

Voter Turnout in Primary Elections

Eric McGhee

Supported with funding from S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation

PPIC



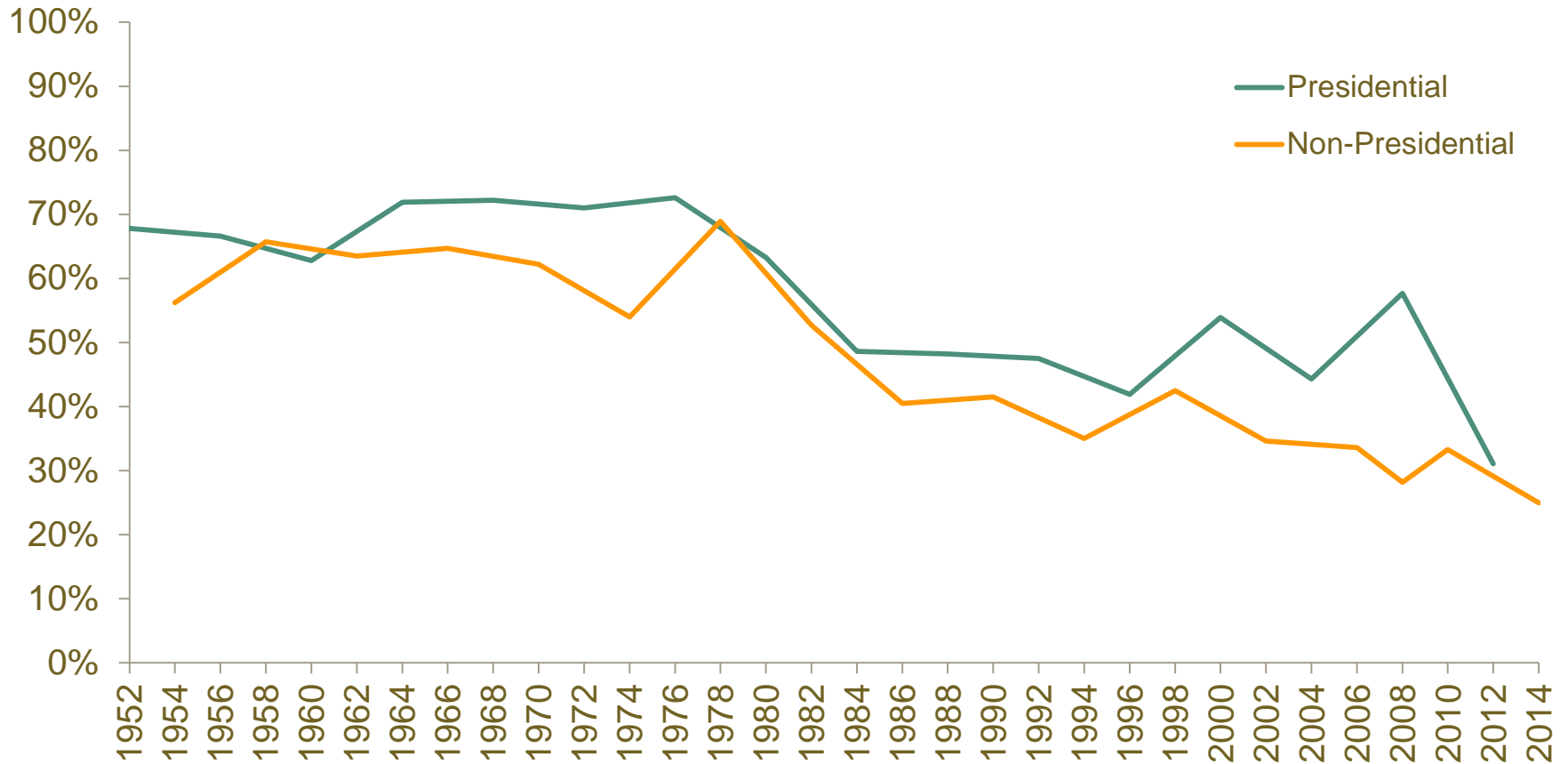
June 3 was the second outing for major electoral reforms

- Top-two primary
- Commission-drawn districts
- First time for:
 - Statewide races (top two)
 - State senate (districts)



Turnout was very low

Turnout as a share of registered, 1952–2014



SOURCE: California Secretary of State.



Fewer incumbents have retired, and fewer were challenged

	Assembly (80 seats)		Senate (20 seats per election; 40 total)		U.S. House (53 seats)	
	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012
Open seats	29%	44%	50%	45%	11%	17%



Fewer incumbents have retired, and fewer were challenged

	Assembly (80 seats)		Senate (20 seats per election; 40 total)		U.S. House (53 seats)	
	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012
Open seats	29%	44%	50%	45%	11%	17%
Same-party competition	44	63	55	45	72	79



Fewer incumbents have retired, and fewer were challenged

	Assembly (80 seats)		Senate (20 seats per election; 40 total)		U.S. House (53 seats)	
	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012
Open seats	29%	44%	50%	45%	11%	17%
Same-party competition	44	63	55	45	72	79
Same-party incumbent challenge	14	33	30	27	45	52



Fewer incumbents have retired, and fewer were challenged

	Assembly (80 seats)		Senate (20 seats per election; 40 total)		U.S. House (53 seats)	
	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012
Open seats	29%	44%	50%	45%	11%	17%
Same-party competition	44	63	55	45	72	79
Same-party incumbent challenge	14	33	30	27	45	52
One major party absent	25	14	25	25	9	17



Outcomes were less competitive, with fewer same-party runoff

	Assembly (80 seats)		Senate (20 seats per election; 40 total)		U.S. House (53 seats)	
	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012
Same-party runoffs	15%	23%	30%	10%	13%	15%



Outcomes were less competitive, with fewer same-party runoffs

	Assembly (80 seats)		Senate (20 seats per election; 40 total)		U.S. House (53 seats)	
	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012
Same-party runoffs	15%	23%	30%	10%	13%	15%
Winner > 50%	70	50	70	80	77	66



Outcomes were less competitive, with fewer same-party runoff

	Assembly (80 seats)		Senate (20 seats per election; 40 total)		U.S. House (53 seats)	
	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012
Same-party runoffs	15%	23%	30%	10%	13%	15%
Winner > 50%	70	50	70	80	77	66
Average gap: 1st- and 2nd-place	23	19	26	20	33	28



Outcomes were less competitive, with fewer same-party runoffs

	Assembly (80 seats)		Senate (20 seats per election; 40 total)		U.S. House (53 seats)	
	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012
Same-party runoffs	15%	23%	30%	10%	13%	15%
Winner > 50%	70	50	70	80	77	66
Average gap: 1st- and 2nd-place	23	19	26	20	33	28
Average gap: 2nd- and 3rd-place	11	8	11	19	11	14



The reforms are maturing

- Competition was elevated in 2012, with some unexpected outcomes
- Results are more settled this time
- A new status quo?
 - Higher competition, both in the primary and the general
 - Most primary outcomes will follow the patterns of the past
 - But the reforms will influence certain outcomes



Voter Turnout in Primary Elections

Eric McGhee

Supported with funding from S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation

PPIC



Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

Eric McGhee (mcghee@ppic.org; 415-291-4439)

Thank you for your interest in this work.

