



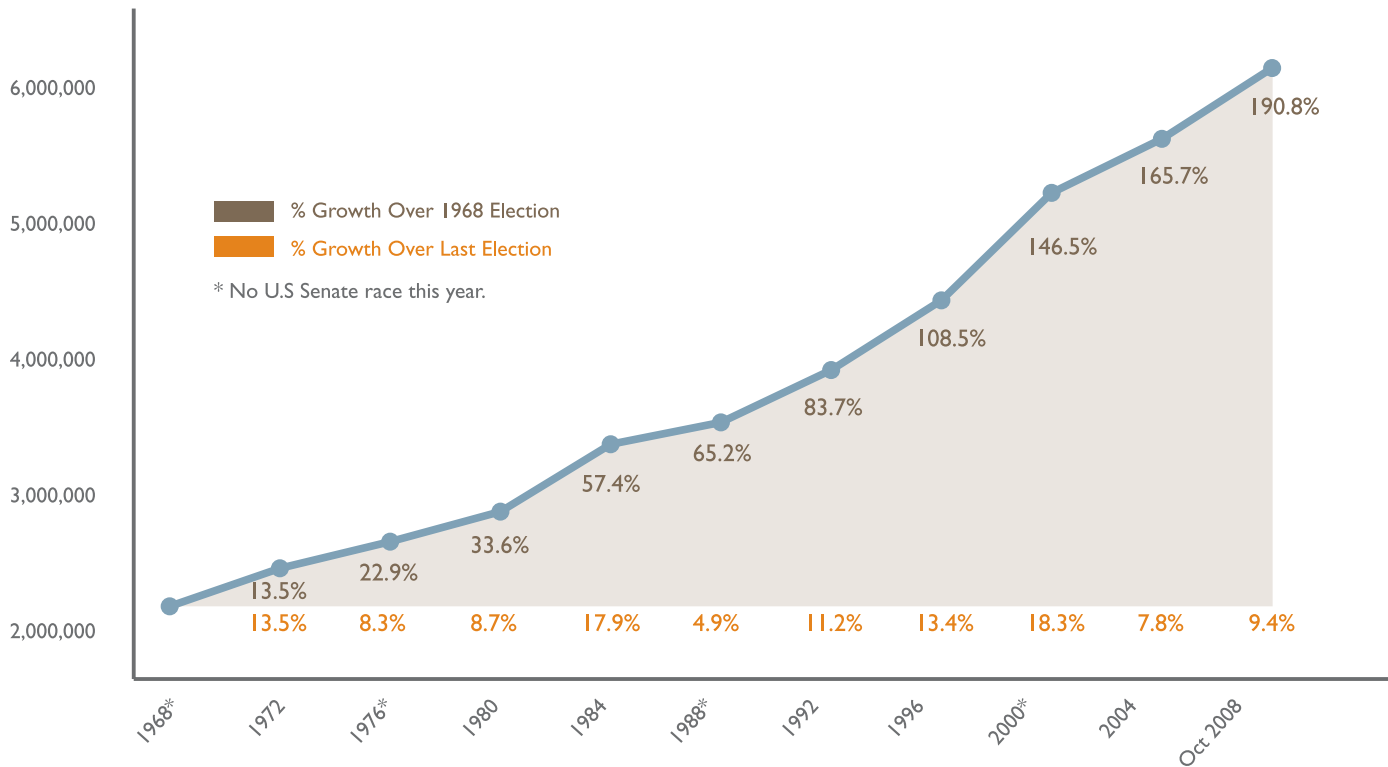
¹ Month and year the poll was conducted.
² Pollster = who conducted the poll:
 CP - Carolina Poll (UNC-CH);
 EU = Elon University Poll;
 KPC = KPC Poll for Knight Ridder Media;
 MD = Mason-Dixon;
 R2 = Research 2000 Poll;
 VNS = Voter News services Election Day Exit Poll.
³ % Pos. = % of the respondents giving the president positive marks for his performance — approve, excellent/good, etc.
⁴ % Neg. = % of the respondents giving the president negative marks for his job performance — disapprove, fair/poor, etc.

