

# Congressional Voters

17.251

Fall 2004

# Turnout



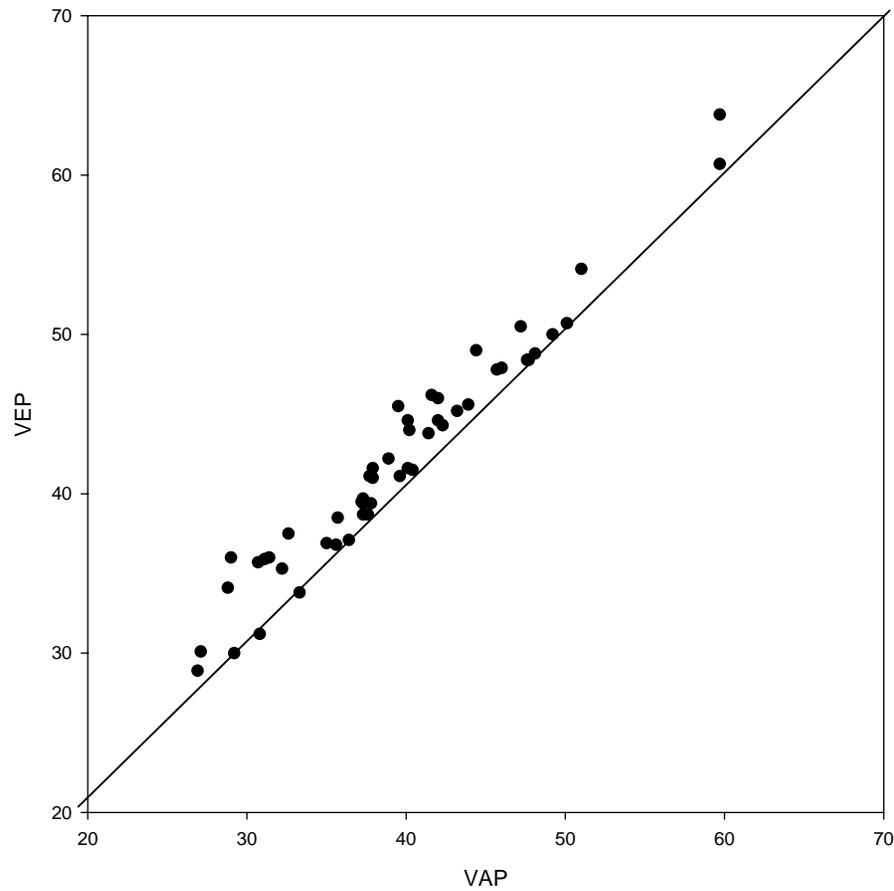
# How to Calculate Turnout Pct.

