MONROE COUNTY
BOARD OF ELECTIONS

You're Right To Vote.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Lisa Polito Nicolay
Commissioner

Peter Elder
Deputy

Jackie Ortiz
Commissioner

Natalie Sheppard
Deputy

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

MISSION STATEMENT

MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

WE WILL PROVIDE, AS A NEW YORK STATE MANDATED DEPARTMENT OF MONROE COUNTY, THROUGH A SKILLED AND DEDICATED STAFF, IN COLLABORATION WITH FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY AND LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES, FOR THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF VOTER PARTICIPATION IN HONEST AND FAIR ELECTIONS FOR ALL THE CITIZENS OF MONROE COUNTY NEW YORK.

2021 IMPROVEMENTS

- In 2021, the Monroe County Board of Elections contracted with Accupay Systems to handle all election inspector payroll for the General Election. MCBOE successfully processed payroll for over 2,000 election inspectors for both the General Election and Early Voting. This resulted in inspectors receiving their paychecks earlier than in previous years. The Accupay system allowed the BOE to assist voters with payroll related questions, whereas in previous years we would forward their calls on to the towns or city in which they had worked.

- The MCBOE increased the number of Early Voting sites from twelve in 2020 to fourteen in 2021.

- The BOE created an online training portal for inspectors. This was offered to any inspector who had previously taken in-person training, to increase the number of inspectors that we can train prior to Election Day.

- The Board of Elections purchased "Vote Here/Vote Aqui" lawn signs for GE21 to place at every poll site to further assist voters in locating their poll site and its appropriate entrance door.

2021 IMPROVEMENTS - CONTINUED

- A major accomplishment of the MCBOE was the handling of Election Night Reporting. In previous years, the town clerks would choose people to upload the results from each town hall. Often, the BOE would not know some of those people and some of whom were on the ballot or directly employed by those candidates. For GE21, two BOE employees were stationed at 6 different sites throughout the county to receive the Election results data cards. These BOE employees uploaded the results remotely from these locations. This allows for the BOE to take ownership of such an important task, strengthens our chain of custody and further upholds our election integrity.

- NYS enacted a new law requiring a manual recount of any race that was within .05 % or 20 votes which ever is less. This would have taken months if done historically with pencil and hash marks. The MCBOE used a system of excel spreadsheets and calculators, created by an employee, and a more accurate recount was done in considerably less time.

- In previous years, BOE staff used a printed checklist to receive the ballot bags back to the BOE on election night. This year that process was automated by use of a bar code and hand-scanner system thus improving both the accuracy and efficiency of the process.

- To recruit additional election inspectors, the MCBOE placed digital recruitment ads on websites, local radio and social media. We also tried to increase our presence on social media in an effort to extend our community outreach.

MANDATORY RECOUNTS 2021

NYS enacted a new law requiring a manual recount of any race that was within .05 % or 20 votes which ever is less.

In 2021, this new requirement mandated a county-wide recount in the Primary and General Election.

This would have taken months if done historically with pencil and hash marks.

The MCBOE used a system of a simplified viewer interface to mirror the look of a ballot and provide for a click and count method, created by an employee. A more accurate recount was done in considerably less time.

BUDGET 2021

- The entire budget of the MCBOE is charged back to the taxpayers of Monroe County. The total adopted budget for the MCBOE in 2021 was $10,450,342. This represents a decrease of $634,339 from the amended 2020 budget, and an increase of $536,406 over the 2020 adopted budget. Our MCBOE budget was allocated to the following areas:

- Personnel costs

- Benefits

- Data processing charges

- Rent

- Voting machine parts and repair costs

- Postage and office supplies

- Commercial services which include: ballot printing, Accupay Systems payroll, election security, envelope printing, & voting machine delivery

- Professional services which include: election inspectors, election coordinators & site chairs, Spanish interpreters, rental of city polling sites, printing costs, public notices, transportation of voting machines, record keeping, and Constant Contact email service

BUDGET COMPARISON BY YEAR

Adopted Budget

Bar chart showing Adopted Budget by year:
- 2016: ~$7,800,000.00
- 2017: ~$6,500,000.00
- 2018: ~$7,000,000.00
- 2019: ~$7,500,000.00
- 2020: ~$9,900,000.00
- 2021: ~$10,500,000.00

