

FALL 2023 MASSACHUSETTS SURVEY

Commissioned by



PIONEER INSTITUTE
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

Conducted by

Emerson College
P O L L I N G



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METHODOLOGY

Emerson College Polling is pleased to present the Pioneer Institute with the findings from a survey of Massachusetts residents' knowledge on the U.S. government. All respondents interviewed in this study were part of a sample of N=1,000 (sample size).

Data was weighted by Massachusetts general population parameters. The credibility interval, similar to a poll's margin of error, for the sample is +/- 3 % in 19 of 20 cases. The survey was administered via an online panel. Data was collected between September 21-22, 2023.

The results presented in this report include univariate and bivariate analysis of the data. Frequency distributions for each item included on the questionnaire are shown in the tables. In all cases, cross-tabulation results are also shown. This type of bivariate analysis examines differences between sub-groups of the overall population. In the cases where cross tabulation results are presented, a chi-square test, an independent t-test for means, or a Z-test for independent percentages is shown.

A chi-square test is used in cases where comparisons are made for categorical variables. A t-test is used in cases where comparisons are made for measurement variables. A Z-test is used in cases where comparisons are made between independent population percentages.

The purpose of these statistical tests is to determine whether or not the observed difference between sub-groups in the sample is due to sampling error or whether it is due to a real difference in the population. When the results are statistically significant, it strongly suggests that the observed difference between sub-groups found in the sample is due to a real difference in the population, and not due to sampling error.

A chi-square significance level of .05 indicates significance at the 95 percent level. In other words, it is 95 percent likely that the results are due to a real difference between comparison groups. A chi-square significance level of .01 indicates significance at the 99 percent level. When a t-test or a Z-test is shown, lower- and upper-case letters indicate significance at the 90 and 95 percent levels respectively.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Massachusetts residents were asked a series of questions about how the federal government works, based on questions from the U.S. citizenship test. Questions ranged from the number of branches of government to the month elections for federal offices are held.

The average score of correct answers on the survey questions for Massachusetts residents was 63%.

Those whose highest level of educational attainment is a postgraduate degree scored the highest, with an average score of 75%. This compares to 70% of those whose highest level of education is a college degree, 61% whose highest level of education is some college, and 51% among those with a high school degree or less.

Massachusetts residents who have taken multiple civics classes in middle or high school scored higher than those who took one or no civics classes, scoring 69% compared to 65% for those who have taken one class and 58% among those who have taken no civics courses.

Independent and unaffiliated voters scored 69%, compared to Democrats and Republicans who averaged 62%, those not registered to vote scored 46%.

Those over 65 scored the highest at 75%, followed by 45-54 year olds at 65%, 18-24 year olds at 58%, 35-44 year olds at 55%, and 25-34 year olds scored the lowest at 52%.

There was no significant regional difference across Massachusetts regarding the overall score of respondents.

SURVEY RESULTS

How many branches of the federal government are there?

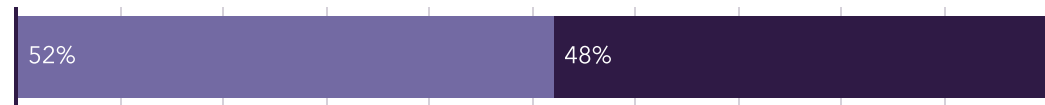
Correct Incorrect



What do we call the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution?



How many U.S. Senators are there?



If both the President and Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President of the United States?



What month are elections for federal offices like President and members of Congress held?



Which of the following wars was not fought during the 20th century?



Which of the following was not one of the original 13 states?



