

# Increasing Voter Participation: Aligning Village and Federal Elections & Lengthening Village Terms of Office



Presented By: Jackson Owen, Justin Solis, Olivia Sundin, and Daniel Marsh

# Background

- Elections in the Villages of Mamaroneck and Larchmont are currently held on the first Tuesday following first Monday of November, each year.
- Each village trustee and mayor serves a term of two years.
- Village of Larchmont and Mamaroneck justices serve four year terms
- There are four village trustees, two village justices and one mayor
- As of now Mamaroneck village officials are elected in two groups:
  - **Group 1:** three trustees are elected every two years on EVEN numbered election years; Village justices are staggered every two years and are elected in EVEN numbered years as well
  - **Group 2:** mayor, one trustee are elected every two years on ODD numbered election years
- Mayor Tom Murphy and Trustee Nora Lucas were up for reelection in November of 2021

# Election Breakdown

ODD Year Elections - 1 trustee slot, 2 candidates

EVEN Year Elections - 3 trustee slots, 6 candidates

## 2019 GENERAL

### MAMARONECK - VILLAGE TRUSTEE

	TWD	DEM NORA A LUCAS	CON STEFANIE LIVIDINI	WOR NORA A LUCAS	TFV STEFANIE LIVIDINI	W/I IRREGULAR	TOTAL CANVASS	BLANK -VOID	TOTAL BALLOT
Town of Mamaroneck - 1	70001	69	40	4	18	0	131	12	143
Town of Mamaroneck - 2	70002	110	50	4	27	0	191	22	213
Town of Mamaroneck - 3	70003	252	60	4	33	0	349	20	369
Town of Mamaroneck - 4	70004	182	40	12	31	0	265	14	279
Town of Mamaroneck - 5	70005	73	34	6	25	0	138	8	146
Town of Mamaroneck - 17	70017	191	28	3	24	0	246	8	254
Town of Mamaroneck - 22	70022	127	40	6	23	0	196	18	214
Town of Mamaroneck - 23	70023	238	39	8	23	0	308	15	323
Town of Mamaroneck - 27	70027	120	42	6	35	0	203	10	213
Town of Rye - 1	160001	164	47	13	28	0	252	14	266
Town of Rye - 2	160002	188	85	10	63	1	347	23	370
Town of Rye - 3	160003	192	43	13	27	0	275	14	289
Town of Rye - 4	160004	123	58	13	57	0	251	12	263
Town of Rye - 24	160024	116	97	14	51	0	278	19	297
Town of Rye - 28	160028	166	68	4	42	0	280	16	296

## 2020 GENERAL

### MAMARONECK - VILLAGE TRUSTEE

	TWD	DEM DAN NATCHEZ	DEM VICTOR M TAFUR	DEM KELLY S WENSTRUP	W/I IRREGULAR	TOTAL CANVASS	BLANK -VOID	TOTAL BALLOT
Town of Mamaroneck - 1	70001	319	318	328	0	965	562	1527
Town of Mamaroneck - 2	70002	342	351	355	3	1051	776	1827
Town of Mamaroneck - 3	70003	555	569	585	13	1722	1005	2727
Town of Mamaroneck - 4	70004	411	423	438	10	1282	857	2139
Town of Mamaroneck - 5	70005	225	224	234	1	684	459	1143
Town of Mamaroneck - 17	70017	428	432	443	7	1310	511	1821
Town of Mamaroneck - 22	70022	283	282	290	1	856	584	1440
Town of Mamaroneck - 23	70023	502	505	521	6	1534	662	2196
Town of Mamaroneck - 27	70027	253	249	260	7	769	545	1314
Town of Rye - 1	160001	369	363	371	0	1103	712	1815
Town of Rye - 2	160002	488	476	479	4	1447	965	2412
Town of Rye - 3	160003	495	458	470	0	1423	659	2082
Town of Rye - 4	160004	340	327	338	7	1012	845	1857
Town of Rye - 24	160024	393	394	393	16	1196	910	2106
Town of Rye - 28	160028	355	346	351	9	1061	625	1686

# Voter Registration

## Number of ACTIVE Registered Voters in Village of Mamaroneck, 2010-2019

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
# of Voters	10,082	10,274	10,364	10,668	10,524	10,474	10,707	11,632	11,186	9,615