Legend: Adopted Budget
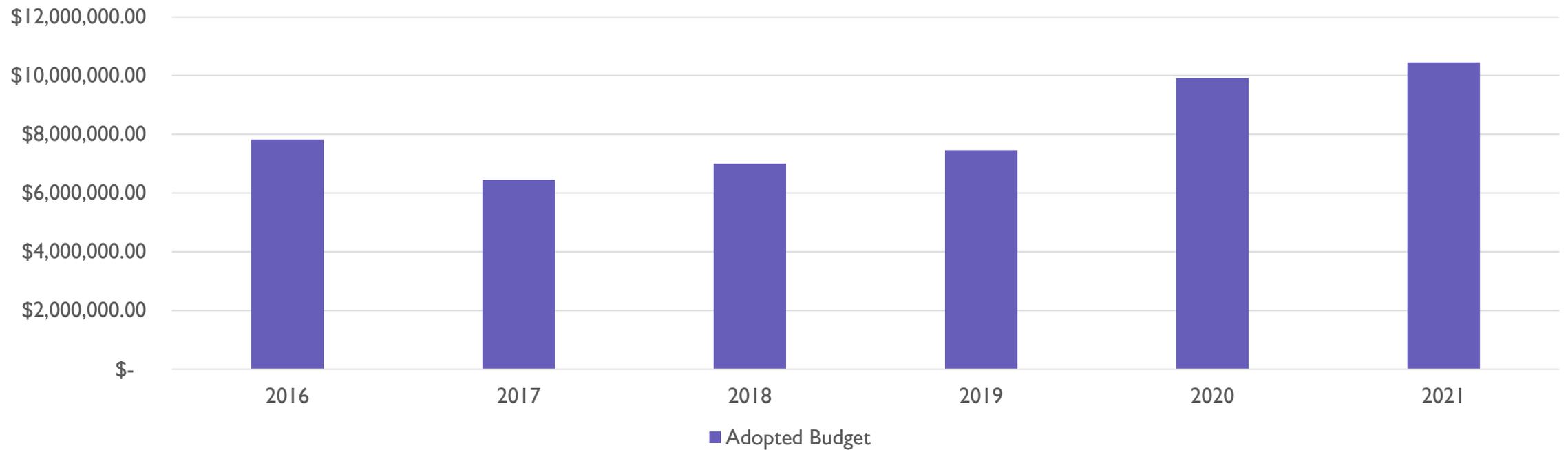
STAFF 2021

The Monroe County Board of Elections (MCBOE) conducts all National, State, County, City, Town, and Village elections held within Monroe County. Although the Board of Elections is a county agency, the structure, responsibilities, and duties are mandated by New York State Election Law and Federal Law. The New York State Board of Elections provides regulations on how to administer proper Election procedures to meet both Federal and State Election Law.

Two Election Commissioners (one Republican and one Democrat) together manage the MCBOE, each serving a staggered four-year term. The county leaders of each political party appoint the Commissioners. The Commissioners are each assisted by a Deputy Commissioner as required per Election Law 3-204.

- In 2021 the Monroe County Board of Elections employed 44 full-time employees as well as an additional 6-10 seasonal staff members at various points throughout the year. MCBOE staff equally represents individuals registered in the Republican or Democratic Parties as mandated by New York State Election Law.

- The MCBOE, pursuant to § 9-208(4), performed a recanvass for both the Primary and General Election in 2021. This is a very tedious and time-consuming process that often requires both additional staffing and overtime for our employees. As always, BOE employees stepped up to the plate to complete the job.

POLLING LOCATIONS 2021

Securing polling locations that meet our required needs (especially post COVID-19) is always challenging. Ideally, we want spacious areas that are fully ADA accessible, offer ample parking and lighting, and provide sufficient cellular connectivity. Moving forward, our goal is to provide consistent polling locations to all voters. This is a good example of where quality really is more important than quantity.

By the close of 2021, we completed a poll site inventory of all sites including documenting square footage, parking spaces, ADA accessibility, cellular connectivity and more. This will provide the information necessary to establish a minimum threshold for all polling locations, further working towards our goal of uniform, fair and accessible locations for all voters in Monroe County.

In 2021 we provided 269 polling locations for the Primary Election and 267 in the General Election.

TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT 2021

- MCBOE continued to implement a host of new policies and procedures in regards to Inspectors, Site Chairs and Coordinators to make Election Day in 2021 run as smoothly as possible. Election Inspectors must ensure fair and honest Elections. Qualifications to be an Election Inspector are:

  - Be a registered voter

  - Be a resident of the County in which one will serve

  - Attend an annual training session and pass an examination

  - Speak, read and write the English language

  - Not hold any public office, be a candidate for public office, be a party position to be voted on by the voters of the district in which the Inspector would be working, or be the spouse, parent or child of any such candidate

Monroe County

Election Inspector

**Serve Your Community
Work Election Day Nov. 2!**

Hiring Now • Paid Training • $14/hr

Visit & Sign Up: monroecounty.gov/elections

Sign Up:
1. Open Camera
2. Scan QR Code
3. Sign Up & Join!

TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT 2021 – CONTINUED

- Taking what was learned from the primaries on June 22, the MCBOE hired additional training staff, improved processes and procedures, stressed inspector responsibilities and created several training videos. This included additional sanitary measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- MCBOE held 145 classes that were 2.5 hours per class and appointed 3,394 Election inspectors. It remains a challenge to find inspectors to work Elections. With the COVID-19 pandemic this year, this was even more evident. The training team was able to limit training to 25 people per class. Inspectors practiced social distancing and wore masks adhering to COVID-19 guidelines.

- https://form.jotform.com/212076325602144 was created as a quick and efficient way to have Inspectors self-register for training at their convenience.

HIGH SCHOOL LEAP PROGRAM

In an effort to promote civic engagement amongst our youth, the Monroe County Board of Elections launched the Student Leaders Engaged as Poll-workers (LEAP) Program.

The MCBOE reached out to Leadership in every School District in Monroe County as a recruitment effort seeking participation of High School students.

A total of sixty-four students expressed interest with a handful of students who were able to work General Election Day as a LEAP Poll-worker in the 2021 inaugural year. The Monroe County Board of Elections is developing more recruitment efforts in hopes to gain greater participation in the LEAP program for 2022.

VOTER REGISTRATION 2021

In 2021, MCBOE had approximately 484,590 registered voters compared to 489,494 in 2020. Forms were distributed by various groups, and through the counter box outreach program at banks, post offices, Town and City halls, schools, etc. The Department of Motor Vehicles automatically registers individuals to vote. Merging these into the Election Management System is cumbersome. A great number of duplicates are provided in these reports.

Election Management System

- NTS Election Management System is one of the most critical parts of the Monroe County Board of Elections operations. It contains scanned images of each voter's registration forms, affidavits, absentees, returned mail, etc. Moving forward we are looking for an updated system that will be user friendly and have additional components.

VOTER REGISTRATION 2021 – ACTION PLAN

COVID-19 effectively squelched any ability to coordinate or host voter registration events. Public gatherings were limited and COVID-19 election related responsibilities took priority.

Hopefully, information sessions throughout the community can be offered by zoom or Skype with the goals of providing awareness to critical deadlines and processes relevant to participating in the electoral process. Election Law has been changing rapidly and it is important to share this information through outreach. Where possible, promotional/awareness materials suitable for social media were available on the MCBOE website.

- The Rochester City School District has expressed interest in developing a pre-registration program as part of student enrollment forms upon registering for the school year. MCBOE will assist in providing materials, information and work collaboratively to ensure its success.

- The Board will continue being responsive to media requests, provide press releases and media access to the BOE and poll sites, ensuring transparency and appropriate coverage of Elections.

- Postal program - Each post office in Monroe County is delivered 100 registration forms and a counter box. Instructions are provided to each office to contact the MCBOE when supplies run low.

- School program - Update comprehensive list of HS, Universities and Continuing Education facilities, notifying them that registration forms and flyers with 2021 registration cut off dates are available

- Media - Commissioners/Deputy Commissioners attend radio and television shows when the opportunity is presented. During all media interviews, registration instructions, deadline and new laws are discussed. The Board also prepares press releases when deadlines approach.

- Print resources, posters, and presentations are available for the public and provided in Spanish, as well.

ABSENTEE VOTING 2021

Absentee Ballots

- For the 2021 Primary Election MCBOE processed over 2,703 new absentee ballot applications, and 7,683 General Election. A total of 7,685 ballots were tallied from absentee voters. These numbers cannot even compare to the 2020 processing of 131,871 absentee ballot applications for the General Election.

- MCBOE once again utilized absentee ballot drop boxes for elections in 2021. These secure boxes were placed at every early voting location, as well as every site for the Primary and General Election.

AFFIDAVIT / COURT ORDER VOTING 2021

Affidavit Ballots – this type of voting allows someone who cannot vote on a machine the ability to still cast a provisional ballot that will then be ruled on by the MCBOE prior to being counted. This typically happens when a voter is not registered, has moved or changed names.

- In 2021, MCBOE processed 113 Affidavit Ballots in the Primary and 674 for the General Election.

Court Order Ballots – this type of voting is similar to an affidavit but with a court / judge deciding to allow a voter to vote and have the ballot counted immediately on a machine.