Late Term NC US Senatorial Job Approval Ratings in Polls



¹ Month and year the poll was conducted.
² Pollster = who conducted the poll:
 CP - Carolina Poll (UNC-CH);
 EU = Elon University Poll;
 MD = Mason-Dixon Poll;
 N&O -News & Observer/FGI Poll;
 R2 = Research 2000 Poll
³ % Pos. = % of the respondents giving the senator positive marks for his or her performance — approve, excellent/good, etc.
⁴ % Neg. = % of the respondents giving the senator negative marks for his or her job performance — disapprove, fair/poor, etc.

Growth of NC Registered Voters, 1968–2008



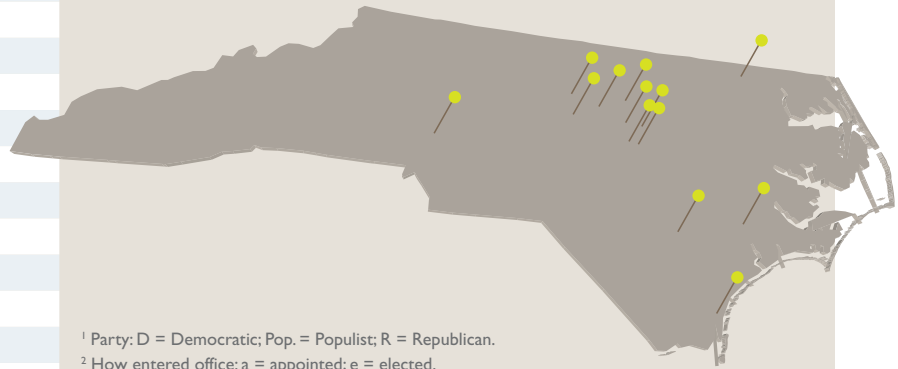
2008 Congressional Districts in NC (Ranked From Most Republican to Most Democratic Districts by Party Registration)

CD#	Incumbent ²	Race			Party Reg.			2004 Vote %	
		Type ³	Projection ⁴	%White ⁵	Rep.	Dem.	Una	Pres.	Gov.
6 th	Coble, R	IRUP	SR	89.2	46.5	32.9	20.5	30.7	46.4
5 th	Foxx, R	IRUP	SR	91.7	46.1	34.4	19.5	31.3	47.1
10 th	McHenry, R	IR	SR	90.1	43.3	35.9	20.8	32.1	46.3
9 th	Myrick, R	IR	SR	84.7	43.0	32.4	24.5	35.2	46.0
3 rd	Jones, R	IR	LR	82.4	36.4	42.4	21.3	32.8	50.6
11 th	Heath, D	IRUP	SW	93.8	35.2	40.3	24.5	40.8	53.1
8 th	Hayes, R	IRUP	SW	67.5	30.3	48.9	20.8	43.6	57.4
2 nd	Etheridge, D	IRUP	LD	65.7	30.3	50.9	18.9	44.1	58.8
7 th	McIntyre, D	IRUP	LD	72.7	30.0	50.4	19.6	43.7	58.7
4 th	Price, D	IRUP	LD	75.9	29.4	45.1	25.5	51.0	61.0
3 rd	Miller, D	IR	SD	69.5	28.4	50.4	21.2	51.1	62.7
12 th	Watt, D	IRUP	SD	49.4	24.7	56.8	18.5	59.8	68.2
1 st	Butterfield, D	IRUP	SD	48.8	18.1	68.3	13.6	57.5	70.6

¹ Party Registration, percent who were Republicans, Democrats or Unaffiliated as of 1/2/08, NC Board of Elections.
² Current incumbent and party
³ Race Type = IR – incumbent running for reelection; IRUP – incumbent running unopposed in party primary; OP – open seat.
⁴ Proj. = projection of election outcome: SR – Strong Republican; LR – Leaning Republican; SW – Swing District; LD – Leaning Democrat; and SD – Strong Democrat.
⁵ %White = percent of the registered voters who are white as of 1/2/08, NC Board of Elections.
⁶ 2004 Voting = % voting for the Democratic candidate in the Presidential race [Kerry] and in the Governor’s race [Easley].