2011 ->  $3204/10,274$ = roughly 31.2% of registered voters

2013 ->  $3977/10,668$ = roughly 37.3% of registered voters

2015 ->  $3377/10,474$ = roughly 32.2% of registered voters

2017 ->  $4650/11,632$ = roughly 40.0% of registered voters

2019 ->  $3710/9,615$ = roughly 38.6% of registered voters

To the left is the percentage of registered voters that the Trustee elections of odd numbered election years made up in voter turnout. For each odd numbered election year, the percentage of REGISTERED voters that participated in the mayoral election is usually less than 40%. This isn't the percentage of ELIGIBLE voters. According to the [Westchester Board of Elections](#), ACTIVE enrollment means voters who have voted in past federal elections within two years.

Only 25 percent of those who take the time to vote in midterm and general elections vote in village elections that are OFF CYCLE.

# VoM Voter Turnout Data (2010-2020)

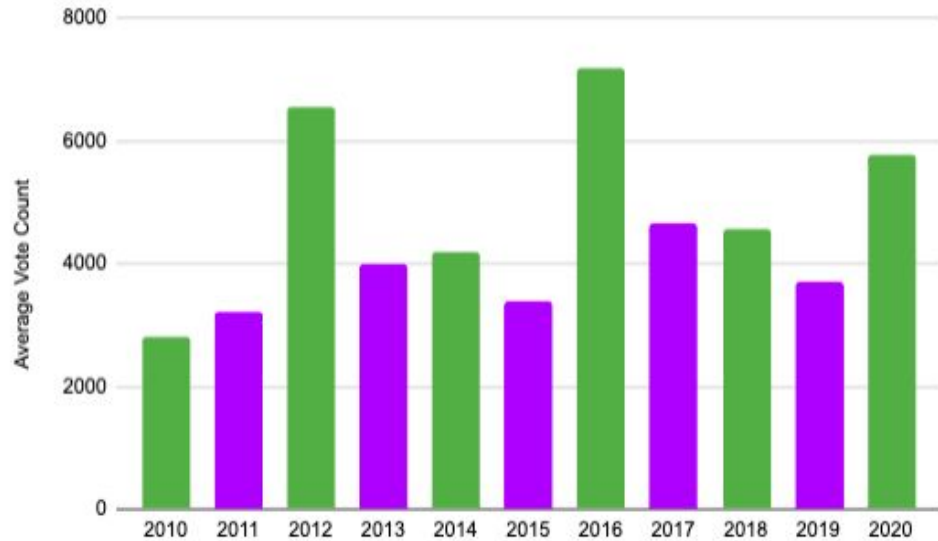
\*Green is On Cycle, Purple is Off Cycle

Source:

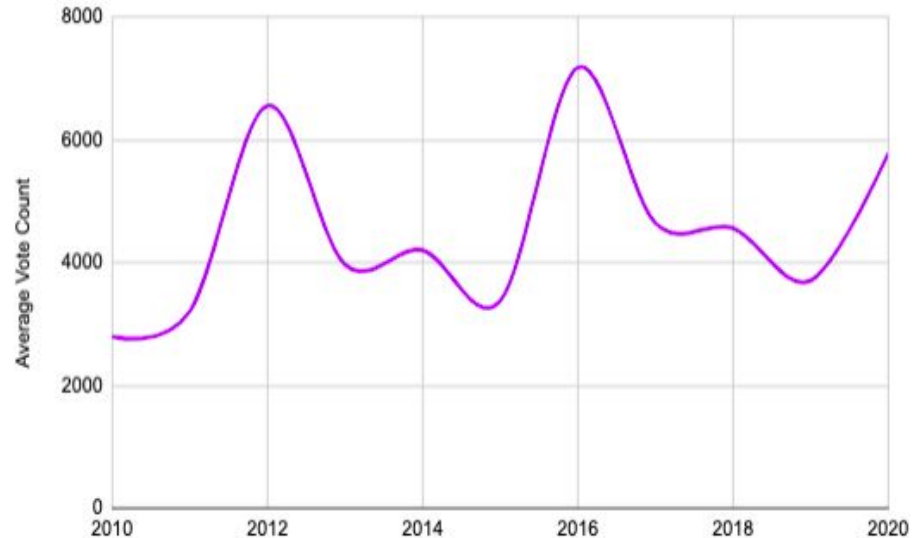
<https://citizenparticipation.westchestergov.com/election-dates-and-calendars/enrollment-figures-and-election-results>