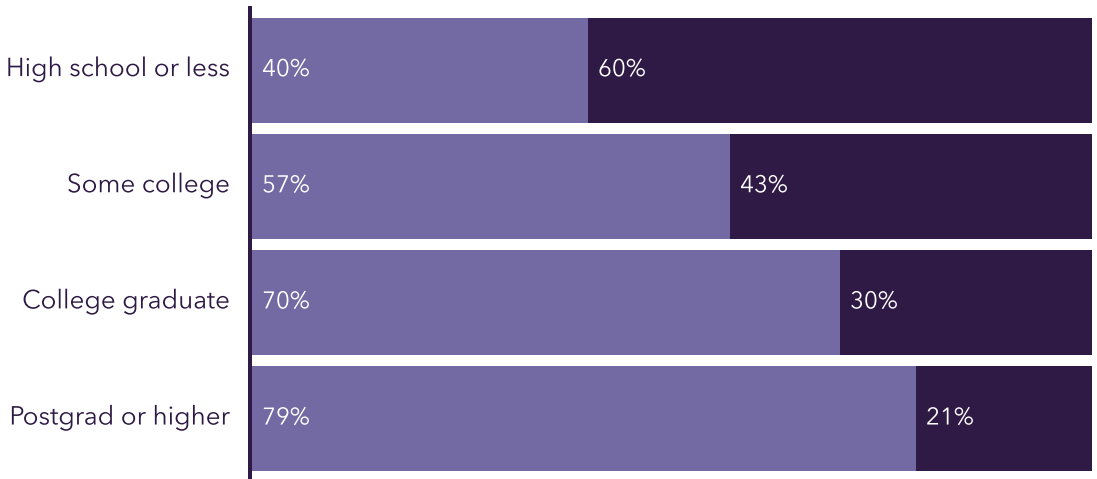
Which of the following is a U.S. territory?



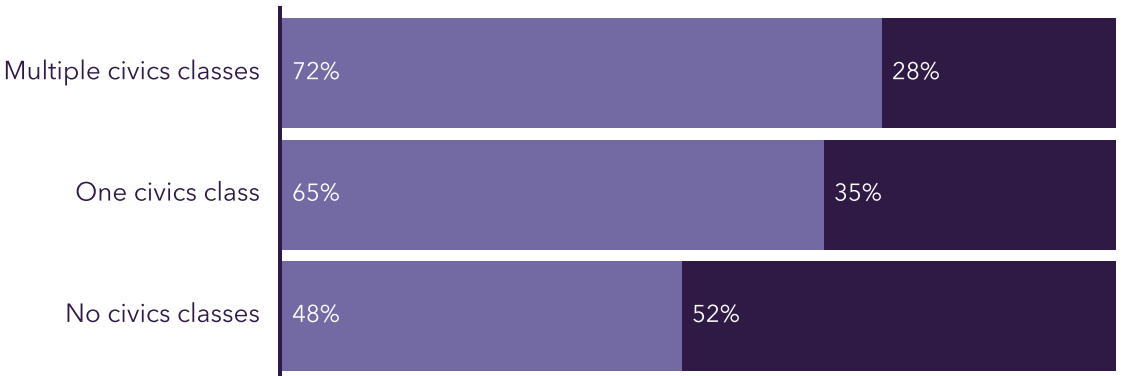
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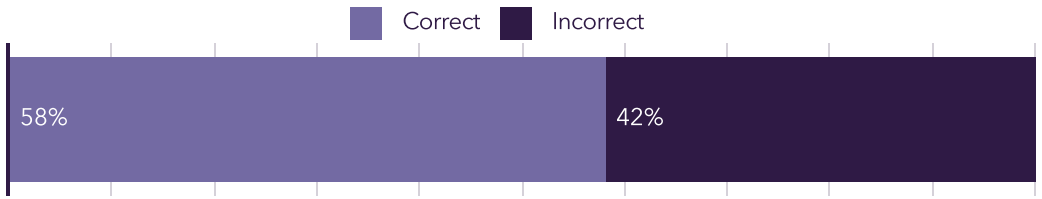
BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