Political Lineage of US Senate Seat at Stake in 2008

Senator/Party ¹	NC County	Years In Senate	How Senator Entered ² / Left Office ³
Matt Ransom, D	Northampton	1872–95	e / LG
Marion Butler, Pop	Sampson	1895–1901	e / LG
Furnifold Simmons, D	Jones	1901–31	e / LP
Josiah Bailey, D	Wake	1931–46	e / d
William B. Umstead, D	Durham	1946–48	a / LP
J. Melville Broughton, D	Wake	1948–49	e / d
Frank Porter Graham, D	Orange	1949–50	a / LP
Willis Smith, D	Wake	1950–53	e / d
Alton Lennon, D	New Hanover	1953–54	a / LP
W. Kerr Scott, D	Alamance	1954–58	e / d
B. Everett Jordan, D	Alamance	1958–73	a / LP
Jesse Helms, R	Wake	1973–2002	e / r
Elizabeth Dole, R	Rowan	2003–	e



¹ Party: D = Democratic; Pop. = Populist; R = Republican.

² How entered office: a = appointed; e = elected.

³ How left office: d = died; LG = lost in general election; LP = lost in party primary; r = retired.

Presidential Voting in North Carolina, 1900–2004

Year & Party ¹	Republicans		Democrats	
	NC Vote %	[+] or [-] US Vote ²	NC Vote %	[+] or [-] US Vote ³
1900-R	45.5	- 6.2	54.2	+ 8.7
1904-R	39.7	-20.3	55.2	+17.6
1908-R	45.5	- 9.0	54.4	+11.4
1912-D	12.0	-12.9 ⁴	59.2	+17.4
1916-D	41.7	- 6.6	58.1	+ 8.9
1920-R	43.2	-17.1	56.8	+20.6
1924-R	40.3	-14.4	59.6	+24.8
1928-R	54.9	- 3.3	45.1	+ 3.9
1932-D	29.5	-10.3	69.8	+10.7
1936-D	26.6	- 9.9	73.4	+10.9
1940-D	26.0	-18.8	74.0	+19.0
1944-D	33.3	-12.6	66.7	+12.9
1948-D	36.0	-12.4	58.0	+ 5.7
1952-R	46.1	- 9.0	53.9	+ 8.3
1956-R	49.3	- 8.1	50.7	+ 8.5
1960-D	47.9	- 1.6	52.1	+ 2.0
1964-D	43.9	+ 5.3	56.2	- 5.1
1968-R	44.2	- 3.9	42.5	- 6.7
1972-R	70.6	+ 8.8	28.9	- 9.3
1976-D	44.4	- 3.8	55.3	+ 4.2
1980-R	51.1	- 1.4	47.2	+ 2.5
1984-R	62.0	+ 3.1	37.9	- 2.9
1988-R	58.0	+ 4.6	41.8	- 4.6
1992-D	50.5	+ 6.0	49.5	- 4.0
1996-D	52.5	+ 8.2	47.4	- 7.3
2000-R	56.5	+ 6.6	43.5	- 6.6
2004-R	56.0	+ 5.3	43.6	- 4.7