Average Vote Count	2798	3204	6562	3977	4206	3377	7184	4650	4565	3710	5777
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020

Average Turnout for VoM Trustee Elections, 2010-2020



Average Turnout for VoM Trustee Elections, 2010-2020



# Analysis: VoM Voter Turnout

## Average Turnout for OFF CYCLE Elections

$$(3204 + 3977 + 3377 + 4650 + 3710) \div 5 = 3783.6$$

## Average Turnout for ON CYCLE Elections

$$(2798 + 6562 + 4206 + 7184 + 4565 + 5777) \div 6 = 5182$$

$$5182/3783.6 = 1.369595095 = 136.9\%$$

**\*ON CYCLE Elections have 36.9% more turnout than OFF CYCLE Elections\***

## Average Turnout Percentage of Registration for OFF CYCLE Elections

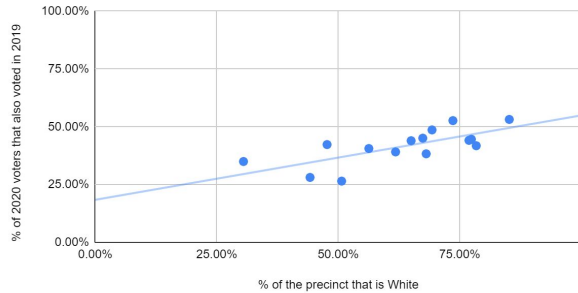
$$(31.3\% + 37.3\% + 32.2\% + 40.0\% + 38.6\%) \div 5 = 35.88\%$$

## Average Turnout Percentage of Registration for ON CYCLE Elections

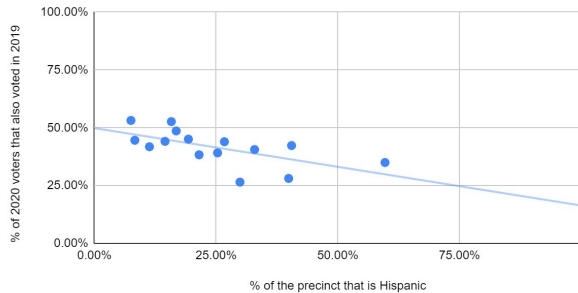
$$(27.7\% + 63.3\% + 40.0\% + 67.1\% + 33.2\%) \div 5 = 46.26\%$$

# Off-Year Elections' Effect on Minority Turnout

% of 2020 voters that voted in 2019 compared to the % white population of the district



% of 2020 voters that voted in 2019 compared to the % hispanic population of the district



The charts below show the effect of off year-elections on minority turnout in the Village of Mamaroneck.

There is a clear correlation between higher turnout in off-year elections, and the racial composition of the population voting.

In precincts with high hispanic populations, turnout is lower in off-cycle elections, compared to whiter districts.

In precincts with high white population, turnout is higher in off-cycle elections, when compared to more hispanic precincts.

Source: <https://www.westchestergov.com/boe99/>

# Our Initiative: Aligning Elections

"...If such resolution or local law shall become effective, the offices, the term or terms of which have been reduced, shall thereafter, except as is otherwise provided in subdivision seven of this section, be filled for terms of two years commencing at the beginning of the official year following the next general village election at which such offices are to be filled. No such resolution or local law, however, shall become effective within thirty days prior to a general village election." - Section 3-302, Subpoint 5b

\*This chart assumes each official will win each election

A proposal for aligning elections and lengthening terms in the *Village of Mamaroneck* as allowed by NYS Village Law

A new system shall be created in which there shall be a Group A and a Group B.

Group A will include the offices of one trustee and one mayor.

These incumbents in Group A shall be up for reelection on the first Tuesday of November in 2021, after which the victor of this election shall have their term extended temporarily to 3 years. Group A will then be up for reelection on the first Tuesday of November in 2024, and would serve four year terms from then on.

Group B will include the offices of three trustees.

These incumbents in Group B shall be up for reelection on the first Tuesday of November in 2022, after which the victor of this election shall have their term extended to 4 years. Group B will then be up for reelection on the first Tuesday of November in 2026.

If the proposal passes, Group B would run in 2022 for a four year term (again in 2026); Group A would run for a 3 year term in 2021, pending an extension of the term via this proposal.