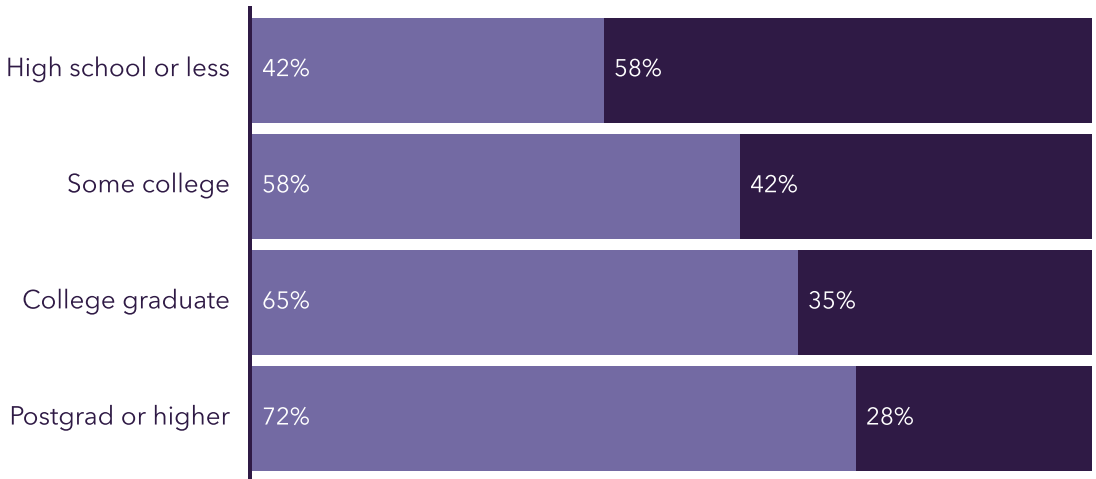
BY CIVICS EDUCATION



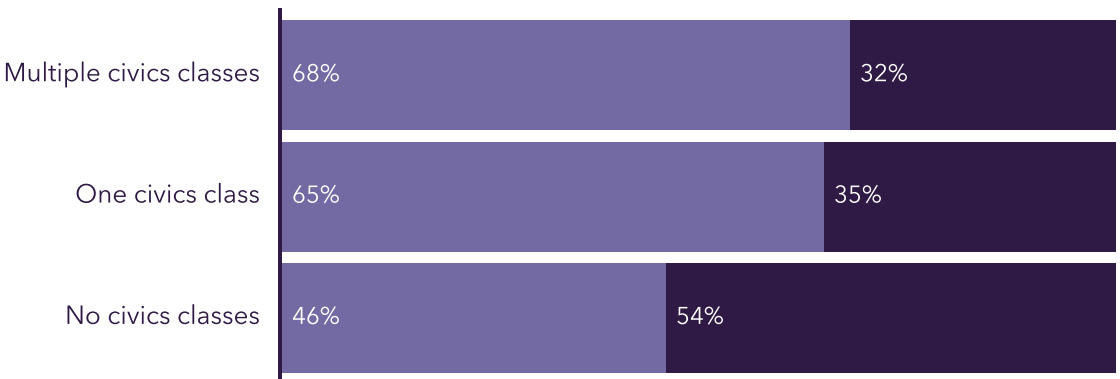
What do we call the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution?



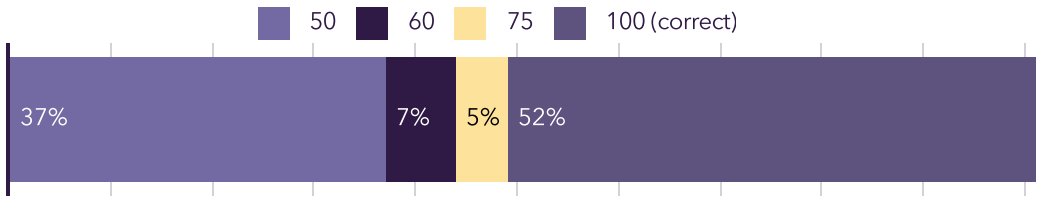
BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



BY CIVICS EDUCATION



How many U.S. Senators are there?