¹ Election year and party winning the White House

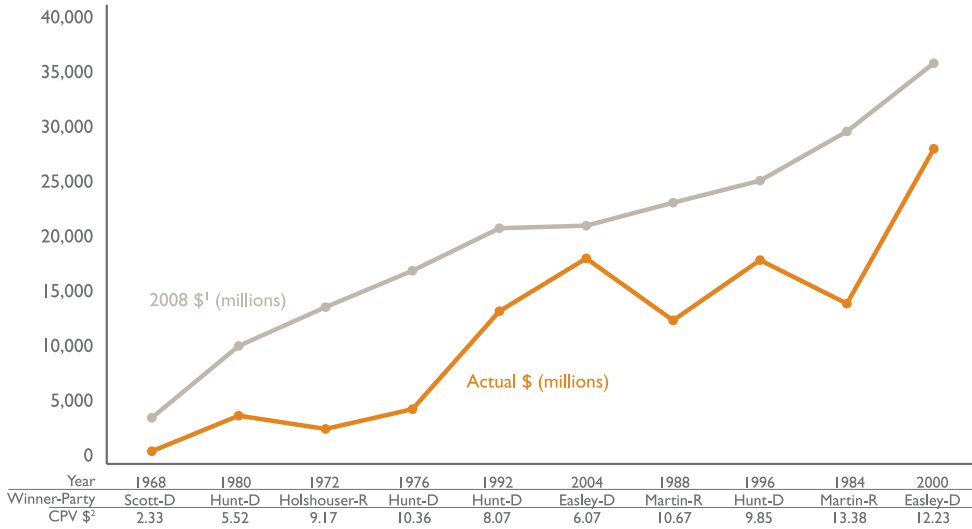
² The percentage point margin by which the NC Republican share of the two-party vote for president exceeded [+] or trailed [-] the Republican percentage nationally.

³ The percentage point margin by which the NC Democratic share of the two-party vote for president exceeded [+] or trailed [-] the Democratic percentage nationally.

⁴ Republican Party % of the 2-party vote as former Republican President Teddy Roosevelt ran on the Progressive of "Bull Moose" Party ticket winning 30% of the vote nationally and 28.4% of the NC vote.

Sources: *America at the Polls, 1996* [Storrs, CT: The Roper Center, University of Connecticut, 1997]: 92–95; *The State of 2 Parties* [Raleigh: NC Center for Public Policy Research, 1987]: 13–14; Michael Barone and Grant Ujifusa/Michael C. Cohen, *The Almanac of American Politics* [Washington, DC: *The National Journal*, various years].

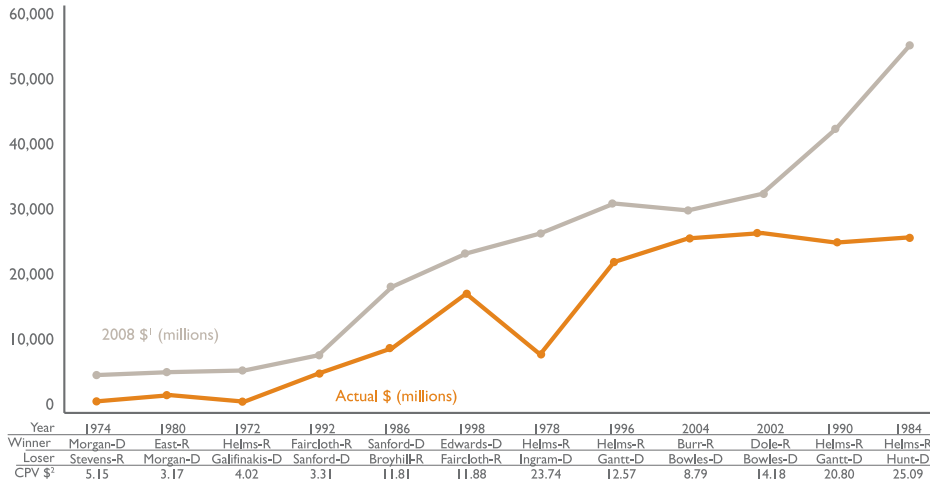
Most Expensive Gubernatorial Races, 1968–2004



¹ Adjusted for inflation to the July 2008 value of the U.S. dollar.

² CPV stands for "cost per vote" in U.S. dollars.

Most Expensive U.S. Senate Races, 1972–2004



¹ Adjusted for inflation to the July 2008 value of the U.S. dollar.

² CPV stands for "cost per vote" in U.S. dollars.