- Turnout Pct. = Turnout / VAP

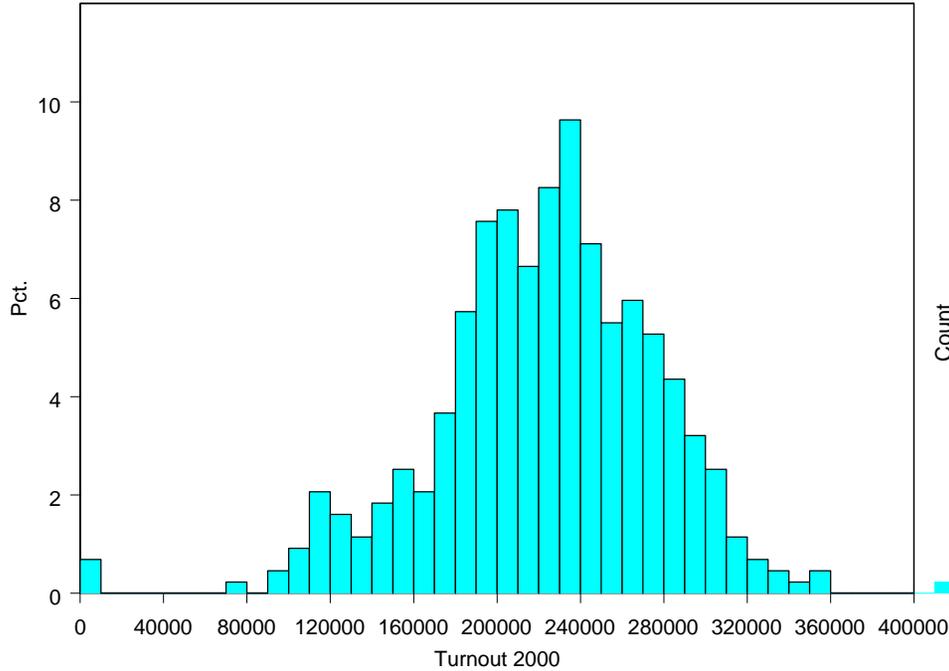
not

- Turnout / Registered
- New measure: Turnout / Voting eligible population