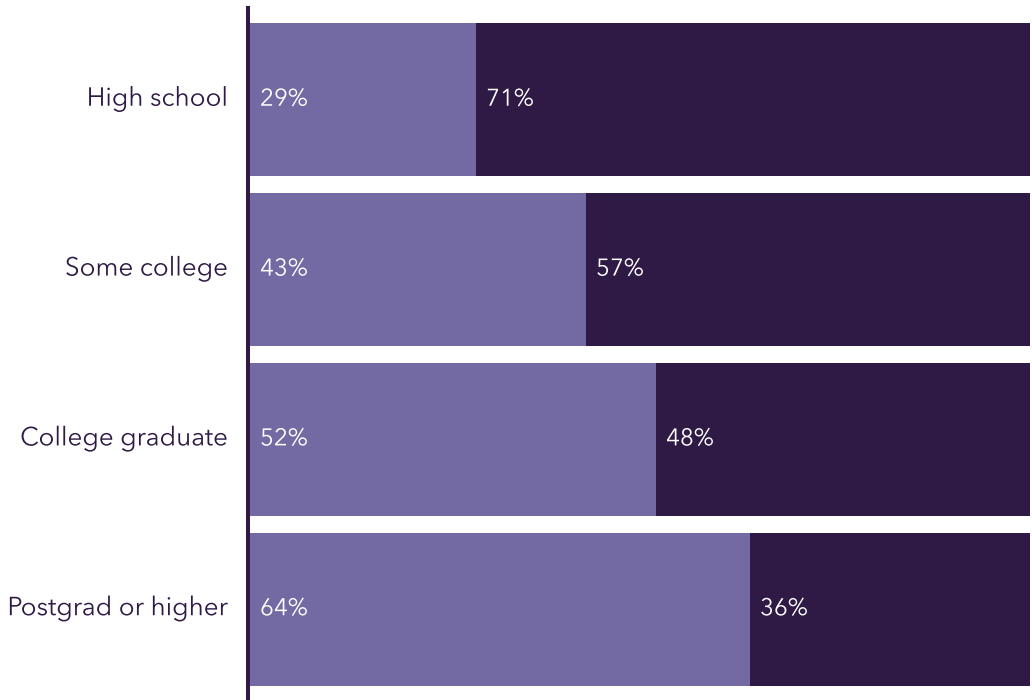


How many years is a U.S. Senator's term?