	President	US Senate	Governor
1948	Harry Truman, D	Mel Broughton, D	W. Kerr Scott, D
1960	John F. Kennedy, D	B. Everett Jordan, D	Terry Sanford, D
1972	Richard Nixon, R	Jesse Helms, R	Jim Holshouser, R
1984	Ronald Reagan, R	Jesse Helms, R	Jim Martin, R
1996	Robert Dole, R	Jesse Helms, R	Jim Hunt, D
2008	John McCain, R Barack Obama, D	Elizabeth Dole, R Kay Hagan, D	Pat McCrory, R Beverly Perdue, D

The 12-Year Patter: Candidates Who Won North Carolina When Top of the Ballot Has 3 Major Races: 1948–1996

Democrats Republicans

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'Mother's Milk' and US Senate Races in NC, 1972–2004¹

Year	Annual Dollars (millions)			2008\$ (millions) ²			CPV ³	Winner Party ⁴ %	Spent ⁵ Most %
	Dem	Rep	Total	Dem	Rep	Total			
1972	.470	.654	1.124	2.474	3.443	5.918	23.74	R-54	R – 58
1974	.781	.386	1.167	3.488	1.721	5.209	5.15	D-63	D – 67
1978	.264	8.123	8.387	.849	23.990	24.839	23.74	R – 55	R – 97
1980	.948	1.176	2.124	2.529	3.136	5.664	3.17	R – 50	R – 55
1984	9.462	16.918	26.379	20.046	35.842	55.889	25.09	R – 52	R – 64
1986	4.169	5.188	9.357	8.371	10.418	18.789	11.81	D – 52	R – 55
1990	7.812	17.762	25.573	13.151	29.902	43.052	20.80	R – 53	R – 69
1992	2.486	2.952	5.438	3.897	4.627	8.524	3.31	R – 50	R – 54
1996	7.993	14.589	22.582	11.210	20.462	31.672	12.57	R – 53	R – 65
1998	8.3331	9.376	17.707	11.243	12.653	23.896	11.88	D – 51	R – 53
2002	13.306	13.735	27.042	16.267	16.791	33.058	14.18	R – 54	R – 51
2004	13.360	12.853	26.213	15.553	14.963	30.516	8.79	R – 52	D – 51

¹The major party candidates in these elections were:

1972 - Nick Galifianakis, D and Jesse Helms, R;
1974 – Robert Morgan, D and William Stevens, R;
1978 – John Ingram, D and Helms, R;
1980 – Morgan, D and John East, R;
1984 – Jim Hunt, D and Helms, R;
1986 – Terry Sanford, D and James Broyhill, R;
1990 – Harvey Gantt, D and Helms, R;
1992 – Sanford, D and Lauch Faircloth, R;
1996 – Gantt, D and Helms, R;
1998 – John Edwards, D and R;
2002 – Erskine Bowles, D and Elizabeth Dole, R;
2004 – Bowles, D and Richard Burr, R.

²The 2008 Dollar Equivalents are based on the 1982–84 Consumer Price Index equal to 1000 and modified to July 2008 dollars. The value of the July 2008 dollar on the 1982-84 base was 2.19964. The July 2008 equivalents for the above years are as follows: 1972 dollars = .190 of the 2008 dollar; 1974 = .224; 1978 = .331; 1980 = .375; 1984 = .482; 1986 = .498; 1990 = .594; 1992 = .638; 1996 = .713; 1998 = .741; 2002 = .818; 2004 = .859.

³CPV = cost per general election vote, total amount spent in 2008\$ divided by total votes cast in the general election.

⁴Party% = party of winning candidate and the winner's % share of the vote.

⁵Spent most % = which party's candidate spent the most money in the campaign and the % share of that spending.

Sources: Michael Barone and Grant Ujifusa/Richard E. Cohen, *The Almanac of American Politics*, (Washington, DC: National Journal) published in the years following each of the elections, 1978 to 2008, and the Federal Elections Commission Web site: www.fec.gov