

INTRODUCTION

Thank you Chairman Proctor, Vice Chair Waggoner, and fellow Representatives. Thank you for having me here today. My name is Spencer Richardson, and I am a Staff Writer for Ballotpedia's Elections Team.

Today, I'm pleased to discuss Kansas voter turnout in non-November elections. I will specifically be using data from 2010 through the most recent election in November of 2025.

SETTING THE STAGE

First, let's set the stage. Ballotpedia generally categorizes elections as either on-cycle or off-cycle.

On-cycle elections are those held alongside federal elections on the Tuesday after the first Monday of November in even years—such as presidential general elections and midterms.

Off-cycle elections make up the rest. These are elections that do not align with federal election dates and are often local. Think school board, city council, or mayoral races.

DATA POINT 1: ON-CYCLE ELECTIONS

A useful way to visualize the separation between off-cycle and on-cycle elections is by imagining a “turnout pyramid.” At the bottom are on-cycle elections, because they tend to draw the largest turnout.

Let's start with the largest chunk of that set: general presidential elections. Between 2012 and 2024, registered voter turnout averaged about 89% nationally and around 62% in Kansas.

Moving up the pyramid, we have midterm election turnout, which tends to draw a smaller turnout than presidential elections. Between the 2010 and 2022 midterm elections, an average of 73% of registered voters turned out nationally, and 46% turned out in Kansas.

DATA POINT 2: OFF-CYCLE ELECTIONS

Now for the fun part: Kansas' off-cycle elections. These are held in any year, any month, and on any date other than the Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even years.

Returning to our pyramid analogy, if on-cycle presidential elections form the base, and on-cycle midterms fill out the middle portion, off-cycle elections make up the capstone. Because of the smaller turnout, it represents a smaller portion of the pyramid.

One way to divide up these off-cycle elections is to look simply at odd-year turnout. For this segment, we compiled data from Kansas' five largest counties: Johnson, Sedgwick, Shawnee, Wyandotte, and Douglas. Together, these counties are home to about half of Kansas' total overall population and we use them as proxies for the state's overall trends.

When we compile the data for odd year turnout in these five counties, we see that, from 2017 to 2025, turnout in odd year elections in these counties averages to about 20%.

DATA POINT 3: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EVEN AND ODD YEAR TURNOUT

We've also compiled data to show the differences in turnout between even-year November elections and the following odd-year November election.

What we found is that turnout in odd years lags both presidential and midterm general elections. Most recently, in 2025, turnout was almost 44 percentage points lower than in 2024.

WRAP UP: THANK YOU

I look forward to answering any questions you may have. The committee has a copy of the data and charts in case anyone wants to spend longer on any portion. On behalf of myself and Ballotpedia, thank you very much for your time.

TABLES

TABLE 1 - Turnout in Presidential Elections

Year	National (Percent of Eligible Voters - Source)	National (Percent of Registered Voters - Source)	Kansas (Percent of Registered Voters - Source)
2024	63.10%	88.76%	63.20%
2020	65.30%	94.16%	65.70%
2016	59.20%	86.80%	59.70%
2012	58.00%	84.32%	58.20%
Average	61.40%	88.51%	61.70%

TABLE 2 - Turnout in Midterm Elections

Year	National (Percent of Eligible Voters - Source)	National (Percent of Registered Voters - Source)	Kansas (Percent of Registered Voters - Source)
2022	46.20%	75.53%	47.60%
2018	50%	79.89%	51.10%
2014	36.70%	64.89%	43.30%
2010	41.80%	69.93%	42.60%
Average	43.68%	72.56%	46.15%

TABLE 3 - Kansas Turnout in November Elections (County)

County	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<u>Johnson</u>	<u>25.07%</u>	<u>72.79%</u>	<u>26.74%</u>	<u>56.86%</u>	<u>25.27%</u>	<u>77.48%</u>	<u>17.35%</u>
<u>Sedgwick</u>	<u>11.98%</u>	<u>62.85%</u>	<u>23.96%</u>	<u>46.78%</u>	<u>15.45%</u>	<u>70.03%</u>	<u>20.30%</u>
<u>Shawnee</u>	<u>22.43%</u>	<u>69.62%</u>	<u>18.20%</u>	<u>56.42%</u>	<u>20.56%</u>	<u>74.26%</u>	-
<u>Wyandotte</u>	<u>20.00%</u>	<u>54.10%</u>	<u>15.51%</u>	<u>38.29%</u>	<u>19.03%</u>	<u>62.69%</u>	<u>16.94%</u>
<u>Douglas</u>	<u>26.70%</u>	<u>71.00%</u>	<u>26.10%</u>	<u>57.90%</u>	<u>22.20%</u>	<u>73.01%</u>	<u>24.58%</u>
Average	21.24%	66.07%	22.10%	51.25%	20.50%	71.49%	19.79%

TABLE 4 - Change in turnout
in odd years compared to the
previous even year (County)

County	2025	2023	2021	2019	2017
Johnson	-47.72%	-30.12%	-52.21%	-47.56%	-55.64%
Sedgwick	-50.87%	-22.82%	-54.58%	-35.60%	-57.50%
Shawnee	-47.19%	-38.22%	-53.70%	-	-51.25%
Wyandotte	-34.10%	-22.78%	-43.66%	-34.17%	-38.21%
Douglas	-44.30%	-31.80%	-50.81%	-37.72%	-39.79%
Average	-44.84%	-29.15%	-50.99%	-38.76%	-48.48%

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND BACKGROUND

ABOUT BALLOTPEDIA

- Ballotpedia exists to educate and create awareness about American politics.
- We aim to accomplish this goal by researching and writing an unbiased, neutral, and accurate online encyclopedia of U.S. politics for scholars, journalists, voters, and interested citizens.
- Founded in 2007
- Over 650,000 encyclopedic articles
- Over the past 17 years, Ballotpedia has created a dynamic online encyclopedia with more than 650,000 articles that is changing the way Americans learn about politics and how they learn about the candidates and ballot measures they will be voting on.
- Our website has garnered over one billion pageviews.
- With 10 newsletters, our opt-in email list boasts more than three million lifetime subscribers.
- We appear in the top five search results on Google for relevant keywords.
- Ballotpedia has covered more than 15,000 candidates through our Candidate Connection Survey.

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More notes/links

https://ballotpedia.org/Off-cycle_elections

<https://effectivegov.uchicago.edu/primers/the-timing-of-local-elections>

<https://electionlab.mit.edu/research/election-timing>