

New York Voters Age 50 and Older

Voters age 50+ could outnumber younger voters by roughly 1.3 million in New York's 2026 general election.

If participation resembles the last two gubernatorial elections, approximately 3.7 million voters age 50+ could participate, compared with 2.4 million under 50 - about 61% of participants with known adult ages.

Historical baseline scenario based on the 2018 and 2022 gubernatorial elections; not a polling-based turnout forecast. Actual 2026 participation could differ.

62.5%

of identified 2022 general-election participants were age 50 or older

Older voters were 50.5% of registered adults that year. Their larger share at the polls is central to understanding a Governor election.

Prepared by Gotham Polling & Analytics for AARP New York
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Draft for AARP New York Review



Full report, pp. 12-16. Known-age adults. Identifiable histories do not establish complete turnout coverage.

THE ESSENTIAL FINDINGS

Five Key Findings

Each statement includes its population and comparison period so it can stand on its own.

1 Older voters had substantially more weight at the polls

In New York's identified 2022 general-election population, voters age 50+ made up 62.5% of known-age adult participants, compared with 50.5% of registered adults that year.

Full report, pp. 12, 16.

2 The younger primary rebound was overwhelmingly local

New York City accounted for 95.2% of the statewide increase in under-50 primary participants from 2024 to 2026. This annual-primary change is not a general-election forecast.

Full report, pp. 15, 217.

3 Unaffiliated participation grew as Democratic participation declined

From 2020 to 2024, identified general-election participation among unaffiliated New Yorkers increased by 106,545 while participation among voters recorded as Democrats declined by 96,683. These are changes in group size, not evidence of individual party switching.

Full report, pp. 13, 215.

4 The city also drove older general election growth

New York City supplied 94.6% of the statewide increase in general-election participants age 50+ from 2020 to 2024, even though its 2024 electorate remained younger than the rest of the state.

Full report, pp. 14, 216.

5 Stable registration can mask an older shift in participation

Long Island's registration stayed about 53.3% age 50+ from 2018 to 2026, while older participants increased their share in both the 2018-2022 and 2020-2024 general-election comparisons.

Full report, p. 185.

STATEWIDE PARTICIPATION

The electorate became older in both comparable cycles

Older participation increased modestly while younger participation fell. The older share rose in both the midterm and presidential comparisons.

Age 50+ share of general-election participants | bars start at zero



General election	Age 50+	Under 50
2018	3,645,856	2,522,436
2020	4,487,903	3,888,813
2022	3,713,573	2,231,798
2024	4,610,261	3,726,074

The younger decline matters to the older majority

Between 2018 and 2022, the older count increased 1.9%, while the under-50 count fell 11.5%. The stronger older share reflects both movements, rather than older growth alone.

Presidential elections drew more participants of both ages and a larger younger share. Comparing 2018 with 2022 and 2020 with 2024 keeps that normal election-cycle difference separate from the change within each cycle.

Full report, p. 12. Counts are identifiable participants; shares use age 18-49 plus age 50-120. A share of participants is not an individual turnout rate.

REGISTRATION AND THE GOVERNOR RACE

Balanced rolls can produce an older electorate

The last gubernatorial electorate had 1,481,775 more participants age 50+ than under 50.

Age 50+ share | registration at October 1 and participation on November 8, 2022



The current register is still nearly evenly divided

On October 1, 2026, registration included 6,747,496 voters age 50+ and 6,695,790 under 50. Older voters represented 50.2% of known-age adult registrants, compared with 50.3% in 2018.

Older influence crosses recorded party groups

In the 2022 general election, older Democratic women numbered 1,031,508. Older Republican women and men numbered 589,743 and 615,100, respectively; older unaffiliated women and men numbered 295,059 and 309,704. The older electorate is not a single partisan bloc.

What this means for the 2026 race

Governor Kathy Hochul faces Bruce Blakeman after a Governor election with a substantial older majority. One central question is whether the city-centered younger participation seen in the 2026 primary will carry into the much larger general election.

New York City supplied 30.4% of statewide general-election participation in 2022 but 54.1% of the 2026 primary population. Those are different electorates. Neither the primary nor recorded party enrollment predicts a winner.

Full report, pp. 12-16, 212, 214. Race context as reported October 13, 2026. Age shares use known-age adults; participation counts are not candidate votes.

RECORDED PARTY AGE AND SEX

Unaffiliated growth accompanied younger Democratic declines

Changes in the groups that participated altered the electorate. They do not establish individual party switching.

Recorded party	2020 general	2024 general	Change
Democratic	4,091,571	3,994,888	-96,683
Republican	2,152,907	2,190,249	37,342
Blank / Unaffiliated	1,663,331	1,769,876	106,545

These are full recorded-party counts, including people outside the age and sex groups shown below. Unaffiliated means no party enrollment; it does not mean undecided.

