

**MAINE**  
**Winner: Democratic**

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From the Civil War to the 1980's, Maine has primarily voted Republican, however over the past ten presidential elections Maine has gone blue five times. Four of these Democratic successes were in the past 4 elections; however only in 1992 and 1996 did the state vote with the winning candidate (270toWin). Out of all Maine's voters 31.1% are registered as Democrats, 28.1% are registered as Republicans, 2.9% are independent and the other 37.8% are undecided. (Maine Secretary of State) Maine for decades now has been known to charge its own path. Senator Muskie, a member of a group of progressives, helped create parties in Maine, and helped introduce the concept of an alternative, 'independent' party (Brunelle). And once he became a U.S. senator he pursued a liberal agenda becoming one of the first environmental activists on the hill. (Brunelle)

Over the past decade Maine has voted Republicans, Democrats as well as independents into office. Republicans have been elected most prominently to the US Senate with wins in the past 5 elections. However, the House Representatives have been mostly Democratic with the exception of a few district wins in the early 1990's. When interpreting this information it is important to acknowledge the other candidates which were running in these elections. For instance in the 1996 senate election there were candidates running as independents, taxpayers, and unaffiliated together these candidates received 42,129 votes or about 7% of the vote. In this election the Republicans won by only 32,196 votes or about 5%, therefore it is possible the democrats could have been victorious if the "Liberal" vote generally associated with the Democratic Party were not divided among many independents (Elections Division.1996). In most of the Senate elections there were other parties involved, although some elections were won by a good percentage some may have been incumbents. In contrast the U.S. House Representative elections, which have been filled by Democrats, consisted of very few if any independent party candidates. (Election Division. 1998). Maine has also filled their State legislator with Democrats for the past 4 elections (Election Division. 2000. 2002. 2004. 2006.). Maine has also elected in the past 3 governor elections an independent and more recently Democrats (Election Division. 1998. 2002. 2006.). With the democratic success in local elections as well as more recent success in the past few national elections, it does not seem as though the idea of Maine going Blue again this November is too far fetched. However, the 37.8% unaffiliated vote is an unpredictable yet significant factor in elections (Maine Secretary of State). The unaffiliated votes are really what the candidates are battling over and one must be very cautious not to send out the wrong message while trying to please both moderate conservatives and independents (270toWin).

Maine's demographic features are typical of a state that would vote more conservatively. Maine has a 96.7% Caucasian population and a minority population that together is only 3.3% which is of course a disadvantage to Democrats, and typically an advantage to republicans (US Census). They also have an elderly population of 14.6%, which is 2% higher than the national average and a 51.1% female population which are

both typically groups which vote Democratic (US Census). However, Maine is not stereotypical but appears to be increasingly liberal. Maine provided the first woman to be elected to both houses of congress in the 1950's and since 1988 women have held more than 25% of the seats in the state legislature (Maine; Brunelle). Maine also elected the first Independent governor in 1974 (Brunelle). All of these things prove Maine cannot be categorized as easily as most states.

Maine is such a unique state with unique ideals and standards, which are unwilling to be compromised. As a Democratic presidential candidate it is a challenge to win Maine because one must appeal to the independents as well as the moderate conservatives. In order to be successful in winning an election a liberal perspective must be acknowledged and respected. (270toWin) Considering in some elections independents have held up to 206,820 votes in a single presidential election, they have the ability to throw the election (Election Division.1992). Assuming most independents lean Democratic before Republican, one can draw the conclusion that without an strong, Independent candidate, Democrats have the ability to win Maine in the Fall. (Abramowitz)

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