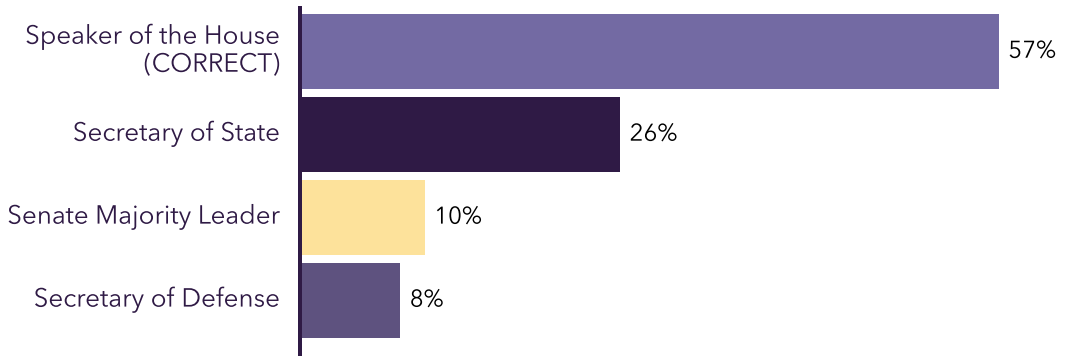


● Correct ● Wrong

BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

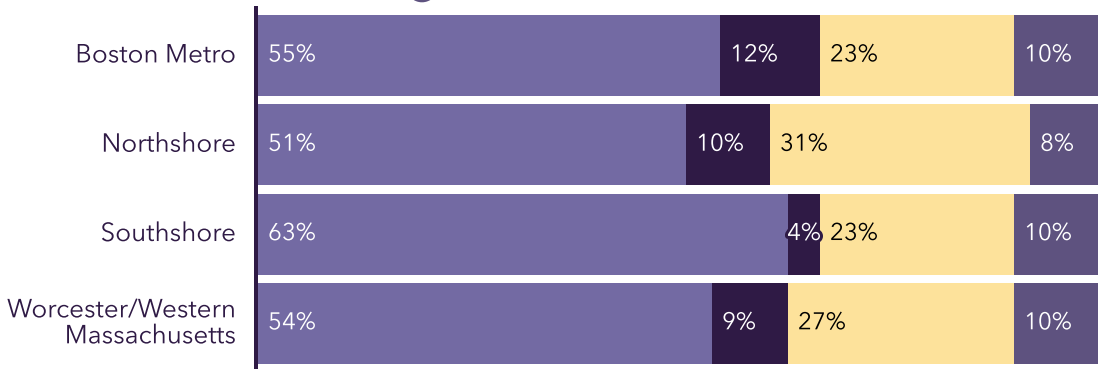


If both the President and Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President of the United States?

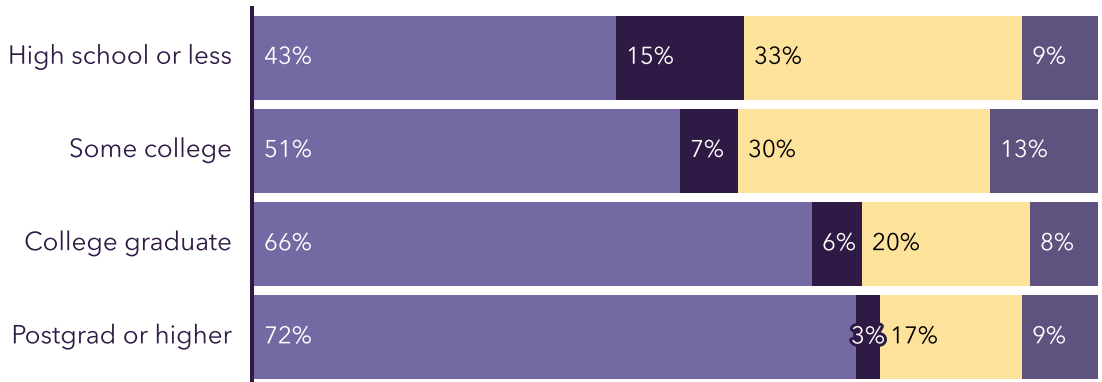


BY REGION

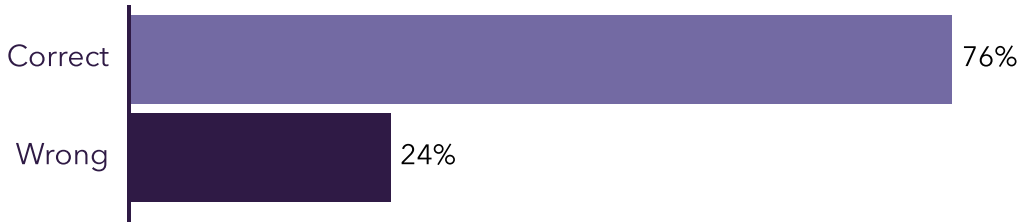
- Speaker of the House
- Secretary of Defense
- Secretary of State
- Senate Majority Leader