- MCBOE processed 5 court orders for the Primary Election and 4 prior to the General Election, and 8 on the General Election day.

VOTING MACHINES 2021

- The County of Monroe owns and operates a fleet of 762 optical scanning voting machines, including Image Cast Voting Machines (IC1), Image Cast with Ballot Marking Devices Voting Machines (IC2), and 20 ICE machines, which are all housed in a 30,000 square foot Service Center. These machines were utilized in 825 Election districts throughout Monroe County during the General Election. They are each tested annually as required by the New York State Board of Elections.

- Poll Pads make certain voters only vote once, and are not able to go to another center and cast a ballot or go to a district specific site on Election Day. Poll Pads communicate via a secure network connection and only transmit non-personal information to update files, thus ensuring voters are given the correct ballot for where they live.

VOTER SECURITY 2021

There are many checks and balances in place to process voter registration forms, absentee ballot requests and ballot counting:

- The MCBOE verifies against other government records, annual verification mailing, PO changes of address, State and Federal address changes, death records from the Department of Health, and signature verification.

- Absentee Ballots are not counted on Election night because they must be compared to voters from early and day-of voting polling sites to ensure each voter only votes once.

AUDITS AND CYBER SECURITY 2021

After each Election, ballots from three percent of all the machines used (which machines to audit are chosen in a random draw) are recounted using a separate NYSBOE approved audit system and the results are compared against the election day counts. This audit is also performed for absentee ballots. In addition, paper tapes are pulled from the voting machines and are used to compare the total ballots cast against the totals reported Election night. Finally, every polling site is required to provide a detailed reconciliation of the ballots used, which we also review to compare against the actual ballots cast.

MCBOE participates in the Elections Cyber Security Remediation Grant Program. By utilizing a grant for $262,000 from the NYSBOE and working together with Monroe County Information Services, elections in Monroe County are safe and secure.

CURES 2021

If an absentee ballot was received by the MCBOE but was missing a (or had an incorrect) signature, unsealed, or lacked a witness statement for a voter's mark, it could not be counted.

In an effort to correct this type of ballot, a MCBOE staff person called, emailed, and sent out a cure letter. The error was explained and the voter was asked to sign and return a cure form correcting the issue. When returned, these forms were attached to the voter's absentee ballot.

In 2021 MCBOE received 113 absentee ballots in need of a cure. Of those, 81 were returned, cured and able to be counted.

VOTER ACCESSIBILITY 2021

- EVERY polling location is ADA accessible!

- In 2021 the MCBOE continued its commitment to improving accessibility to the election process for all persons. The BMD (IC2) allows people with almost any disability to vote independently and is available at every polling site.

- MCBOE printed election materials, such as the voter registration form, absentee ballot request, and "Voter's Bill of Rights" are available in Spanish and Braille.

- American Sign Language interpreters were added to select/some early voting and election day sites.

- Accessible absentee ballots for voters who are blind or visually impaired were once again available for both the Primary and General 2021 Elections.

EARLY VOTING 2021

- Voters can early-vote at any location.   It can occur near their workplace, school or church, not necessarily their home Election district. Electronic Poll Pads allow voter data to be available at each location.

- None of the votes cast during early voting are counted until Election Day. Standards for protecting ballots and memory cards are extensive. A daily audit of each location is required.

- Early Voting began in 2019 with seven locations and a dismal turnout. It was incredibly underutilized the first year. In 2020 an amazing 105,712 voters took advantage of the nine days and 12 locations and voted early. This influenced the MCBOE's decision to add two more early voting locations for 2021. Unfortunately only 16,390 voters took advantage of Early Voting in 2021. These polar changes in voter participation are very challenging to plan for.

Eastside Sites:

6. SUNY Empire
680 Westfall Rd Rochester, NY 14620

7. Henrietta Library
625 Calkins Rd, Rochester, NY 14623

8. Irondequoit Library
1290 Titus Ave Rochester, NY 14617

9. PCC Community Room
1985 Baird Rd, Penfield, NY 14526

10. Perinton Square Mall
6720 Pittsford Palmyra Rd, Fairport, NY 14450

11. Webster Library
980 Ridge Rd Webster, NY 14580

City of Rochester Sites:

1. David F. Gantt Center
700 North St Rochester, NY 14605

2. Boys & Girls Club
500 Genesee St Rochester, NY 146011

3. Sibley Square
250 E Main St Rochester, NY 14604

4. Edgerton Rec
41 Backus St Rochester, NY 14608

5. Norton Village Rec
350 Waring Rd Rochester, NY 14609

Westside Sites:

