

OREGON
Winner: Democrat

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Oregon is indeed a divided state when it comes to sorting out whether or not it is a Democrat or Republican stronghold. For years Eastern Oregon Counties have remained staunchly Republican while Western Counties have supported Democrats. The state's demographics both favor Republican voters and even more so Democrat voters. Despite Oregon existing in this political divided environment, I am confident Oregon will vote Democratic in the general election because of the voting record and quite frankly bad reputation of the Republican Party in these years.

So what is the makeup of Oregon exactly? It is a rural state that is comprised of a lot of working to middle class families. Over 90.5% of the population is white and education is mostly in line with the national average ("Oregon Census Data," 2008). Furthermore, Median household income is below the national average slightly by \$2000 and poverty is at 12.9%, which is a little above the national average ("Oregon Census Data," 2008). This potential means Oregon is fertile ground for a Democratic vote harvest because the Democratic Party does well with middle –lower income level voters and with poverty a problem here, all the better for Democrats. Oregon does in fact keep track of voter registration by county. As of February 2008 the registration logs show Democrats outnumbering Republicans 775,119 to 688,594 voters ("Oregon Secretary of State Election Division," 2008). While this statistic is encouraging for Democrats, it is still too early to tell how many more voters will be added to either party before the deadline of April 29th. There is lots of talk of voters switching parties and the Democrats seem to be the beneficiaries of this surge by and large. Only time will tell if that will add to the likelihood of a Democratic Presidential victory in half a year.

How Oregon votes on Presidents is very neck to neck. Democratic candidates in the last 5 Presidential elections have narrowly, and I mean narrowly, won in tightly contested races. In fact, in the last 2 elections (2000 and 2004), Al Gore beat George Bush by less than half a percentage point; 46.9% vs. 46.5% and John Kerry only beat George Bush by 4%; 51.4% vs. 47.2% (Leip, 2000,2004). As you can see, Democrats have right to be equally nervous about Oregon as do their Republican brethren. Yet, if the slim victories of the past are any indication, Democrats don't need to worry too much about winning Oregon, especially considering the special circumstances of this 2008 election where Republicans are on the defense in terms of voter domination.

In all, but the U.S. Senate Democrats have dominated the levels of government in Oregon. Since 1990, Democrats have won with healthy 5% to 10% advantages in the U.S. House even up to 2006 (Carle, 1990,1992,1994,1996; Trandahl, 1998,2000, 2002, 2004,2006). As previously mentioned, the U.S. Senate proves to be the only area where Republicans enjoy favoritism in Oregon. Despite this sore spot for Democrats, Oregon is pretty much theirs and they have consecutively won again and again. The voting history bodes well for more Democratic success.

Oregon may be considered a relatively divided blue and red state, but it is certainly not a battleground state by any contemporary election standards. This being said, it seems highly inevitable based on the past that Oregon will give a majority of Electoral College Votes to a Democrat come November 2008.

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