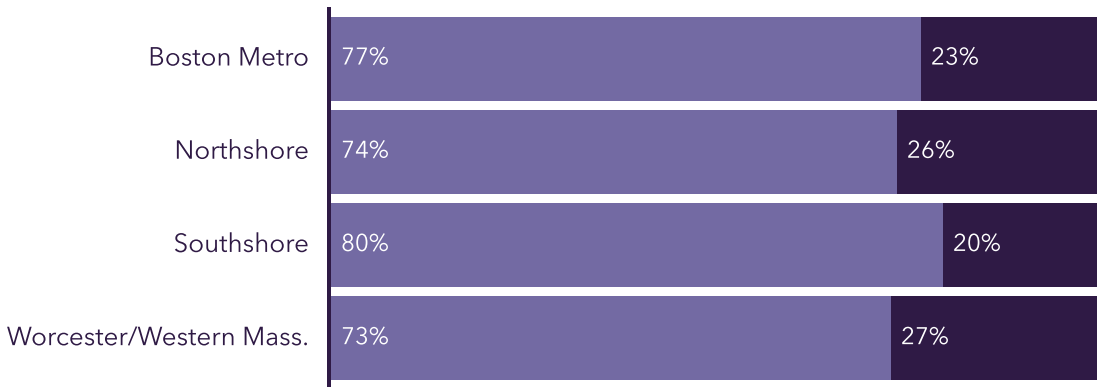
BY HIGHEST DEGREE OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



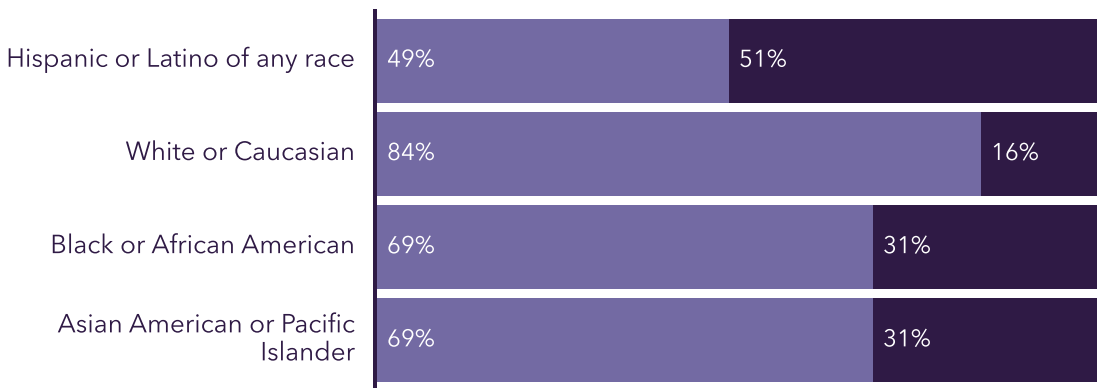
What month are elections for federal offices like President and members of Congress held?