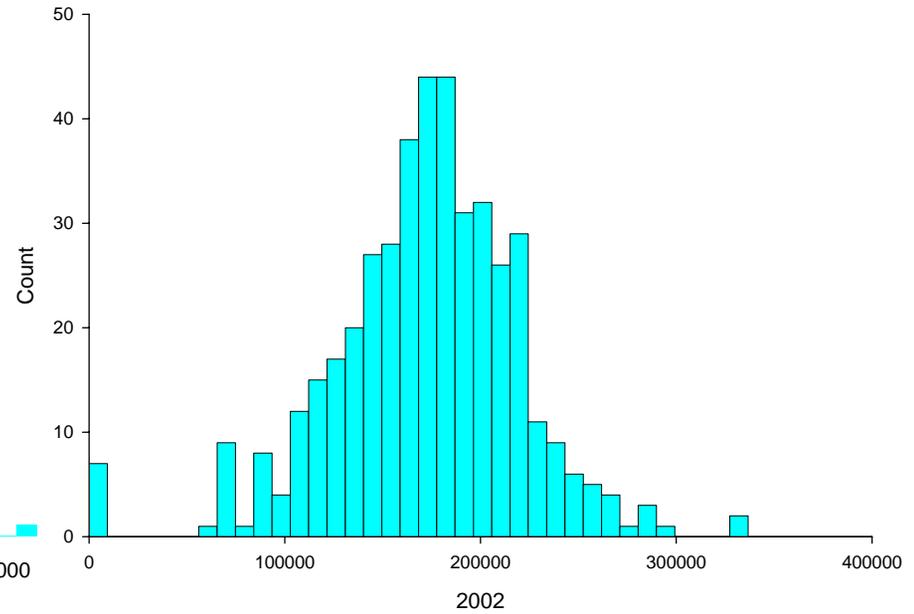
# Turnout/VEP vs. Turnout/VAP



# Variation in Turnout 1998 & 2000