Younger Democratic losses were substantial

From 2018 to 2022, participation among Democratic-recorded women and men under 50 fell by a combined 299,793. From 2020 to 2024, younger Democratic women declined by 90,245 and younger Democratic men by 75,784, while older Democratic women increased by 36,604.

The sex balance differs within matching groups

2024 general-election group	Female	Male
Democratic age 50+	1,314,120	845,040
Republican age 50+	690,845	696,085
Republican under 50	355,118	438,816

Women made up 60.9% of the older Democratic group with recorded Female or Male sex. Older Republicans were nearly evenly divided; younger Republicans were predominantly male.

On the registration rolls, unaffiliated voters grew from 2,609,462 in 2018 to 3,454,481 in 2026. Their general-election participation also grew between 2020 and 2024, but registration and participation remain distinct measures.

Full report, pp. 12-13, 212, 215. Party and sex are recorded source attributes, not effective-dated historical affiliations or candidate preferences.

NEW YORK CITY AND THE REST OF THE STATE

The younger primary rebound was centered in the city

New York City supplied 95.2% of the statewide increase in under-50 primary participants from 2024 to 2026.

Increase in under-50 primary participants | 2024 to 2026 | counts



The statewide younger increase was 151,922. Even after that rebound, both age groups in the 2026 statewide primary remained smaller than in 2022. Supported primary contests and eligibility differ across years.

The city also supplied most of the older general election gain

From 2020 to 2024, New York City added 115,800 participants age 50+, accounting for 94.6% of the statewide older increase. Its younger primary rebound and its older general-election shift are separate findings.

Age 50+ share of general-election participants	2020	2024	Change
New York City	45.7%	49.6%	+3.9 points
Outside New York City	57.5%	58.2%	+0.7 points

The city's older share increased faster, even as it remained younger than the rest of the state. In 2024, it contributed 1,387,103 older participants, the largest older population of any region.

Full report, pp. 14-16, 212, 216-217. Annual primary counts deduplicate people across supported contests. Outside-city totals retain participants whose county was unassigned. Age shares use known-age adults.

TEN REGIONAL TAKEAWAYS 1 OF 2

Regional differences matter

The highest older share and the largest older population are different measures. County contributions also vary within a region.

Western NY Region R01

66.6% of the region's 2024 participants age 50+ came from Erie, about 265,300 people. Smaller counties could have higher older shares, while Erie supplied most of the region's older electoral weight.

Full report, p. 14.

Finger Lakes Region R02

11.6% growth in under-50 registration from 2018 to 2026 coexisted with younger participation declines in both the 2018-2022 and 2020-2024 general-election comparisons.

Wyoming coverage limits qualify the historical regional comparisons; see the interpretation notes.

Full report, pp. 35, 213.

Southern Tier Region R03

59.7% of 2024 general-election participants were age 50+, a population of 179,810. Broome supplied 53,208 of those older participants, or 29.6% of the regional older total.

Full report, p. 58.

Central NY Region R04

95.2% of the region's net participation decline from the 2018 to 2022 general elections came from Onondaga. Its loss of 9,340 participants concentrated the regional decline in its largest county.

Full report, p. 79.

North Country Region R05

6.3% growth in older participation accompanied a 1.2% increase among younger participants from 2018 to 2022. Older voters gained weight in an expanding electorate, a countertrend to the statewide younger decline.

Full report, p. 94.

TEN REGIONAL TAKEAWAYS 2 OF 2

Older influence takes different forms

An older majority may reflect growth, younger losses, or the concentration of participation in particular counties.

Mohawk Valley Region R06

62.0% of 2024 general-election participants were age 50+. Oneida supplied 45.3% of those older participants, concentrating much of the region's older numerical weight in one county.

Schoharie's incomplete 2018 and 2020 histories prevent a firm regional full-electorate growth claim.

Full report, p. 113.

Capital District Region R07

65.7% of the region's net participation increase from 2018 to 2022 came from Saratoga. The region expanded while statewide participation contracted, but its growth was heavily concentrated.

Full report, p. 130.

Hudson Valley Region R08

About 5,600 additional general-election participants from 2020 to 2024 masked a decline of about 4,700 in Westchester. Gains across the other six counties offset the loss in the largest county.

Full report, p. 151.

New York City Region R09

94.6% of the statewide increase in general-election participants age 50+ from 2020 to 2024 came from the city. New York's younger electoral center was also its main source of older participant growth.

Full report, pp. 14, 15, 216.

Long Island Region R10

About 53.3% age 50+ on the registration rolls in both 2018 and 2026 contrasts with an older shift at the polls. Older shares rose from 62.4% to 63.8% between the 2018 and 2022 general elections and from 55.7% to 57.0% between 2020 and 2024.

Full report, p. 185.