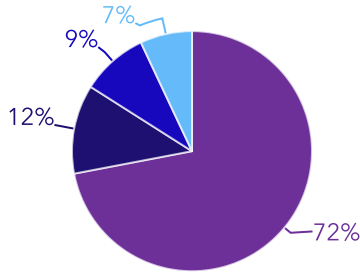
BY REGION



BY RACE/ETHNICITY

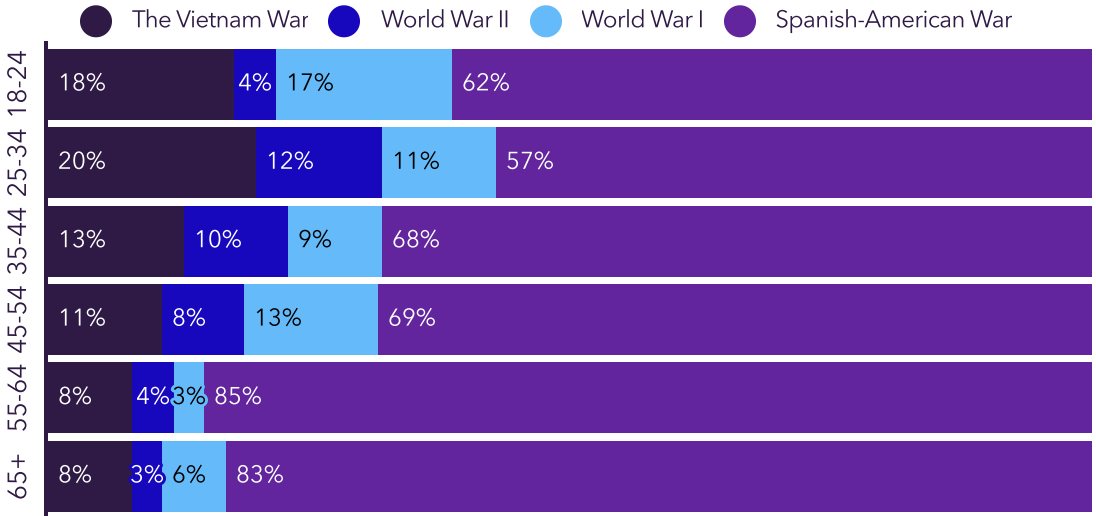


Which of the following wars was not fought during the 20th century (January 1, 1901 - December 31, 2000)?

