



ELECTION HISTORY FOR RHODE ISLAND

Counties and Media Markets, 2003-2004 Edition

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USER NOTES

NOTE 1: *Source of Data.* State election authorities, generally the Secretary of State, or State Election Board, generally publish election reports for counties and districts following each election. The coverage, quality and timing of these reports vary greatly. Some states have produced fine publications for over a hundred years while others provide photocopies or newspaper clippings. Polidata has collected election results from these sources since 1980. These provide the basis for most of the recent data included in this volume.

Also used for returns are the following reference sources that are essential for any serious research into American elections.

1) AMERICA VOTES, Congressional Quarterly Books, biennially since 1952; 2) AMERICA AT THE POLLS, CQ Books, a periodic recapitulation of Presidential returns since 1920; 3) PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS SINCE 1789, CQ Books, a periodic recap for state-level returns; 4) PRESIDENTIAL BALLOTS, 1836-1892, by Walter Dean Burnham, 1955, Johns Hopkins Press; 5) THE PRESIDENTIAL VOTE, 1896-1932, by Edgar Eugene Robinson, 1934, Stanford University Press; 6) HISTORY OF AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS by Svend Petersen, reprinted by Greenwood Press; and 7) REPUBLICAN ALMANAC, Republican National Committee, biennially for many years during the latter half of the 20th century.

NOTE 2: *Incumbency and Result Summary.* A one line summary sentence is provided for each race (office or election) included in the Vote Summary Section. This is based upon the status of the Incumbent and/or Winner and the Nominee of the party that controlled the seat before the election. In Presidential races the summary indicates the result in the state, not necessarily the same as the national result. Options are a) an incumbent win, denominated as "reelected", b) an incumbent loss, denominated as "gains seat/state" for the "out" party, c) no incumbent is running, denominated as either "retains seat/state" if the "in" party wins, or "gains seat/state" if the "out" party wins. (Incumbency status may be unknown, as in multimember offices or early elections.)

NOTE 3: *Total votes.* As much as possible, all votes, aside from a scattering of write-in votes, are generally included for each race. This often becomes problematic when the official report lists votes for many minor candidates but does not include any jurisdictional total. Coverage will vary in such cases. For both types of listings, both the Vote Listings and Vote Histories, votes for candidates who received less than 5% of the vote statewide are lumped together as "Remainders". Their collective percentage is usually listed by county with a total of the votes statewide listed in the sub-table at the end of the Vote Listing table. In addition, in some states, votes for several party labels may have been combined by candidate.

NOTE 4: *FIPS Code Order.* The Federal Information Processing Standards county code is the basis of the Polidata® MERLIN (Master Election Records onLINE) data system. In general these provide an alphabetical listing of counties with a few exceptions. For example, Independent Cities in several states are listing following the counties. More troublesome is the inconsistency with which alphabetizing occurs in reports of yore or computer software of today. See, e.g., "Mc", or "St".

NOTE 5: *Notes on race order and inclusion.* a) The order in which races appear in our publications is standardized and may not appear in the same order as they are on the ballot in some states. b) Races which are uncontested, or loosely noncompetitive, may be excluded. c) Some races may appear in one section and not other. d) Notes are generally included on the divider page for each Vote Listing if errors or discrepancies are found in the source material.

NOTE 6: *Mini-Reports.* Page 1 of each Mini-Report is the right-hand side. Copying in duplex mode will produce a standalone booklet with opposing, generally complementary pages, as designed.

NOTE 7: *County Changes.* Data listings reflect the results from the County units as of the time of the election. These maps reflect county boundaries as of the 1990 census. Changes in boundaries may have been made due to annexation or reorganization and are illustrative only, especially for early elections.

NOTE 8: *Presidential Vote Tabulation.* Data for Presidential races may vary somewhat from listings in AMERICA VOTES especially for recent years. National tabulation of votes by POLIDATA generally keeps track of votes for a limited number of candidates (2 for the major parties and 2 independents with over 5% of the vote, plus 5 others). Treatment of votes for minor candidates may vary by state in AMERICA VOTES and yield a more inclusive/higher, vote total.

VOLUME-SPECIFIC NOTES for RHODE ISLAND:

A) Governor and other state officers were elected biennially through 1994; now they are elected every four year in "off" (non-Presidential) years. B) The size of the General Assembly changed for the 2002 elections.