Pursuant subpoint b. section 5, 3-302					
<b>Board of Trustee</b>	Tom Murphy	Nora Lucas	Daniel Natchez	Kelly Wenstrup	Victor Tafur
<b>Current Term E</b>	November 2021	November 2021	November 2022	November 2022	November 2022
<b>Adjusted Term</b>	November 2024	November 2024	November 2026	November 2026	November 2026



# Relevant New York State Laws

The New York State Village Law explicitly stipulates election years can be changed to odd or even by the will of the Board of Trustees or by permissive referendum

## **Section 3-302 – Subpoint 7**


**“Biennial elections. a. The board of trustees of any village which has provided that the terms of office of all trustees, or the terms of office of mayor and all trustees shall be four years, may, subject to permissive referendum, adopt a separate resolution or local law providing that general village elections shall be held biennially in the odd numbered years or in the even numbered years, as they shall determine,”**

In terms of the legality of changing term lengths of village officials there is substantive legal justification again in the New York State Village Code.

## **Section 3-302 – Subpoint 5**

**“Four year terms for mayor and trustees. a. The board of trustees, by resolution or local law subject to permissive referendum, may extend to four years the term of office of mayor, the terms of office for all trustees, or the terms of office of mayor and all trustees.”**

# Three Examples

- Baltimore
  - Austin
  - Phoenix
- 
- A dark blue diagonal gradient bar that starts from the bottom left corner and extends towards the top right corner, covering the lower half of the slide.

Source: <https://elections.maryland.gov/index.html>

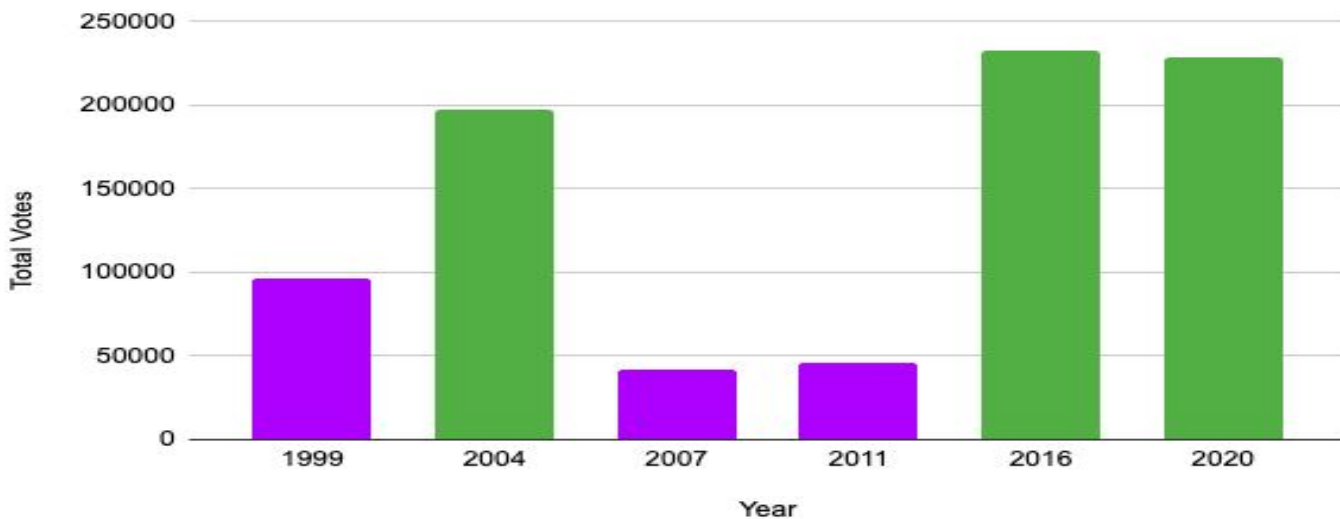
# Example One: Baltimore

## \*Green is On Cycle, Purple is Off Cycle

- In 2016, Baltimore's municipal elections were aligned with the national general election.
- The 2003 election in September was postponed to November 2004 because of a clash between Maryland State Election Law and the Baltimore City Charter.