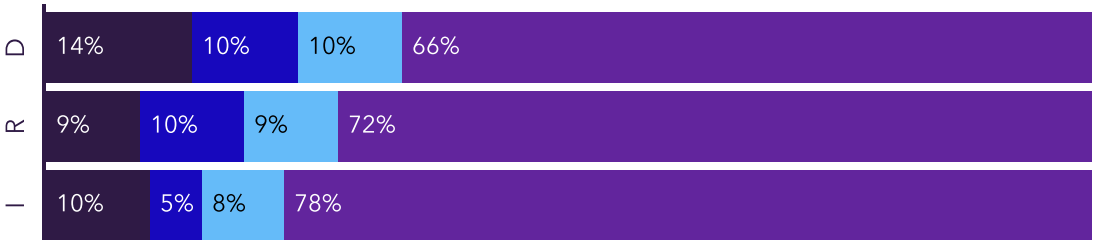


Spanish-American War (correct) The Vietnam War World War I World War II

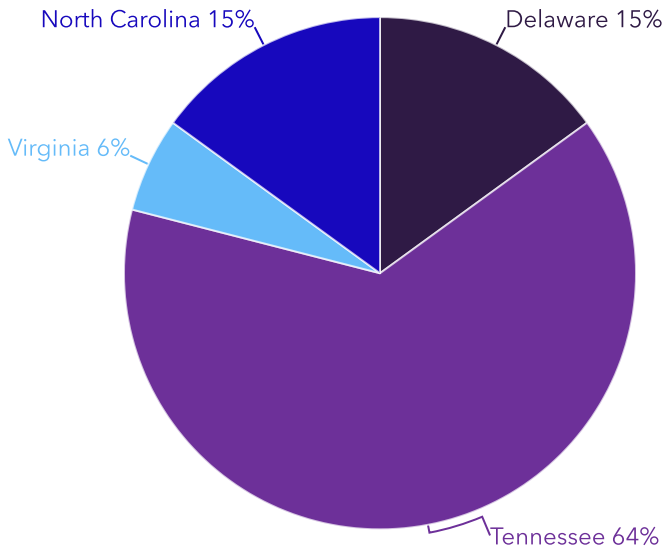
BY AGE



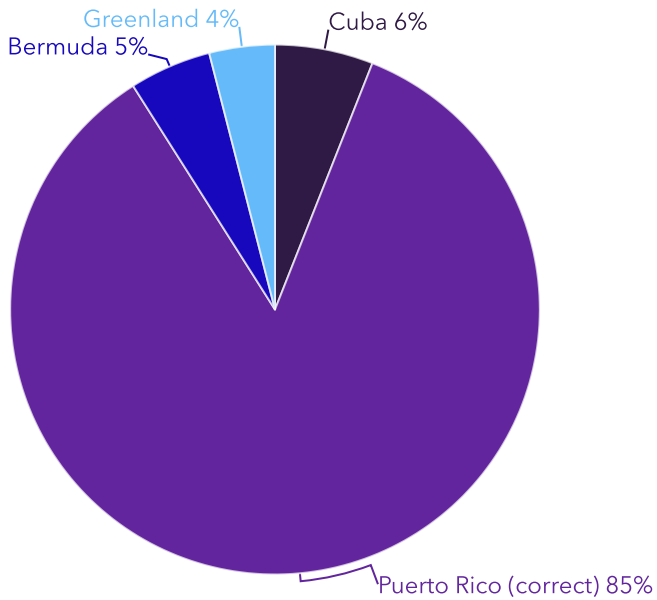
BY PARTY



Which of the following was not one of the original 13 states?



Which of the following is a U.S. territory?



DEMOGRAPHICS

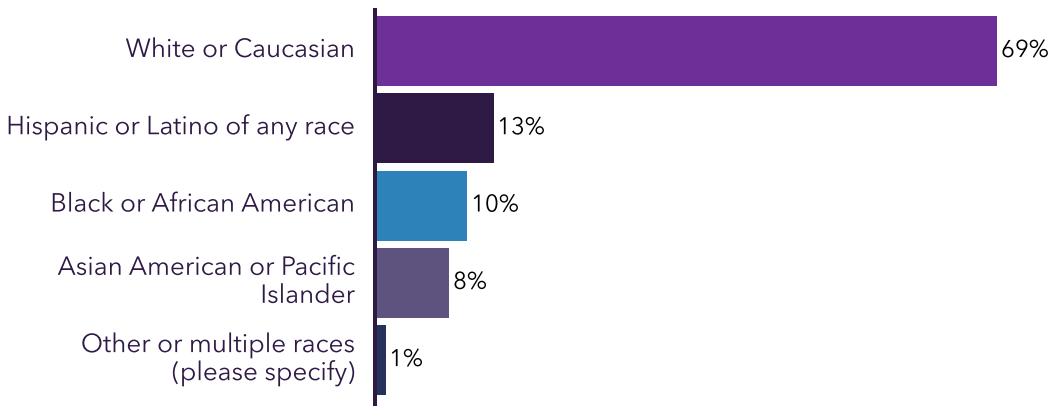
Did you ever take a civics or government class when you were in middle school or high school?



Gender



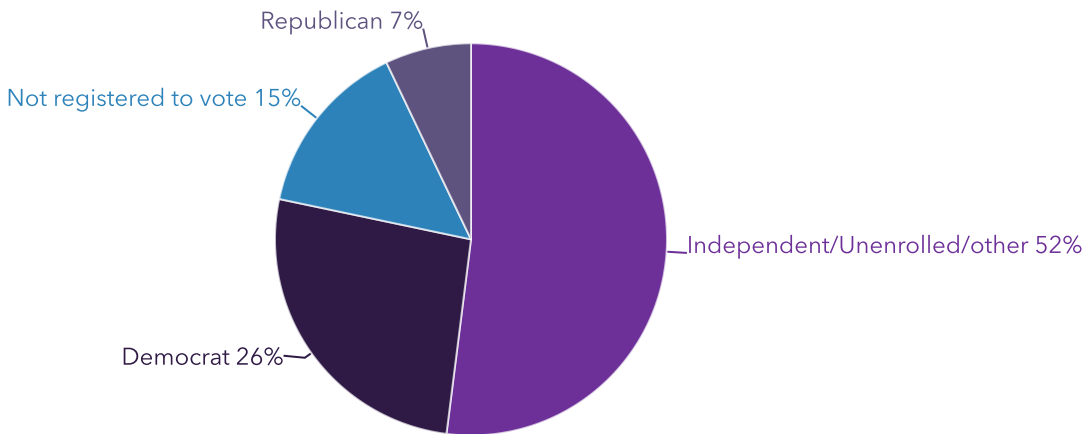
Race/Ethnicity



Highest Level of Educational Attainment



Voter Registration



MA region





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