



TO: WisPolitics  
From: The Shop Consulting  
DATE: November 4, 2004  
RE: Turnout and results 2000 vs. 2004

An early analysis of the 2004 presidential election results show Bush, Kerry, and independent organization strategies attempting to increase voter turnout among “their voters” succeeded in achieving their goals.

Voter participation was up in all 72 Wisconsin counties. Of the 10 largest Wisconsin counties (accounting for over 53% of eligible voters) Senator Kerry won 3 while Bush won a majority in 7. It is important to note that the most currently available population data in a few counties may not reflect actual population totals in some fast growing areas of the state (i.e. St. Croix County). Also, vote totals used in our analysis are based on unofficial data provided by the counties. We feel generally, however, that these high turnout percentages are accurate.

Wisconsin’s two largest counties (Milwaukee and Dane) account for slightly more than 25% of the state’s eligible voters and are traditionally Democratic. The increased turnout in these areas strongly contributed to the Democrats outpacing Republican turnout. Turnout was also up in Kenosha County but not as much as in Milwaukee County.

Of the remaining 7 largest counties in Wisconsin (Winnebago, Racine, Waukesha, Rock, Marathon, Brown and Outagamie) increased turnout appears to have been more beneficial to the GOP. This indicates that, contrary to long-held beliefs of many pundits, increased turnout does not automatically favor Democrats.

In the remainder of the state Democrats made larger vote improvements in 34 counties, but many of them were less populated areas where the increases there were not enough votes to prevail in the county. Broadly speaking, Democrats made gains in the far western and northern portions of the state, while republicans maintained their stranglehold in the Fox Valley.

In keeping with national trends, Kerry was able to motivate and increase turnout in the state’s largest urban areas, while Bush offset those gains in the more rural areas of the state. However, unlike national results, Kerry was able to extend his margin of victory in Wisconsin.