12. Town of Chili Senior Center
3235 Chili Ave Rochester, NY 14624

13. North Greece Rd Church
1039 N. Greece Rd Rochester, NY 14626

14. Sweden Clarkson Community Center
4927 Lake Rd Brockport, NY 14420

Oct. 23-31, 2021
Early Voting

Early Voting is available to **all voters in Monroe County**. Voters can choose to vote at any of the 14 sites in the county from **Oct. 23-31, 2021.**

Polling Hours:

Sat & Sun: 9am-3pm

M, W & F: 9am-5pm

Tu & Th: 11am-8pm

INFORMATION AND PUBLICATIONS 2021

The MCBOE website, https://www.monroecounty.gov/Elections has a tremendous amount of up-to-date, public information available. One can obtain information about voter registration, polling locations, maps, petition requirements, party enrollment, early voting information, elected officials, how to run for office, Election results, absentee voting, and there is even a real-time interactive voter application.

New in 2021 was the Monroe County Board of Elections Facebook Page. This social media platform provides an easy and accessible way to share information, stay updated, and help engage the community in the electoral process.

@votemonroecounty

2021 SUMMARY

The MCBOE found 2021 to be a bit less stressful than 2020. However, 2021 had its own difficulties. Poorly thought out new laws including automatic hand recount caused both the Primary and General elections to drag out additional weeks and costs. We continue to collaborate with the New York State Board and Election Commissions across our state to incorporate new laws and regulations to positively affect all voters in Monroe County and assist them in their right to vote.

The Commissioners are proud of the work completed in 2021. Deadlines were met and certifications to New York State were timely. The MCBOE continued its legacy of administering fair, free and open Elections for each and every voter in Monroe County. This is possible because we have the greatest bi-partisan team in the state!

VOTER TURNOUT BY PARTY
2021 GENERAL ELECTION
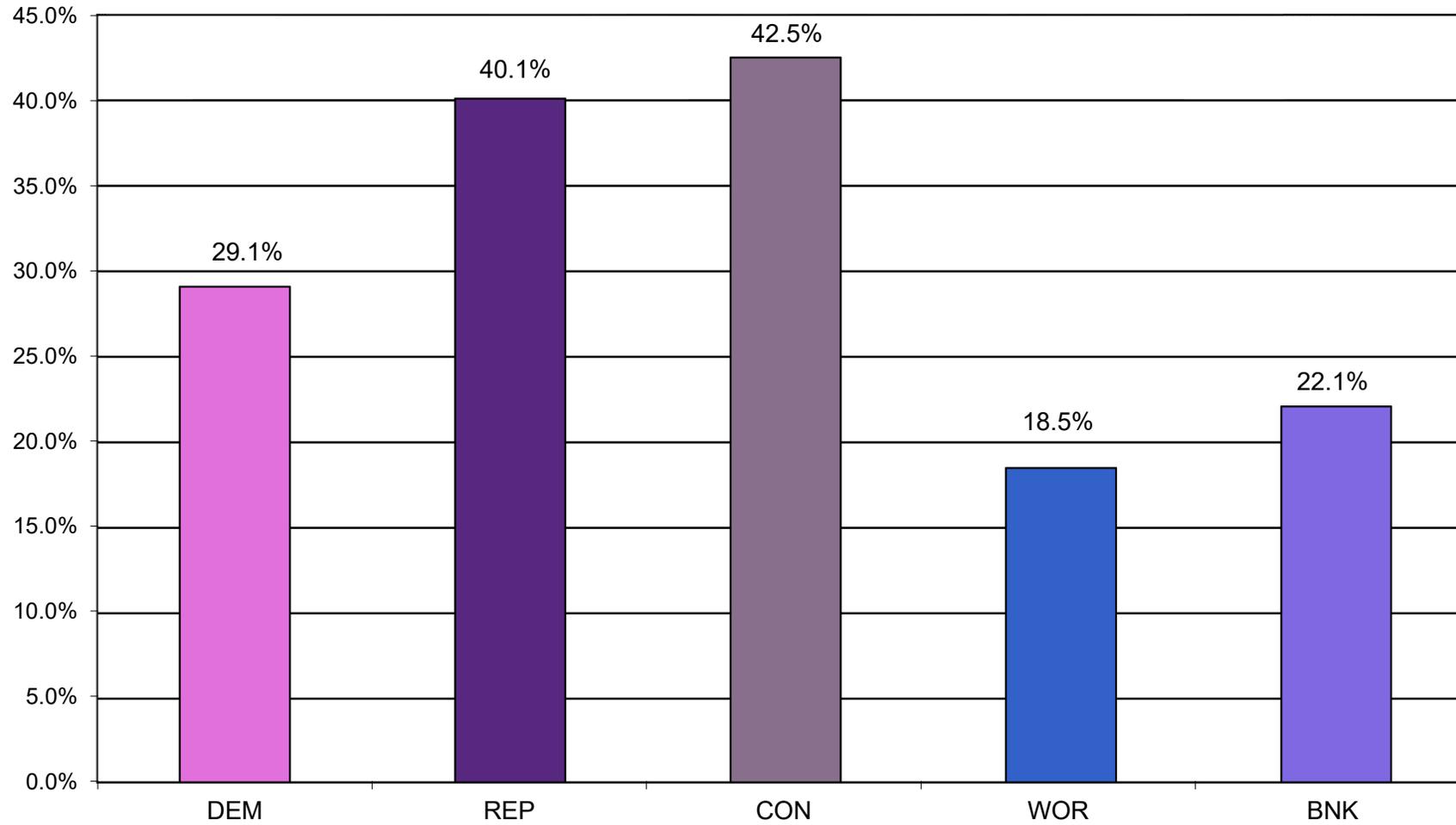
COMPARISON OF TURNOUT BY AGE GROUP
2021 GENERAL ELECTION

