

WEST VIRGINIA
Winner: Democrats

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Many people view West Virginia as a swing state, due to the way they voted in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. West Virginia, for many different reasons is by far a more Democratic state than many would assume. At present time, West Virginia's state demographics and past election results for example, forecast a Democratic winner in 2008's general election.

The demographics of West Virginia are in line with a Democratic win. A primary issue that democrats have used to their advantage is the party's support of labor unions (Wayne, 2008). A mass portion of West Virginia's economy and population is based around coal mining. The median household income is nearly \$10,000 below the national average (West Virginia Quick Facts, 2008). The lower income population is also a group that Democrats tend to do very well in receiving votes (Wayne, 2008).

West Virginia has almost always traditionally voted in Democratic favor. Only 5 republican nominees have won the allotted number of electoral votes in West Virginia since 1940. This includes the two most recent and consecutive terms served by George W. Bush. In contrast, 12 democratic nominees have encompassed such a time span. (Leip, 2008). This showcases how Democrats have dominated for close to 60 years. Prior to the Republicans winning two consecutive nominations, Democrats won the state three consecutive times from 1988 through 1996. West Virginia over the past 60 years has voted Democratic 70% of the time, leaving me to believe this trend with continue.

Looking at other elected offices in West Virginia, it is very clear that they strongly vote in favor of the Democratic candidate. Since 1990, Democratic candidates have won every Senate and House vote with substantial margins. The average victory in Senate races was 70.5 percent of the vote. The House is no different, but actually has a higher margin of victory at 75 percent of the vote (Lendy, 1991; Anderson, 1993; Carle, 1995, 1997; Trandahl, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005; Miller, 2007). This pattern continues all the way through to the state level of both the Senate and House, with voting for Democrats holding at least a two to one (2:1) seat advantage since 2000 (StateVote 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006). At the gubernatorial level, Republicans have seen marginal success in 1998, where they won a very highly contested race with 51.63 percent of the vote (Leip, 2008).

Although recent presidential elections have yielded mixed results for the Democrats, I believe that West Virginia will find itself voting for and allocating its 5 electoral votes to a Democratic nominee.

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