FIVE SELECTED CONGRESSIONAL RACES

Older majorities with different compositions

All five selected cohorts had older majorities in 2024. Histories follow October 1, 2026 registrants, including earlier votes wherever recorded; they are not complete past district electorates.

Congressional district NY-3

Tom Suozzi (D) vs. Michael LiPetri (R/Conservative)

2024 general election: 58.0% age 50+. The cohort included 52,634 unaffiliated participants age 50+ in 2024. Its 2026 unaffiliated registration exceeded Republican registration. This substantial population belongs in the Suozzi-LiPetri race picture; unaffiliated does not mean undecided.

Full report, pp. 193, 194.

Congressional district NY-4

Laura Gillen (D) vs. Jeanine Driscoll (R/Conservative) and Blay Tarnoff (Libertarian)

2024 general election: 54.7% age 50+. Even the youngest of these five 2024 cohorts had an older majority. From 2020 to 2024, older Democratic women increased by 5,100 and older Republican men by 3,892, showing expansion across affiliations.

Full report, pp. 197, 198.

Congressional district NY-17

Mike Lawler (R/Conservative) vs. Cait Conley (D/Working Families)

2024 general election: 55.4% age 50+. Both ages expanded from 2020 to 2024, but the older gain was 22,830 versus 2,040 under 50. About 92% of the net increase came from older participants; describing the district simply as a younger retreat would miss that distinction.

Full report, pp. 201, 202.

Congressional district NY-19

Josh Riley (D/Working Families) vs. Peter Oberacker (R/Conservative)

2024 general election: 59.8% age 50+. From 2020 to 2024, the older count grew by 22,446 and the younger count by 5,825. Older Democratic women and older Republican men posted similar gains. The stronger older majority cannot be assigned to one candidate.

Full report, pp. 205, 206.

Congressional district NY-21

Open seat: Blake Gendebien (D) vs. Anthony Constantino (R/Taxpayer Rights)

2024 general election: 61.8% age 50+. This was the oldest of the five selected cohorts in 2024, with the oldest 2026 registration profile as well. Both age groups grew in both comparable election pairs. The new candidates cannot be assumed to inherit a predecessor's votes.

Full report, pp. 209, 210.

Race context as reported October 13, 2026. D = Democratic; R = Republican. Shares use known-age adults in each fixed cohort. Age is measured at each election; aging and retention affect comparisons. Recorded party does not establish candidate support.

METHODOLOGY AND INTERPRETATION

What the findings measure

The study describes identifiable participation and reconstructed registration. Its 2026 historical baseline is conditional on comparable participation, not a prediction.

Participation and registration use different populations

Statewide, regional and county histories include identifiable participants across voter statuses, including people who later left the register. Historical registration is reconstructed from application dates, status and dated evidence. Later participation and undated purges require assumptions; they do not establish a certified historical roster. The October 5, 2026 source-file timestamp is not a certified administrative cutoff.

The 2026 outlook is a historical baseline

The scenario averages the 2018 and 2022 gubernatorial-election counts within each age group: 3.68 million age 50+ and 2.38 million under 50, or 6.06 million known-age adults. The difference is 1.30 million; the ratio of averaged counts is 60.8% age 50+. This is arithmetic, not a predictive model, official estimate or confidence interval. Competitiveness, demographics, current conditions and source-history coverage may change the outcome. No 2026 turnout rate or linear trend is inferred.

Shares depend on age and recorded attributes

Age 50+ means 50-120; under 50 means 18-49. Shares use their sum, excluding missing or invalid age, measured at the relevant date. Participant share is not turnout rate. Female/Male comparisons exclude unresolved sex; full party totals can include people outside the displayed age/sex groups. Recorded party and sex may differ from a person's attributes at a past election. Unaffiliated means no party enrollment, not candidate preference. Group growth does not establish individual party switching.

Primaries and district histories have defined limits

Annual primary histories count each person once across supported contests. Contests and eligibility differ, so these populations do not forecast general elections. Congressional histories follow the five selected districts' October 1, 2026 registered cohorts, including earlier votes wherever recorded. They are not complete past district electorates. Aging and retention affect comparisons; historical registration on fixed district boundaries remains unavailable.

Historical coverage remains incomplete

Schoharie's 2018/2020 general histories and dependent Mohawk Valley changes require caution. Schuyler's 2020 county assignments lack proven full coverage. Wyoming historical coverage and Suffolk's 2020 annual-primary coverage remain qualified. Missing histories are not assumed random or imputed. The earlier September 2024 file is not a complete October roster; some county growth directions depend on that baseline. Gotham's ten established regions are not AARP-defined. Compare midterms with midterms and presidential elections with presidential elections.

Full report, pp. 12, 211-214. Full definitions, baseline source counts and county coverage qualifications.

Source for this brief: accompanying draft report, New York Voter Participation and the Influence of Voters Age 50 and Older, Gotham Polling & Analytics for AARP New York, October 2026.