

Ohio's History in Presidential Elections

There have been 40 presidential elections since Ohio's current two party system began in 1856. Ohio has voted for the Republican candidate 28 times and the Democratic candidate 12 times.

Republicans won Ohio in the first 14 races (1856-1908).

Republican presidential nominees received over 50 percent of the vote in 23 elections and Democratic nominees received over 50 percent in 8 elections since 1856. Prior to Barack Obama winning over 50% of the vote in 2008 (which he did again in 2012) Democrats had not received 50 percent of the vote in 10 straight elections (1968-2004).

Since Ohio's current two party system began, the Ohio and the national presidential winner have been the same 35 of 40 times. Ohio picked the losing candidate in 1856, 1884, 1892, 1944 and 1960. In all five of those races, Ohio voted for the Republican candidate while the Democrat won nationally. In 1960, Richard Nixon carried Ohio by a 6.57% margin. In 1944, Ohio Gov. John Bricker, who was the vice-presidential running mate of Tom Dewey, likely swung Ohio to Dewey, the only time Franklin Roosevelt lost Ohio while winning nationally in four races.

Barack Obama in 2008 (D) received the most raw votes of any presidential candidate in the 40 elections, getting 2,940,044 votes. George W. Bush (R) was second highest – and the highest ever for a GOP candidate – with 2,859,768 votes in 2004. Herbert Hoover (R) received the highest percentage of the vote in the 40 elections, fetching 64.89% in 1928. Lyndon Johnson (D) was second highest – and the highest ever for a Democratic candidate – with 62.94% in 1964. Dwight Eisenhower (R) won the most counties, 87 of 88, in 1956, losing only Pike County. Nixon (R) in 1972 and Hoover (R) in 1928 won 86 counties, while Johnson won the most counties by a Democrat – 83 of 88 in 1964.

Among Ohio counties in presidential elections, Portage and Wood counties picked the same winner as the statewide winner in 36 of the 40 elections. Clinton and Warren counties register as the most-consistent GOP counties, picking the Republican candidate in 39 of 40 races. Both of those counties voted for the Democrat in 1964. Delaware, Fulton, Geauga, Greene, Logan, Morgan and Union voted Republican in 38 of the 40 races. Monroe County has voted for the Democrat the most times, 32 out of 40 elections.

Ottawa is the only county to pick the statewide winner in the last 10 presidential races. Tuscarawas and Wood counties picked correctly nine out of 10. Forty-five counties picked the Republican candidate in 10 of the last 10 races. Three counties – Cuyahoga, Mahoning and Trumbull – voted for the Democrat in all 10 races.

In the last 10 presidential elections (1976-2012), Republicans have won in Ohio and nationally five times and Democrats have won Ohio and nationally five times, underscoring the state's competitiveness. Adding up all the Ohio votes in the last 10 elections (1976-2012), Republican presidential nominees have received 23,606,556 votes and Democratic nominees have received 22,357,290 votes.

Republicans have won an average of 68 counties over the last 10 elections (1976-2012) and Democrats have won an average of 20 counties. Over the last 20 elections (1936-2012), Republicans have won an average of 66 counties and Democrats 22.

The regional percentages of the total statewide vote in the 2012 presidential race were: Central Ohio 20.32%; Northeast Ohio 38.50%; Northwest Ohio 8.73%; Southeast Ohio 4.61%; Southwest Ohio 15.46%; West Ohio 12.38%.

Central Ohio has voted for the Republican candidate in eight of the last 10 presidential elections but has voted for the Democrat in the last two. Northeast Ohio has voted for the Democrat in eight of the last 10 elections and is the most Democratic region of the state. Northeast Ohio only supported the Republican nominee in 1980 and 1984 (both times, Ronald Reagan). Northwest Ohio is the only region to pick the statewide winner in the last 10 presidential elections, voting for the Republican five times and the Democrat five times. Southeast Ohio supported the Republican nominee in six of the last 10 races, including the last four. Southwest Ohio and West Ohio voted for the GOP nominee in all 10 of the last 10 races, making them the most Republican regions of the state. West Ohio had the highest percentage support for GOP nominees in the last two.

Central Ohio has provided an average victory margin of 86,579 votes in the last 10 races for Republican nominees, but in the last two races it has voted for the Democratic nominee, giving Obama a 42,352 vote margin in 2012 and a 27,733 vote margin in 2008. Northeast Ohio has provided an average victory margin of 194,514 for the Democratic nominees in the last 10 races, including margins of over 250,000 in five of the last six races and 300,000 in the last two presidential elections. Northwest Ohio has provided an average victory margin of 10,273 votes in the last 10 races for GOP candidates, but in the last two races it has voted for Democrat Obama – by 37,821 votes in 2012 and 50,326 in 2008. Southeast Ohio has provided an average victory margin of 1,472 votes in the last 10 races for the Democratic candidates, but in the last two races it has voted for the Republican nominee – by 17,218 votes in 2012 and 9,805 votes in 2008. Southwest Ohio has provided an average victory margin of 137,252 votes in the last 10 races for GOP presidential candidates. West Ohio has provided an average victory margin of 86,809 votes in the last 10 races for Republicans.

Smart Politics did an outstanding analysis about Ohio being the best predictor of Presidential elections. Click on the link for the article. <http://tinyurl.com/nwqvj95>