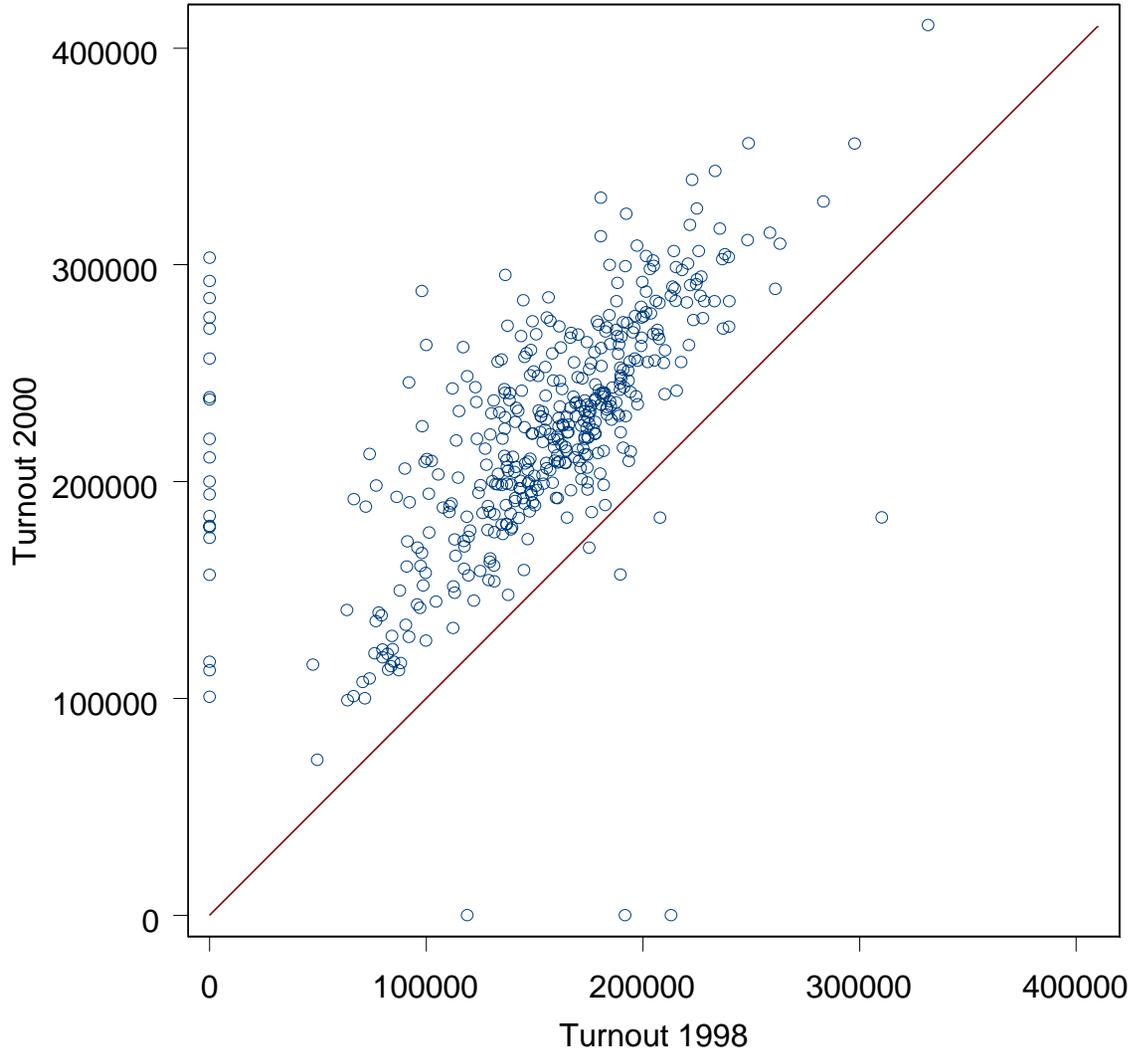


Mean = 223,000

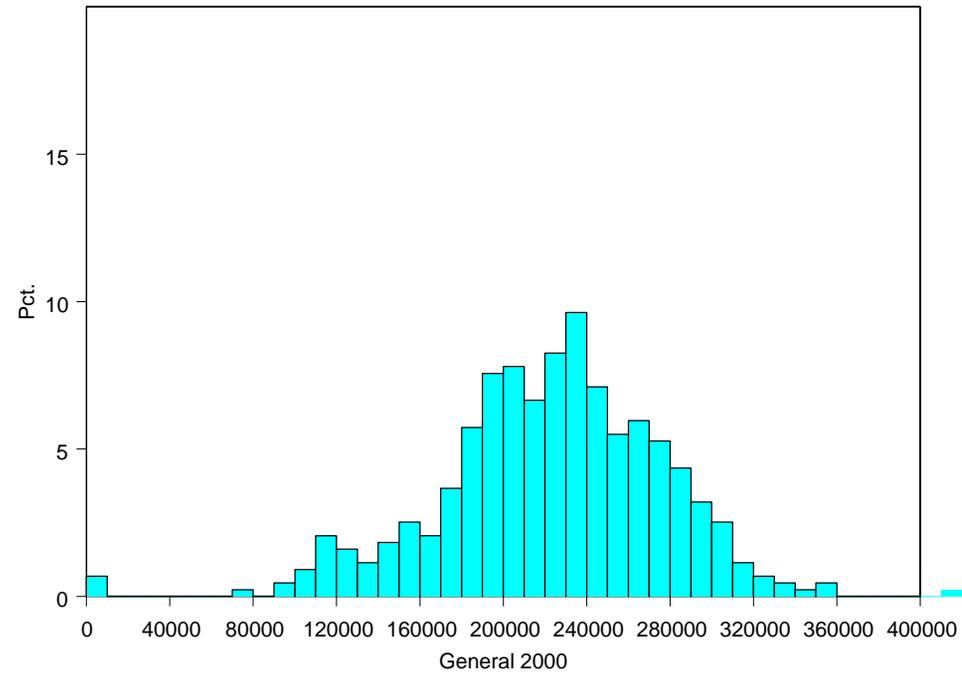
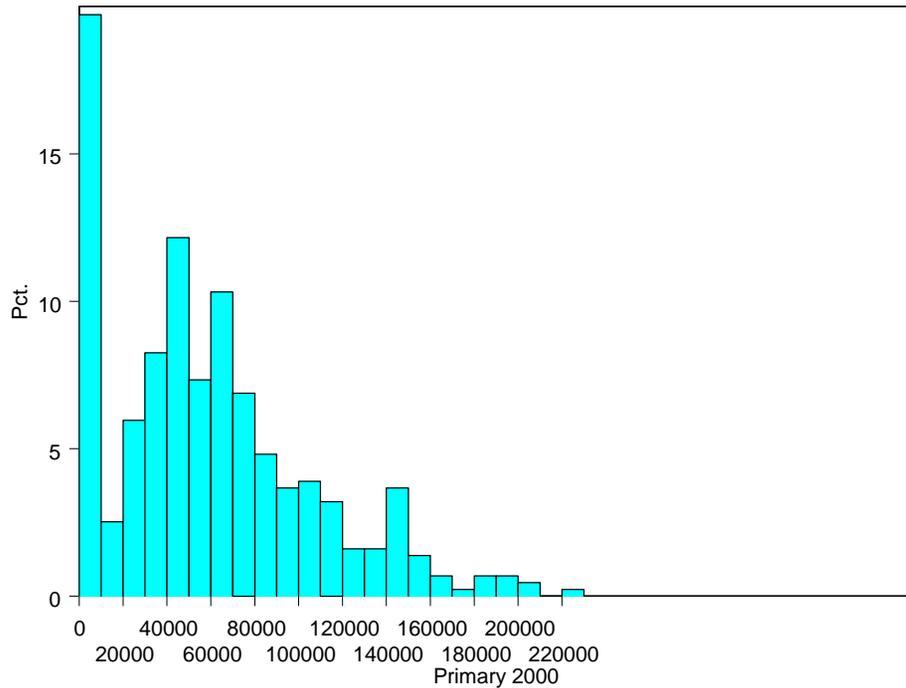