Baltimore Mayor	1999	2004	2007	2011	2016	2020
Total Votes	96814	197475	41865	46233	233035	228600

Baltimore Mayoral Elections, Total Voter Turnout, 1999-2020



$(96,814 + 41,865 + 46,233) =$   
**184,912**

**Average Turnout in OFF  
CYCLE elections:**

$184,912/3 = 61,637$

$(197,475 + 233,035 +$   
 $228,600) = 559,110$

**Average Turnout in ON  
CYCLE elections:**

$559,110/3 = 186,370$

**Turnout for elections in ON  
CYCLE years was 3.02  
times higher than OFF  
CYCLE Elections**

# Example Two: Austin

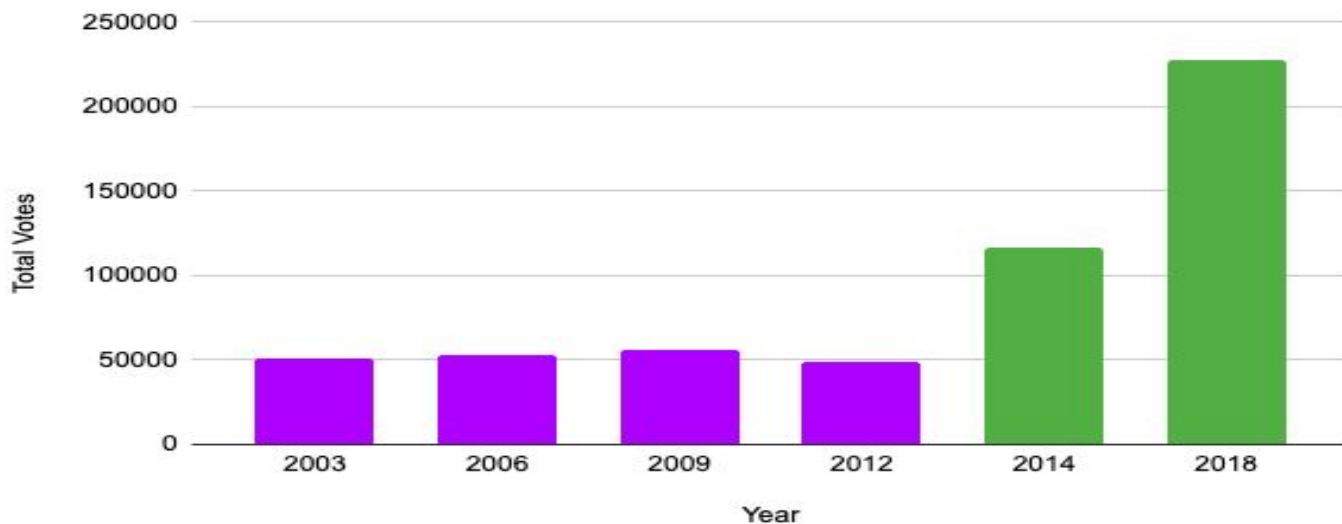
## \*Green is On Cycle, Purple is Off Cycle

- In 2014, Austin's municipal elections were aligned with the national midterm elections.
- The 2006 and 2012 mayoral elections cannot be evaluated as ON CYCLE elections because they took place in May

Austin Mayoral	2003	2006	2009	2012	2014	2018
Total Votes	51318	53151	55595	48882	116308	227308

$$(51,318 + 53,151 + 55,595 + 48,882) = 208,946$$

Austin Mayoral Elections, Total Voter Turnout, 2003-2018



**Average Turnout in OFF CYCLE elections:**  
 $208,946/4 = 52,237$

$$(116,308 + 227,308) = 343,616$$

**Average Turnout in ON CYCLE elections:**  
 $343,616/2 = 171,808$

**Turnout for elections in ON CYCLE years was 3.3 times higher than OFF CYCLE Elections**

# Example Three: Phoenix

## \*Green is On Cycle, Purple is Off Cycle

- In 2020, Phoenix's municipal elections were aligned with the national midterm elections.
- The 2018 mayoral elections can be evaluated as an ON CYCLE elections because it was a special election held in November

