
ELECTION WEEKEND BRIEFING

GRASSROOTS VOTER PARTICIPATION IN THE SOUTH

The 2026 cycle, from the April court ruling to the last days of early voting

Prepared October 31, 2026. Election Day is Tuesday, November 3.

Early voting is running ahead of 2022 across much of the South.

Reports from Georgia, North Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, Tennessee, Virginia and Texas show early totals above the last midterm. What that means for Tuesday is not yet known.

Sources are listed on the last three slides.

Early voting: Georgia, North Carolina, Florida

GEORGIA

1.5M

early ballots through Oct 22

About 1.4 million at the same point in 2022. Georgia does not register voters by party.

NORTH CAROLINA

+37%

ahead of the comparable 2022 point

Over 1.2 million accepted early ballots. Growth by registration: Democrats 47%, unaffiliated 60%, Republicans about 2.6%.

FLORIDA

2.8M

ballots cast by Oct 26

Reported past the 2022 benchmark. In person: just over 600,000 registered Republicans, 505,000 Democrats. By mail: 604,000 Democrats, just over 500,000 Republicans.

Early voting: Texas, Tennessee, Virginia

TEXAS

6.3M

Texans had voted by Oct 28

Up 50% from 4.2 million at the same point in 2022, per an AP analysis. Travis County's in-person total ran 61% above 2022 after four days.

TENNESSEE

28%+

more ballots than 2022, in counties NewsChannel 9 covers

Hamilton County is up 89% and Polk County 133% on November 2022. No statewide total was given.

VIRGINIA

930K

early ballots through Oct 22

About 80% more than the comparable stage in 2022. Some definitions count Virginia as Southern, others do not.

Early voting: Louisiana

STATEWIDE

520,942

early votes through Oct 27

Up 38% from 377,428 in 2022 and past the state's previous midterm mark. In 2024 it topped 960,000.

BLACK VOTERS

+83%

more early votes than in 2022

179,094 ballots, up from 98,008. Black voters are about 34% of early voters, up from about 26%.

BY REGISTRATION

+69%

no-party and other early votes

No party: 94,791. Democrats: 221,066, up 39%.
Republicans: 205,085, up 27%.

Reading early-vote numbers

States count differently

Some reports count in-person votes only, others add mail ballots, and each compares with a different day in 2022.

Registration is not a vote

Party figures show how people registered, or a model's estimate. They do not show how anyone voted.

Mail ballots are still out

Many requested mail ballots have not come back, so today's totals capture only part of the expected vote.

Early voters skew older

In states that report age, voters 65 and older cast about 52% of early ballots.

April 29: Louisiana v. Callais

6–3

Supreme Court vote,
April 29, 2026

The Court held that Louisiana's second majority-Black congressional district was an unconstitutional racial gerrymander. Justice Alito wrote for the majority.

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act survives, but challengers now need strong evidence of intentional dilution. Justice Kagan wrote in dissent that the ruling "renders section 2 all but a dead letter."

The same day, Florida lawmakers approved a new congressional map that Texas Public Radio reports is aimed at flipping four Democratic House seats. Texas's latest map had been upheld two days earlier.

The response: All Roads Lead to the South

Thousands gathered across Alabama for a multigenerational rally on Black voting rights and redistricting.

FREEDOM SUMMER 2026

Organizers launched it to continue the legacy of the 1964 Mississippi voter drive.

BLACK VOTERS MATTER

Co-founded in 2012 by LaTosha Brown and Cliff Albright. Works across nine Southern states.

GEORGIA REGISTRATION CHECKS

The group urged Black voters to confirm their registration as the state increased challenges to its rolls.

May 16: Louisiana's closed primary

EARLY VOTE

206,749

early votes in the primary

Against 170,283 in the March 2024 presidential primary. Democrats cast 88,214 and Republicans 87,758.

AMENDMENTS

5 of 5

Landry-backed amendments rejected

Margins ran from 16 to 56 points, the second year in a row. The Power Coalition urged "No on All."

WHO VOTED

34%

Black share of primary voters (estimate)

Black voters are 31.8% of registered voters. Demographer John Couvillon made the estimate.

Church networks and Republican turnout

Conservative leaders worry white evangelicals could skip the midterms. CNN found little sign that national committees target them, so churches and outside groups carry the work.

FAITH & FREEDOM COALITION

Get-out-the-vote effort aimed at drop-off voters, who skip midterms.

MY GOD VOTES

Church-based registration, including a table in a Houston church lobby.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Its president urged pastors to “step up” and educate congregations.