	No DOB	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
■Democratic	15.9%	7.2%	12.7%	22.1%	25.7%	36.1%	49.6%
■Republican	20.3%	13.3%	16.0%	27.9%	36.5%	47.4%	54.0%
□Blanks	22.8%	4.5%	6.1%	13.7%	21.1%	33.1%	43.6%
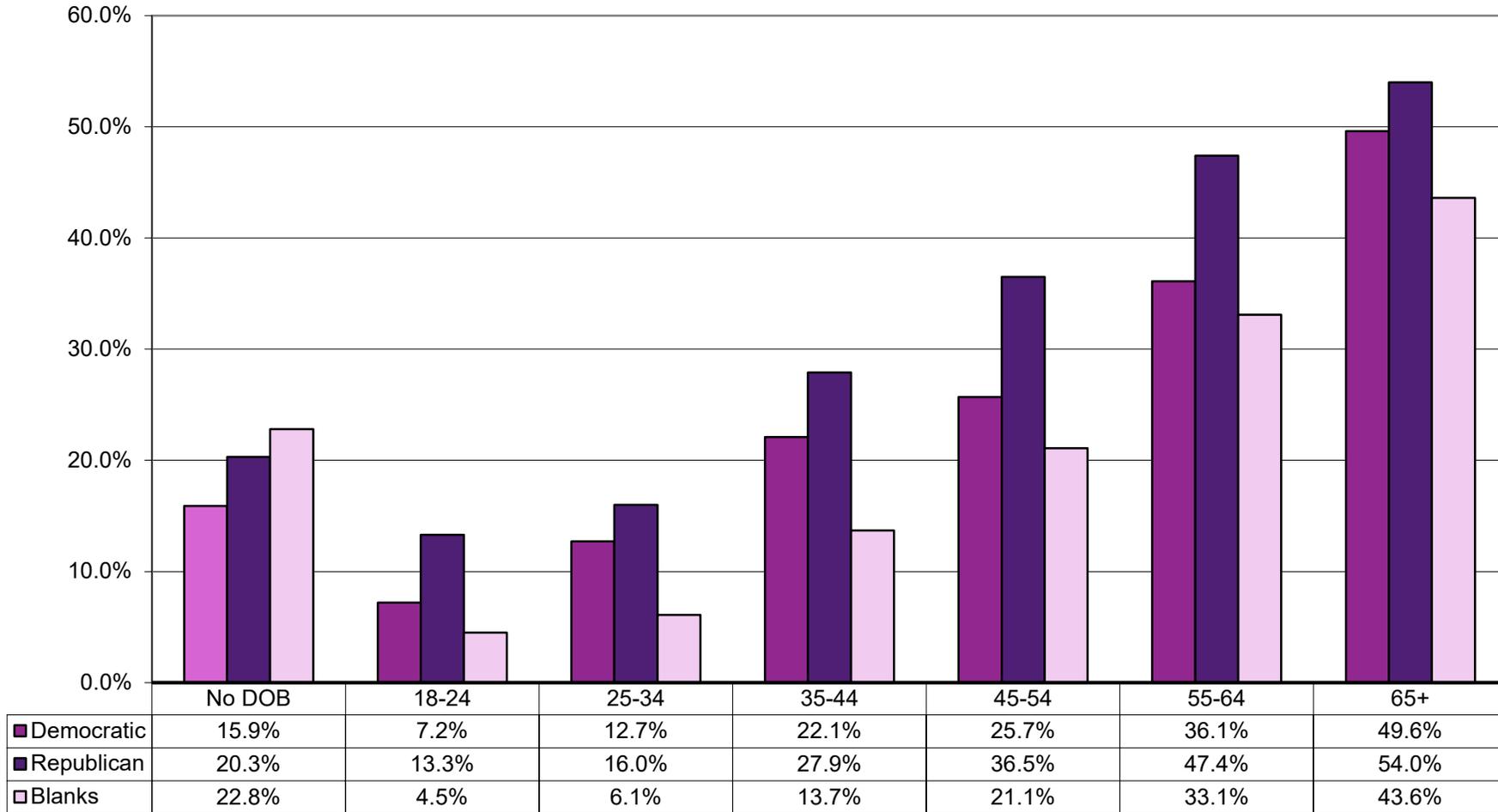
VOTER TURNOUT - TOTAL BY GENDER
2021 GENERAL ELECTION