Mean = 171,469

# Correlation in Turnout 1998 to 2000



# Primary & General Election Turnout, 2000



# Explaining (Non-)Voting

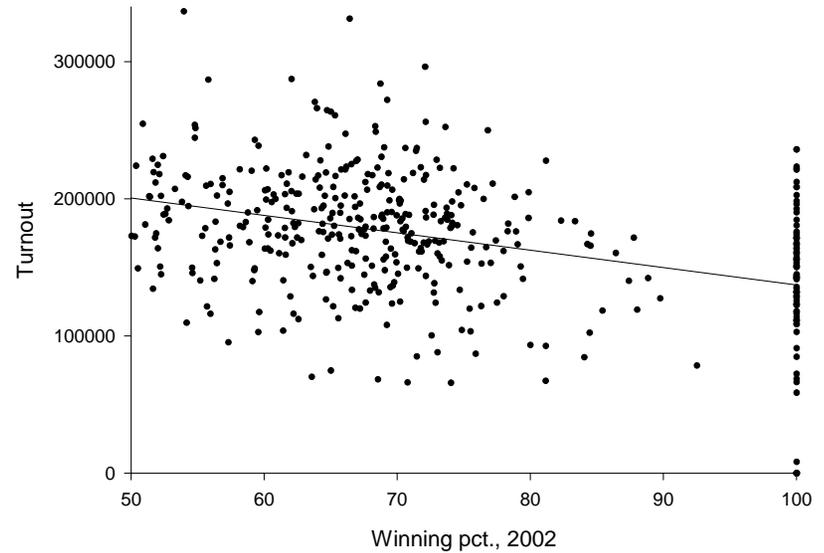
- Expected value of voting =
  - Benefit the individual receives as a consequence of the election outcome
  - Minus
  - The cost of voting

# Explaining (Non-)Voting

| State of the World w/out Citizen's Vote | Net Benefit if Citizen Abstains                   | Net Benefit if Citizen Votes                          | Condition under which Citizen Should Vote             |
|---|---|---|---|
| <i>D</i> wins by more than 1 vote       | $B^D_{\text{Citizen}}$                            | $B^D_{\text{Citizen}} - c$                            | Never   |
| <i>D</i> wins by exactly 1 vote         | $B^D_{\text{Citizen}}$                            | $B^D_{\text{Citizen}} - c$                            | Never   |
| <i>D</i> and <i>R</i> tie               | $(B^D_{\text{Citizen}} + B^R_{\text{Citizen}})/2$ | $B^D_{\text{Citizen}} - c$                            | $(B^D_{\text{Citizen}} - B^R_{\text{Citizen}})/2 > c$ |
| <i>R</i> wins by exactly 1 vote         | $B^R_{\text{Citizen}}$                            | $(B^D_{\text{Citizen}} + B^R_{\text{Citizen}})/2 - c$ | $(B^D_{\text{Citizen}} - B^R_{\text{Citizen}})/2 > c$ |
| <i>R</i> wins by more than 1 vote       | $B^R_{\text{Citizen}}$                            | $B^R_{\text{Citizen}} - c$                            | Never   |

# Salvaging the Calculus

- Candidate differential
- Costs of voting
- Closeness of election
  - Voter attention
  - GOTV
- Citizen duty

