



Getting out the Vote: A Comparison of Accessible Voting Features and Voter Participation

Kira Norton, M.P.H., OHSU; Larissa Yoshino, M.P.H., OHSU; Alice Miller, M.S.W., M.P.H., OHSU

Introduction

Voter turnout among people with disabilities remains significantly lower than those without. Voting policies and mechanisms, as well as turnout, vary by state.¹

Legislation protects voter rights:

- 1984 - Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act
- 1965 - Voting Rights Act
- 1990 - Americans with Disabilities Act
- 1993 - National Voter Registration Act
- 2002 - Help America Vote Act
- 2019 - Protection and Advocacy for Voting Access (introduced)

State Rankings

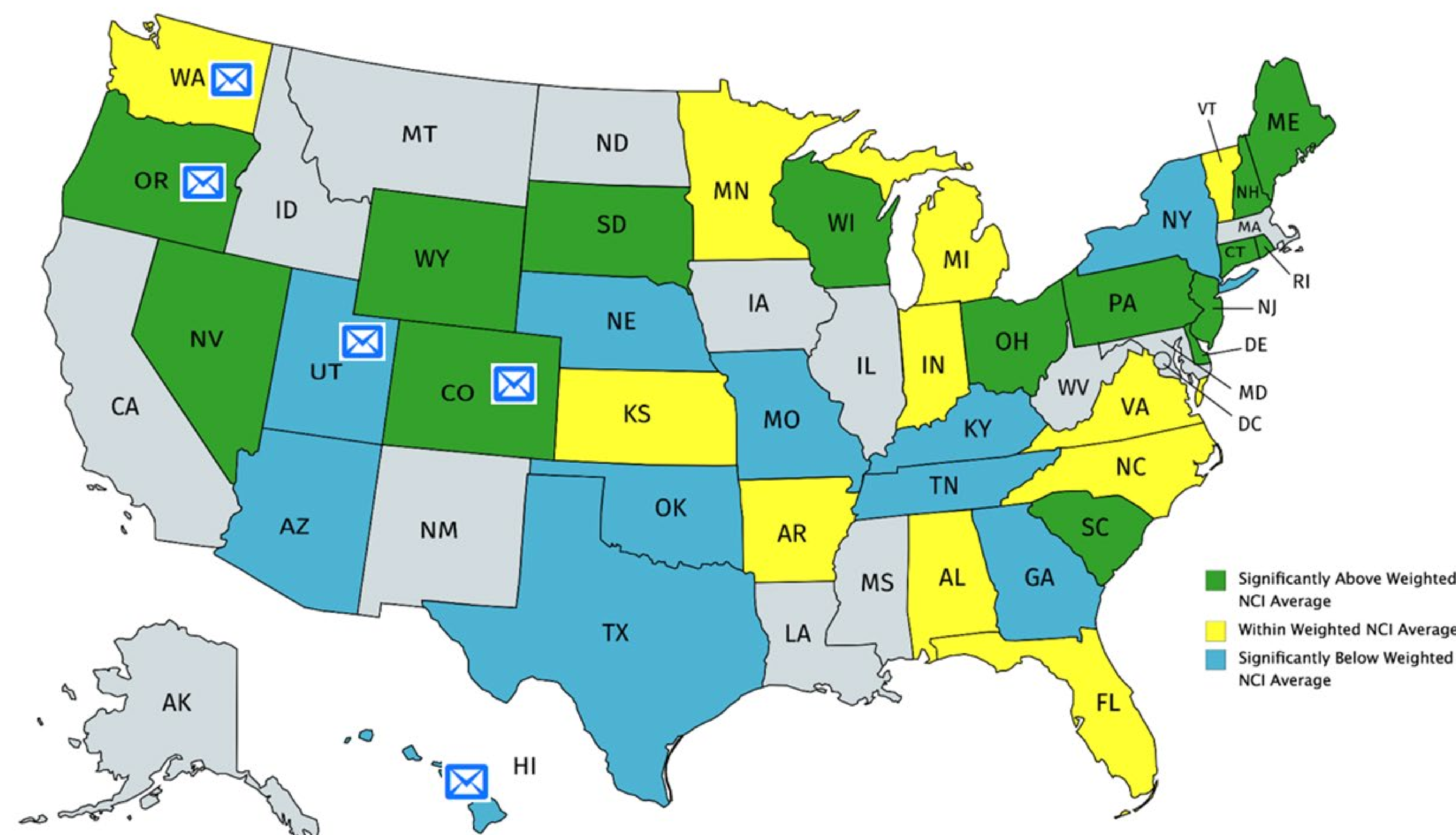
Table: NCI Survey 2018-19 state rankings of people who reported ever voting or having the opportunity to. The NCI weighted average is 37%.¹

State	Ever voted or had the opportunity to	State	Ever voted or had the opportunity to
1. RI	58%	20. KS	39%
2. NV	57%	21. VA	38%
3. ME	55%	22. IN	37%
4. SC	54%	23. MI	36%
5. OR	54%	24. WA	35%
6. NH	52%	25. FL	34%
7. CO	51%	26. AR	33%
8. WY	50%	27. NY	31%
9. DE	47%	28. OK	28%
10. SD	46%	29. UT	28%
11. OH	45%	30. NE	27%
12. CT	45%	31. GA	26%
13. PA	44%	32. TX	25%
14. NJ	44%	33. MO	25%
15. WI	44%	34. TN	24%
16. AL	43%	35. HI	22%
17. NC	41%	36. AZ	21%
18. MN	39%	37. KY	7%
19. VT	39%		

What: States have different voting accessibility laws, practices, and programs for people with disabilities.

So What: Varying features impact voter turnout.

Map: State NCI Voting Participation and All-Mail Voting (☒ icon)



Accessibility Features

Feature	Impact on Accessibility
All-Mail Voting Eligibility	Gives people the ability to vote from home
Absentee Voting	Allows people to vote outside of a polling place and some states require an excuse
Motor Voter Laws	Allows people to register to vote at specific state agencies
Curbside Voting	Allows people to vote outside of a polling place due to age or disability
Assistive Voting Options	Options such as AutoMark, Sip and Puff, Signature Stamps, and ExpressVote offer a variety of ways to fill out your ballot
Voter ID Laws	Many states require ID to vote - requiring an ID card to vote can keep some people from voting
Guardianship Laws	Can include restrictions that take away a persons right to vote
Mental "Incompetency" Laws	Can take away a persons right to vote based on perceived mental abilities

Moving Forward

- Eliminate laws restricting voter rights
- Protection & Advocacy agencies to prioritize voter information transparency
- Use a combination of laws, assistive voting features, and strategies to increase voter turnout²

References

1. Survey Reports. Nationalcoreindicators.org. <https://www.nationalcoreindicators.org/survey-reports/>
2. Gonzalez S. Vote by Mail Is One of Many Ways To Ensure the Disability Community Is Included in the Next Election. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/disability/news/2020/05/19/485218/vote-mail-one-many-ways-ensure-disability-community-included-next-election/>

Contact

If you are interested in learning more about this work, please contact Kira Norton: nortonki@ohsu.edu