

# Does My Vote Even Matter?

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Image from <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-orange-san-bernardino/about-us/blog/why-every-election-matters-including-midterm-elections>

## IN THIS ISSUE

### **Why Your Vote Matters**

An overview of the importance of voting and why your vote counts

### **Historically Tight Races**

A short summary of some historically close elections

### **A Call to Action**

What you can do to encourage people to vote

## Why Your Vote Matters

Election season is gearing up fast for the 2024 Presidential election. Between the primaries, midterms, local, and the Presidential election, the thought often crosses people's minds "does my vote even matter?" The answer is YES! Every vote counts, and every election is important. While many are not excited or may even be feeling overwhelmed about the upcoming election, as Planned Parenthood explains, voting is important because it impacts what happens within our states, communities and country. There have been numerous elections in history that have come down to less than 1 percent of the votes cast as National Geographic discusses. Your vote could make or break an election, especially when it comes to local elections. Additionally, voting gives a chance for your voice to be heard and to stand up for issues that you care about. Elections have consequences and impact

the quality of your day-to-day life. Not voting creates the opportunity for changes that you may not be happy with (AltaMed). No matter the type of election, your vote ALWAYS matters.



Image from <https://vodolton.org/voting/>

## Historically Tight Races

If you still believe that your vote doesn't matter, take a look at these historically close races, some being decided by a single vote (NPR):

- 2018: The Democratic primary for Baltimore County executive was decided by just 17 votes
- 2016: A Vermont state Senate Democratic Primary was decided by a SINGLE vote out of more than 7,400 cast
- 2010: A Massachusetts House race originally ended in a tie. After a court ordered do-over, Peter Durant won by just 56 votes out of 8,000 cast

- 2008: Al Franken defeated Norm Coleman by just 312 votes out of 2.9 million cast, creating a supermajority in the Senate
- 2006: An Alaska state House seat was decided by a coin toss to break a voting tie
- 1998: A Massachusetts House GOP primary race ended in a tie, causing a judge to have to determine a winner

There were even some noted close elections in the 19<sup>th</sup> century:

- 1882: Robert M. Mayo defeated George T. Garrison 10,505 to 10,504
- 1847: George G. Dunn defeated David M. Dobson 7,455 to 7,454
- 1829: Nicholas Coleman defeated Adam Beatty 2,520 to 2,519

While these are not all the elections that have been incredibly close, it's clear to see that numerous elections throughout history have been decided by just one or a handful of votes. That one vote could be yours one day which is why it's always said that "every vote matters" and "every vote counts." Your single vote could change the outcome of an election.

## A Call to Action

As election season draws closer, there's a few things that can be done to encourage everyone to vote:

- Talk with friends and family about why their vote counts and the importance of voting in all elections
- Volunteer with voting organizations such as "League of Women Voters" or "All Voting is Local" that educate on the importance of voting
- Share on social media information about voting from your local government or voting organizations
- Consider writing to your local school board about why it's important to teach students about the importance of voting and engage them in elections
- Volunteer to help get voters signed up in your state and to help pre-register high school students
- Make sure that you vote and wear your voting sticker on election day. This may remind some people to go and vote



# Sources

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