Phoenix Mayor:	2003	2007	2011	2015	2018	2020
Total Votes	99,224	97,973	100,557	131,103	246,447	574,411

$$(99,224 + 97,973 + 100,557 + 131,100) =$$

**428,854**

**Average Turnout in OFF CYCLE elections:**

$$428,854 / 4 = 107,214$$

$$(246,447 + 574,411) =$$

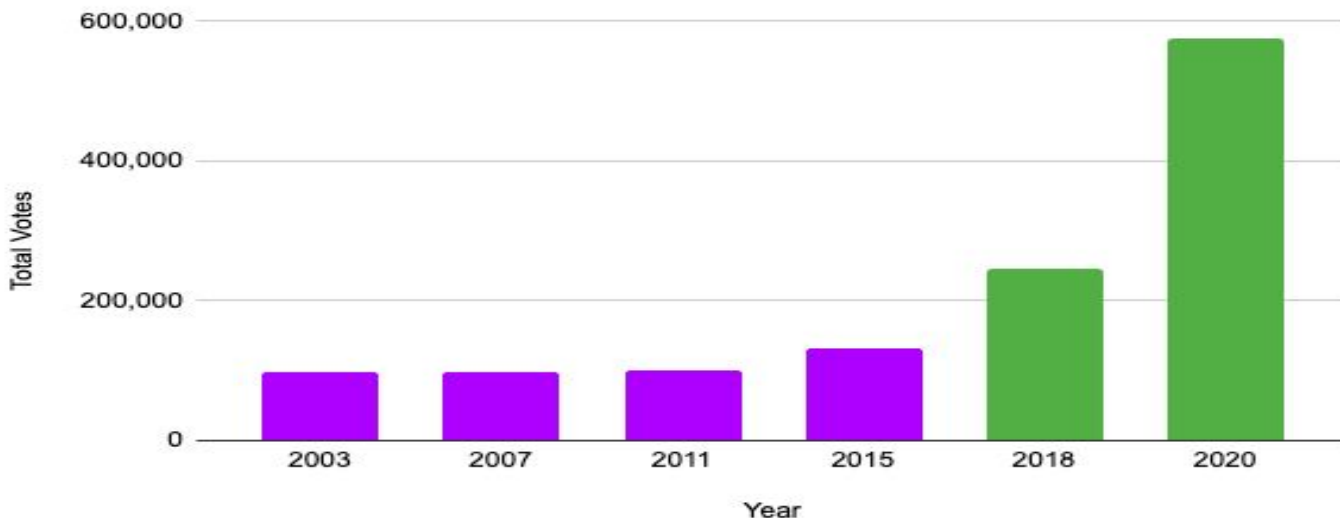
**820,858**

**Average Turnout in ON CYCLE elections:**

$$820,858 / 2 = 410,429$$

**Turnout for elections in ON CYCLE years was 3.83 times higher than OFF CYCLE Elections**

Phoenix Mayoral Elections, Total Voter Turnout, 2003-2020



# Supporting Research

- 70% of voters nationwide favor moving local elections to line up with larger ones.
- A study from California shows that turnout is 25-36% higher in municipal elections held concurrently with statewide races.
- In the last 5 years, California, Kansas, and Michigan have taken steps to line up elections
- An additional 5 states, Arkansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, Oregon and Rhode Island already hold municipal elections in November of even numbered years.
- Off-cycle elections typically have lower turnout for minority voters, while over-representing more affluent, white voters

Source: [https://www.ncsl.org/Documents/Elections/The\\_Canvass\\_April\\_2016.pdf](https://www.ncsl.org/Documents/Elections/The_Canvass_April_2016.pdf)

# Additional Benefit: Reduced Expenditures

- Off-cycle elections pose additional costs not just for the the administration, but for the voters themselves.
- Additional savings exist for the election administrators, as the cost of running one election vs two is cheaper, saves Board of Elections expenditure AND candidates' time and money
- Melissa Marschall, a Professor who leads the Local Elections in America Project at Rice University, has indicated that costs would be lower for municipalities who hold elections concurrently.

## Sources:

[https://www.ncsl.org/Documents/Elections/The\\_Canvass\\_April\\_2016.pdf](https://www.ncsl.org/Documents/Elections/The_Canvass_April_2016.pdf)

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326133664\\_Turnout\\_in\\_Local\\_Elections\\_Is\\_Timing\\_Really\\_Everything](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326133664_Turnout_in_Local_Elections_Is_Timing_Really_Everything)

<https://www.governing.com/topics/elections/gov-moving-municipal-elections-concurrent.html>