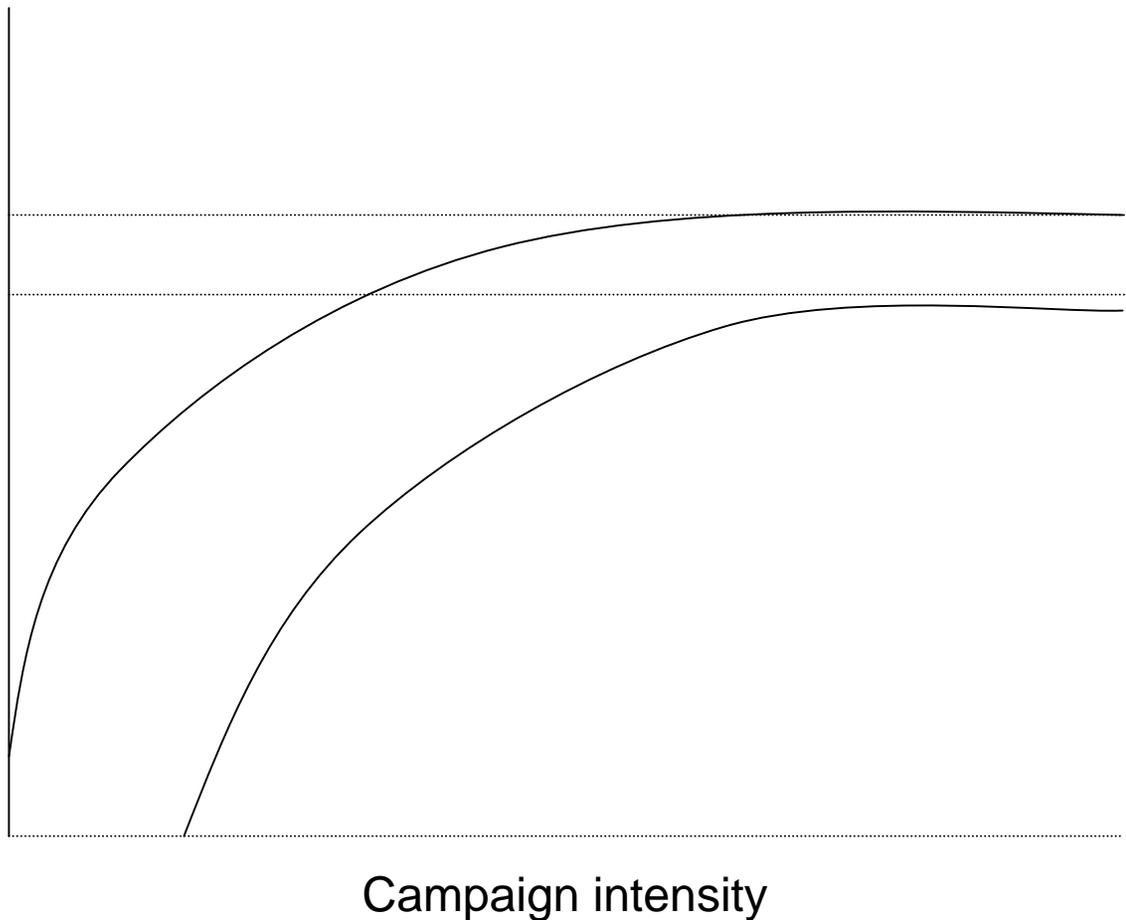


# Who is hurt/helped by turnout

- Naïve view: Dems helped by turnout

# Who is hurt/helped by turnout

- District view: the “out party”



# Deciding whom to support

- Ideology
  - Downsian logic directly
- Party ID
  - Downsian logic by proxy

# Party and Ideology Distance as Explanatory Factors in 2000 Cong'l Elections

| House    | Ideology of voter |      |      |       |
|----------|-------------------|------|------|-------|
| Party ID | Lib.              | Mod. | Con. | Total |
| Dem      | .86               | .81  | .70  | .81   |
| Ind.     | .54               | .60  | .47  | .50   |
| Rep      | .29               | .33  | .16  | .18   |
| Total    | .78               | .67  | .32  | .51   |

Source: 2000 ANES

Note: R's not asked ideological placement of House or Senate candidates

| Senate   | Ideology of voter |      |      |       |
|----------|-------------------|------|------|-------|
| Party ID | Lib.              | Mod. | Con. | Total |
| Dem      | .90               | .83  | .80  | .87   |
| Ind.     | .79               | .67  | .48  | .60   |
| Rep      | .28               | .09  | .15  | .16   |
| Total    | .84               | .61  | .34  | .54   |

# Overall voting effect, 2002 House election

|                      |   |                |
|----------------------|---|----------------|
| Party identification | Effect of changing from an Ind. to a Dem.               | 0.25<br>(0.02) |
| Ideology             | Effect of changing from a mod. To a lib.                | 0.07<br>(0.02) |
| Democratic incumbent | Effect of changing from a open seat race to a Dem. Inc. | 0.18<br>(0.02) |
| Constant             |   | 0.54<br>(0.02) |
| R <sup>2</sup>       |   | .49            |
| N                    |   | 586            |

# A Word about Primaries

- Party not a useful cue
- Not much research, but.....
  - Primary voters are different from general election voters
    - Primary voters are more ideologically extreme, but
    - Primary voters are more strategically sophisticated than general election voters

# The Ideological Purity/Electability Tradeoff