CHAD CONNELLY

Former RNC faith director; 80+ pastor meetings in over 20 states.

Field operations: Republican and Democratic

RNC in Georgia

April 19: the RNC named Jeremy Brown its Georgia state director.

The plan is county-by-county and precinct-by-precinct, with volunteer recruiting and neighborhood team leaders.

Partners include the Georgia Republican Party and grassroots volunteers.

Swing Left's Ground Truth

The list grew from 33 House battlegrounds to 63 House, Senate and governor races.

Goal: 500,000 conversations of 10 minutes or more. A first-quarter pilot in 29 districts logged about 12,000 homes and 187,000 calls.

Southern targets include Georgia and Texas, where the Senate race is a “reach.”

Final push: the parties

REPUBLICAN SIDE

19+

states getting a presidential tele-rally

The RNC calls it a “72-hour sprint.” In-person stops included Mississippi and a Florida rally.

DEMOCRATIC SIDE

Georgia

Obama and Harris both campaigned there

Harris spoke in Macon and Atlanta. Democrats worked to mobilize supporters before Georgia’s early in-person voting ended Friday.

BOTH SIDES

44.8M

ballots cast nationally by Oct 29

23.6 million in person and 21.3 million by mail. An AP analysis puts that nearly 10 million above this point in 2022.

Final push: churches and nonpartisan groups

TEXAS CHURCHES

2,000+

churches committed to Black Out Sunday

The African American Pastors Coalition of North Texas set a goal of 1,000. Churches may arrange rides after worship.

NORTH CAROLINA

Wilmington

NAACP branch at St. Luke A.M.E. Zion Church

On Oct 25 members stood outside urging early and Sunday voting. Streets nearby were packed with cars.

ELECTION PROTECTION

Hotline

866-OUR-VOTE, a nonpartisan legal hotline

Volunteers include National Bar Association and National Urban League members. The plan puts attorneys on the ground in select states Tuesday.

What to watch after Tuesday

Turnout against 2022

Early totals run above the last midterm in several states. Final counts show whether that held through Tuesday.

Early and Election Day mix

Early voters skew older, so the Election Day electorate may look different from the early one.

Who turned out

Black voters are about 34% of Louisiana's early vote, up from 26% in 2022. Evangelical turnout is flagged in Texas, Georgia and South Carolina.

The maps

After Callais, a Houston law professor expects more Southern states to redraw minority opportunity districts.

These are open questions, not predictions. Election Day is Tuesday, November 3.

Sources: early voting

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[WUSF](#), Oct 26. Florida voters surge past the 2022 benchmark.

[NewsChannel 9](#), Oct 20. Early voting rises in Tennessee and Georgia.

[Scripps News](#), Oct 23. Early voting rises ahead of midterms.

[KPLC](#), Oct 28. Louisiana early voting up 38% statewide.

[Fox 8](#), Oct 28. Louisiana early voting numbers surge.

[WBRZ](#), Oct 27. Louisiana early voting passes the 2022 total.

[WAFB](#), Oct 28. 520,942 people early voted.

[KALB](#), Oct 30, 2024. Over 960K early votes cast in Louisiana.

[KALB](#), May 10. Louisiana early voting tops the 2024 primary.

[Louisiana Illuminator](#), May 16. Louisiana rejects amendments again.

[The Advocate](#). High Black voter turnout affected Louisiana's election.

Sources: ruling and organizing

[Texas Public Radio](#), Apr 29. Voting rights decision and redistricting.

[Weekly Press](#). Mass rally in Alabama and the fight over voting rights.

[NABJ Monitor](#). Georgia's Black voters urged to verify registration.

[Alabama Reporter](#). Black Voters Matter profile.

[CNN via KEYT](#), Oct 13. Republicans need evangelicals to turn out.

[Hoodline](#), Apr 19. RNC names Georgia state director.

NBC News, May 14. Democratic grassroots group to target more than 60 races (read through a mirror copy, so no link).

Sources: final days

AP via PBS NewsHour, Oct 30. Early voting surges as Trump reshuffles his schedule.

CBS News, Oct 30. 2026 elections live updates.

IBTimes Singapore, Oct 31. Final four days: where leaders are campaigning.

NBC DFW. Dallas church joins statewide Black Out Sunday voting initiative.

WECT, Oct 25. NAACP pushes early and Sunday voting in New Hanover County.

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Jul 31. Partnership to protect voters in 2026.