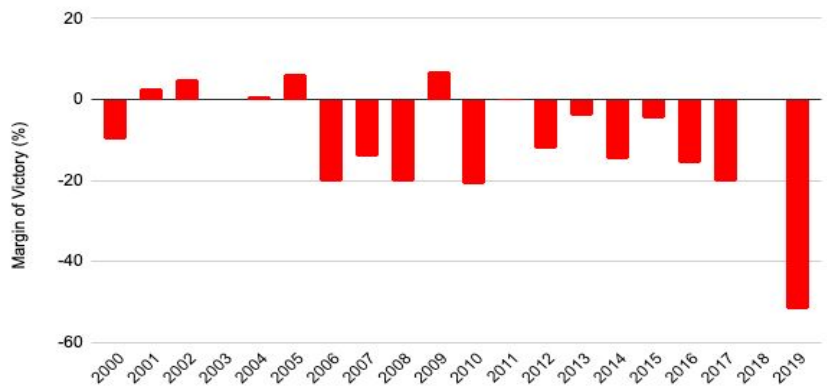
# Analysis of Potential Concerns

- Will This Hurt the Minority Party?
  - Will This Increase Purely Partisan Voting?
  - Does Voting In Federal Elections Decrease Down Ballot?
  - Will Candidates Run for 4 Year Terms?
- 
- A dark blue diagonal gradient bar that starts from the bottom left corner and extends towards the top right corner, covering the lower half of the slide.

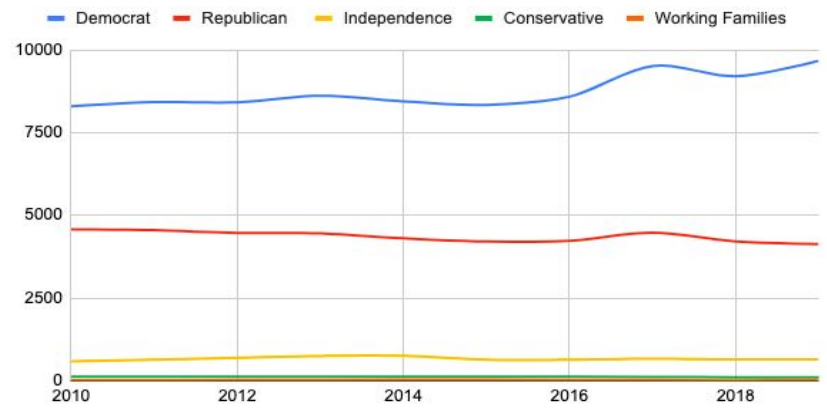


# Concern 1: Will This Hurt the Minority Party?

Average Margin of Victory, By Percentage, for Republicans from 2000-2019 for VoM

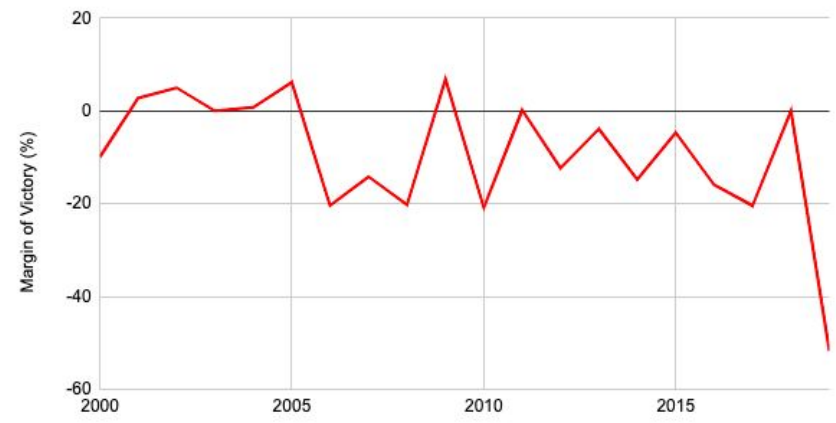


Active Registration in VoM, 2010 - 2019



On the left is the margin of victory from 2000-2019 in Village of Mamaroneck trustee elections, by percentage, for Republicans. Negative values indicate a loss. 2018 and 2003 were input as zero values because they were uncontested elections. This claim is exaggerated because Republicans only suffer a -3% change compared to the off-cycle elections. Not to mention that Republicans have half as many registered voters in the Village of Mamaroneck as the Democrats do. Also, voter registration is fluid, and voters don't always vote on party lines.

Average Margin of Victory, By Percentage, for Republicans from 2000-2019 for VoM



## Concern 2: Electoral “Fall off”?

# Federal Turnout Vs. Local Votes Cast

A common concern is that our data is misleading regarding the amount of local and federal votes being concurrent. The following analysis shows that a large margin of votes cast in a presidential election are votes in local races in ON CYCLE election years.