- Males
- Females
- Undeclared

0.1
45.3
54.6
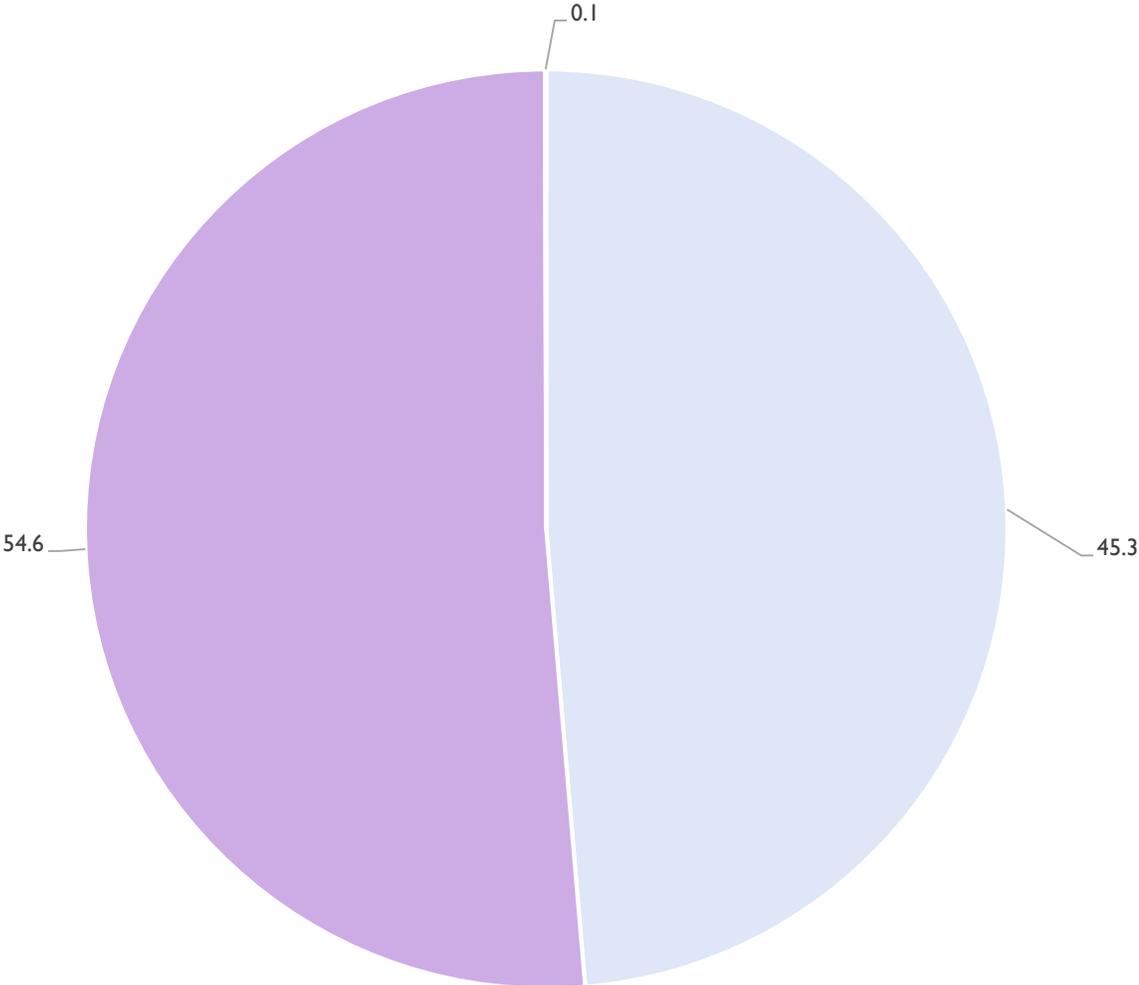
VOTER TURNOUT FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION
2007 Through 2021

