

Myth that California and New York Would Dominate a National Popular Vote for President

May 20, 2026

Opponents of a national popular vote for President often claim that California and New York would dominate a nationwide vote. It is true that these two big states regularly produce a multi-million vote lead in favor of the Democratic presidential candidate.

California and New York together have 59.7 million people—18% of the U.S. population according to the 2020 census. In 2024, California and New York together gave Harris 59% of their two-party popular vote—an impressive lead of **4.2 million votes** for Harris.

California and New York—18% of U.S.—59% Democratic

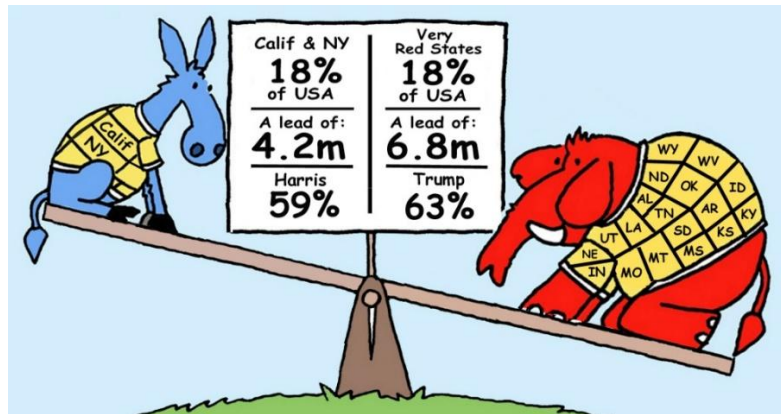
Republican 2024 percent of two-party vote	Population	State	Trump	Harris	Harris lead
40%	39,538,223	California	6,081,697	9,276,179	3,194,482
44%	20,201,249	New York	3,578,899	4,619,195	1,040,296
41%	59,739,472	Total	9,660,596	13,895,374	4,234,778

However, two states containing a mere 18% of the U.S. population do not provide the whole picture of the American electorate.

In particular, there is a group of “Very Red States” that also have 18% of the U.S. population—that is, essentially the same population as California and New York. This 18% slice of the country gave Trump 63% of its popular vote in 2024—a lead of **6.8 million votes** for Trump.

That is, the “Very Red States” gave Trump a bigger lead—both in terms of number of votes and percentage—than California and New York gave Harris.

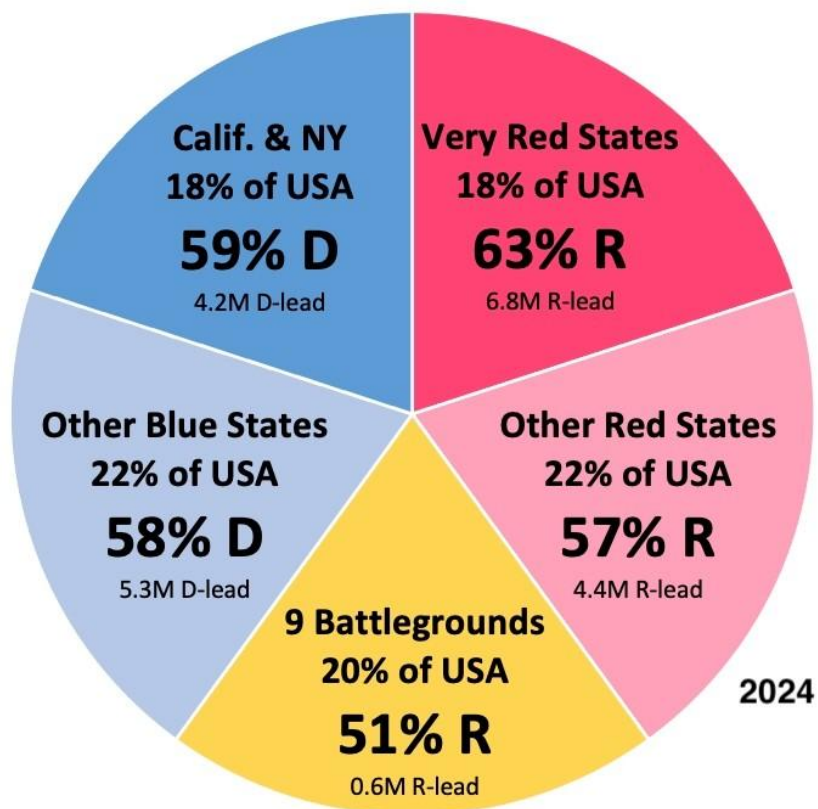
In short, California and New York would not dominate a nationwide vote for President.



