

Presidential Elections in Rhode Island

March 2013

Facts in Focus

- For three straight elections, Rhode Island has had literally zero general election presidential campaign attention as measured by major party TV ad spending and candidate rallies
- After the 2020 Census, Rhode Island is projected to lose a House seat and one electoral vote, reducing its share of the Electoral College from four votes to three

Overview

- Rhode Island has four electoral votes and a voting eligible population of 768,785
- Ranked 45th most populous state (based on voting eligible population)
- 2012 results: Obama – 62.7% over Romney – 35.2% / Margin: 122,473 votes
- 2012: 446,049 votes cast: Obama - 279,677; Romney - 157,204; Other – 9,168

Presidential Campaign Attention: None

- 2012: Zero campaign events with major party presidential and VP candidates and zero TV ad money spent by major party candidates during general election (Sept. 7 to Nov. 6 for events, and April 11 to Nov. 6 for spending). Zero TV ad dollars spent by interest groups.
- 2008: Zero such campaign events and zero TV ad money spent by major party candidates during general election campaign (Sept. 24 to Nov. 4). \$1,058 spent by interest groups.
- 2004: Zero campaign events with major party presidential and VP candidates and zero TV ad money spent by the major party candidates during general election campaign (Sept. 26 to Nov. 2). Zero spent by interest groups.

In 2012, Rhode Island received **zero percent** of the campaign attention it would have received if the campaigns had allocated their resources based on a state's population size. Based on the number of campaign events held and the amount of money the campaigns and their allies spent on local television advertising between April 11 and November 6, Rhode Island should have received around \$3 million in ad spending during that time.

(35 states, including Rhode Island, received less than 1/100th of the attention from the campaigns that they would have received if every state received attention in proportion to its population. The 9 states receiving more attention than the national average were also 2008 battleground states.)

Campaign offices in Rhode Island in 2012: 1 (compared to the 131 in Ohio)

Fundraising

- 2012: Rhode Island residents donated at least \$2.2 million to Obama/Romney campaigns
- Ranked 29th in campaign donations vs. population – \$2.90 in donations per eligible voter
- Ranked 34th net-exporter, when comparing the percentage of money donated to the campaigns vs. percentage of ad money received.
- 2008: Rhode Islanders donated at least \$2 million to Obama and McCain campaigns

Partisanship and Competitiveness

- 2012 partisanship¹ (how Rhode Island would vote in a nationally tied election): 61.9% D
- In 2012 Rhode Island was the nation's 4th most Democratic state, based on partisanship
- Last time Rhode Island voted for a Republican presidential nominee: 1984
- Last time Rhode Island had a close margin of victory (won by 6% or less): 1984
- Last time a swing state (w/a vote deviation from national popular vote of 3% or less): 1956

¹ Partisanship is calculated by comparing the way that a state voted to the way that the nation voted as a whole.