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Series2	32.5%	80.4%	30.6%	53.8%	32.4%	76.4%	31.6%	46.8%	30.8%	76.0%	38.1%	62.2%	39.8%	78.1%	30.1%
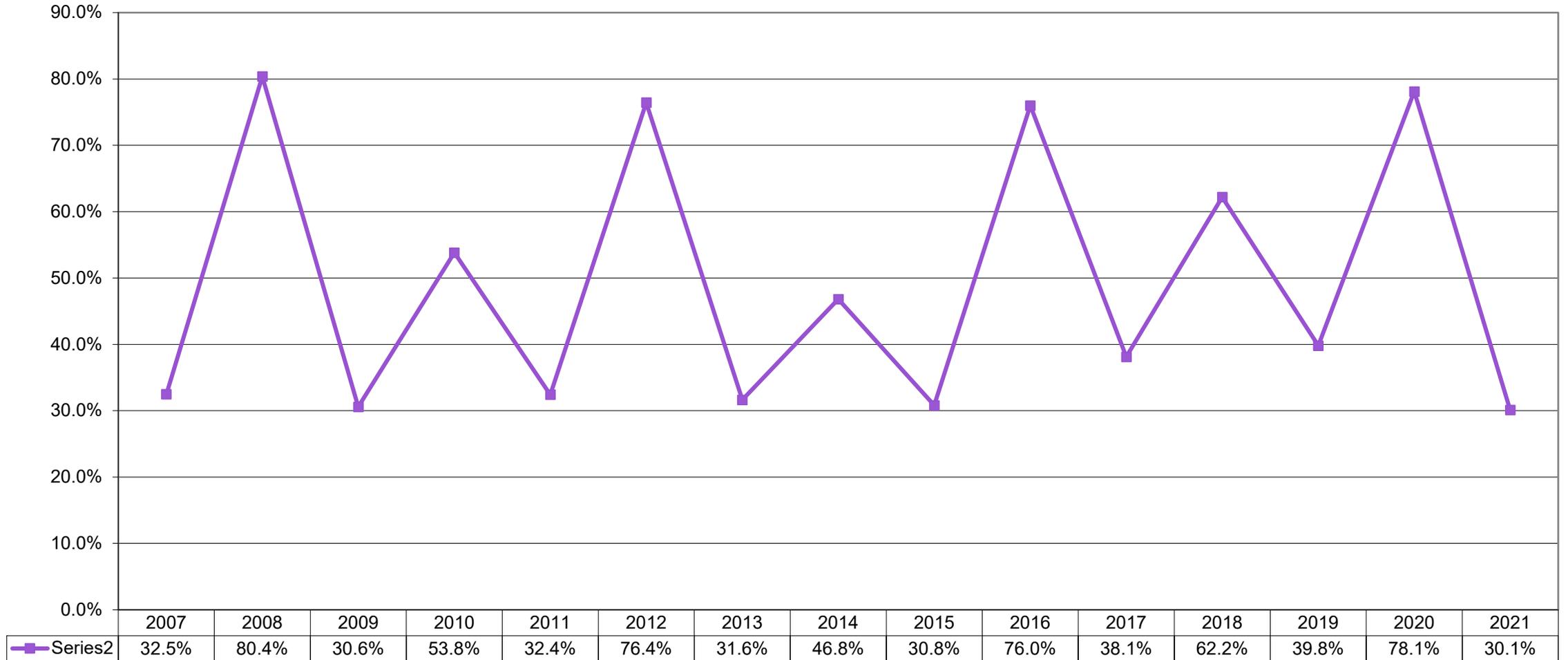
VOTER TURNOUT BY PARTY
2011 Through 2021 GENERAL ELECTIONS

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Democrats	30.5%	78.2%	32.2%	43.7%	29.8%	76.0%	38.1%	63.5%	41.0%	78.4%	29.1%
Republicans	41.3%	80.7%	38.2%	58.3%	39.3%	81.3%	45.2%	68.4%	47.7%	83.9%	40.1%
Blanks	25.2%	69.2%	24.1%	39.0%	23.9%	70.2%	30.7%	53.3%	29.7%	71.3%	22.1%