Very Red States—18% of U.S.—63% Republican¹

Republican 2024 percent of two-party vote	Population	State	Trump	Harris	Trump lead
73%	576,851	Wyoming	192,633	69,527	123,106
71%	1,793,716	West Virginia	533,556	214,309	319,247
69%	1,839,106	Idaho	605,246	274,972	330,274
69%	779,094	North Dakota	246,505	112,327	134,178
67%	3,959,353	Oklahoma	1,036,213	499,599	536,614
66%	3,011,524	Arkansas	759,241	396,905	362,336
66%	4,505,836	Kentucky	1,337,494	704,043	633,451
65%	5,024,279	Alabama	1,462,616	772,412	690,204
65%	6,910,840	Tennessee	1,966,865	1,056,265	910,600
65%	886,667	South Dakota	272,081	146,859	125,222
62%	2,961,279	Mississippi	747,744	466,668	281,076
61%	4,657,757	Louisiana	1,208,505	766,870	441,635
61%	3,271,616	Utah	883,818	562,566	321,252
60%	1,961,504	Nebraska	564,816	369,995	194,821
60%	1,084,225	Montana	352,079	231,906	120,173
60%	6,785,528	Indiana	1,720,347	1,163,603	556,744
59%	6,154,913	Missouri	1,751,986	1,200,599	551,387
58%	2,937,880	Kansas	758,802	544,853	213,949
63%	59,101,968	Total	16,400,547	9,554,278	6,846,269

Moreover, there’s more to the United States than the above two groups. Three additional groups of voters—each having about a fifth of the population—complete the picture of the American electorate.



¹ This group of “Very Red States” consists of the 17 reddest states in the 2024 presidential election plus the 19th reddest state (Kansas). Kansas was included (instead of the 18th reddest state) in order to create a group of states with almost the same number of people as California and New York together. South Carolina appears in a group described later.

The third group consists of 16 “other blue states.” This group has 22% of the U.S. population. This group gave Harris 58% of their popular vote in 2024—a lead of **5.3 million votes**.

Other Blue States—22% of U.S.—58% Democratic

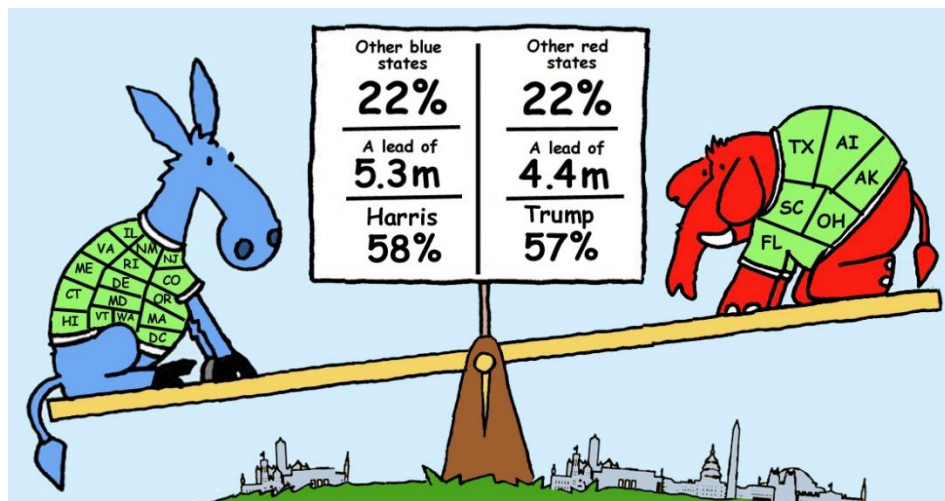
Republican 2024 percent of two-party vote	Population	State	Trump	Harris	Harris lead
47%	8,631,393	Virginia	2,075,085	2,335,395	260,310
47%	9,288,994	New Jersey	1,968,215	2,220,713	252,498
47%	2,117,522	New Mexico	423,391	478,802	55,411
46%	1,362,359	Maine	377,977	435,652	57,675
44%	12,812,508	Illinois	2,449,079	3,062,863	613,784
44%	5,773,714	Colorado	1,377,441	1,728,159	350,718
43%	1,097,379	Rhode Island	214,406	285,156	70,750
43%	3,605,944	Connecticut	736,918	992,053	255,135
43%	4,237,256	Oregon	919,480	1,240,600	321,120
43%	989,948	Delaware	214,351	289,758	75,407
41%	7,705,281	Washington	1,530,923	2,245,849	714,926
38%	1,455,271	Hawaii	193,661	313,044	119,383
37%	7,029,917	Massachusetts	1,251,303	2,126,518	875,215
35%	6,177,224	Maryland	1,035,550	1,902,577	867,027
34%	643,077	Vermont	119,395	235,791	116,396
7%	689,545	D.C.	21,076	294,185	273,109
42%	73,617,332	Total	14,908,251	20,187,115	5,278,864

The fourth group consists of six “other red states.” This group also has 22% of the U.S. population. This group gave Trump 57% of their popular vote in 2024—a lead of about **4.4 million votes**.

Other Red States—22% of U.S.—57% Republican

Republican 2024 percent of two-party vote	Population	State	Trump	Harris	Trump lead
59%	5,118,425	South Carolina	1,483,747	1,028,452	455,295
57%	29,145,505	Texas	6,393,597	4,835,250	1,558,347
57%	733,391	Alaska	184,458	140,026	44,432
57%	3,190,369	Iowa	927,019	707,278	219,741
57%	21,538,187	Florida	6,110,125	4,683,038	1,427,087
56%	11,799,448	Ohio	3,180,117	2,533,700	646,417
57%	71,525,325	Total	18,279,063	13,927,744	4,351,319

In other words, the “Other Blue States” and the “Other Red States” balance each other out quite closely—just as California and New York the “Very Red States” do.

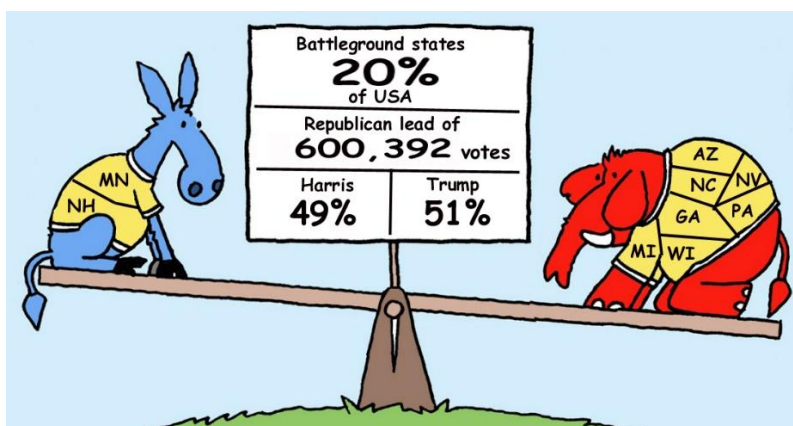


Finally, the fifth group consists of nine most closely divided “battleground” states. Each of these nine states could plausibly have gone to either party in 2024. This group of states has the remaining

fifth of the U.S. population. In 2024, these states gave Trump 50.8% of their two-party popular vote—a lead of 600,392 votes.²

Nine battleground states—20% of U.S.—50.8% Republican

Republican 2024 percent of two-party vote	Population	State	Trump	Harris	Trump lead
53%	7,151,502	Arizona	1,770,242	1,582,860	187,382
52%	10,439,388	North Carolina	2,898,423	2,715,375	183,048
52%	3,104,614	Nevada	751,205	705,197	46,008
51%	10,711,908	Georgia	2,663,117	2,548,017	115,100
51%	13,002,700	Pennsylvania	3,543,308	3,423,042	120,266
51%	10,077,331	Michigan	2,816,636	2,736,533	80,103
50.4%	5,893,718	Wisconsin	1,697,626	1,668,229	29,397
49%	1,377,529	New Hampshire	395,523	418,488	-22,965
48%	5,706,494	Minnesota	1,519,032	1,656,979	-137,947
50.8%	67,465,184	Total	18,055,112	17,454,720	600,392



In summary, the national popular vote is the result of adding up the popular votes from all five groups.

Role of the Five Groups in the 2024 presidential election

Republican 2024 percent of two-party vote	Population	Group	Trump	Harris	Lead
41%	59,739,472	California and New York	9,660,596	13,895,374	-4,234,778
63%	59,101,968	Very Red States	16,400,547	9,554,278	6,846,269
42%	73,617,332	Other Blue States	14,908,251	20,187,115	-5,278,864
57%	71,525,325	Other Red States	18,279,063	13,927,744	4,351,319
50.8%	67,465,184	Battleground States	18,055,112	17,454,720	600,392
50.7%	331,449,281	Total	77,303,569	75,019,231	2,284,338

² Under the current state-by-state winner-take-all method of awarding electoral votes, the nine battleground states received almost all (96%) of the campaign activity of the presidential campaign—251 of the 262 general-election campaign events in 2024. Meanwhile, presidential campaigns gave the first four groups (representing 80% of the American electorate) only 11 of the 262 general-election campaign events.