### **Presidential Turnout in Village Mamaroneck:**

2012 Election: **7474**, 2016 Election: **8267**

### **Average Presidential Turnout in VoM:**

$(7474+8267)/2 = 7871$

### **Average Local Turnout in VoM in These Years:**

2012 Election: **6562**, 2016 Election: **7184**

### **Average Local Turnout in VoM in These Years:**

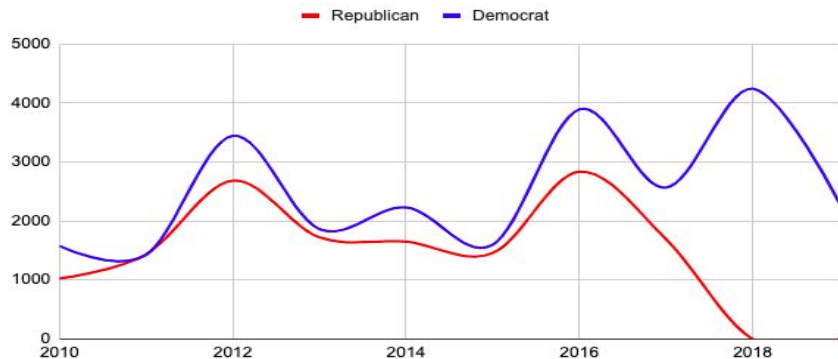
$(6562+7184)/2 = 6873$

### **Percentage of Federal Votes Netted:**

$6873/7871 = 87.3\%$

### Concern 3: Will this Increase Purely Partisan Voting?

VoM Trustee Turnout, Partisan, 2011-2019



Using the calculation to the right, we applied this to the Presidential Election of 2016

**2016:**

2016 VoM Democratic Votes for President: **5142**

2016 VoM Democratic Votes for Trustee: **3892**

$5142(.87) = 4474$

$3892/4474 = .867$   $1 - .867 = .133$

That means **13.3%** of the Democrats voting in the 2016 presidential election switched tickets in the local election

This concern is qualitative in nature, but we did our best to prove some degree of split ticket voting in ON CYCLE elections.

#### **Congressional Example**

2012 VoM Democratic Votes for Congress' 16th: **3692**

2012 VoM Democratic Votes for Trustee: **3445**

2012 VoM Republican Votes for Congress' 16th: **2438**

2012 VoM Republican Votes for Trustee: **2685**

Republicans gained **247 votes** in the local election compared to the congressional election

Democrats lost **247 votes** in the local election compared to the congressional election

That means **6.7%** of the Democrats voting in the 2012 congressional election switched tickets in the local election, demonstrating some degree of engagement, We'll call this **Partisan Variation**

## 2012 Election Analysis

**\*2020 cannot be used in this context because there were no Republican/opposition challengers\***

**2012**

2012 VoM Democratic Votes for President: **4725**

2012 VoM Democratic Votes for Trustee: **3445**

$$4725(.87) = 4111$$

$$3445/4111 = .84 \quad 1-.84 = .16 \rightarrow \underline{16\%}$$

That means 16% of the Democrats voting in the 2012 presidential election switched tickets in the local election

**This proves that there is consistently some degree of differentiation between local and national races when voters make their decision.**

**Voters are voting differently between national and local races**

## Concern 4: Will People Run for 4 Year Terms?

### List of all VoM Trustees who won, 2000-2020

Pete McConnell	Elected 2000
Guy Zerega	Elected 2000, 2004
Kathy Savolt	Elected 2000, ran in 2002
William J Paone	Elected 2001, 2003, 2005
Joseph Angiletta	Elected 2002, ran 2004, 2006
Christie Derrico	Elected 2002, ran 2004
Antonio Vozza	Elected 2002, 2004
Tom Murphy	Elected 2004, 2006, 2008
Toni Pergola Rya	Elected 2006
Ranoi Rabinowitz	Elected 2007, ran 2009
Antoinette P. Rya	Elected 2008, 2010
John M Hofstetter	Elected 2006, 2008, 2010
Sid Albert	Elected 2010
Louis Santoro	Elected 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015
Andres Ez-Halst	Elected 2012
Ilissa Miller	Elected 2012, 2014
Leon A. Potok	Elected 2012, 2014, 2016
Dave Finch	Elected 2014
Victor Tafur	Elected 2016, 2018, 2020
Keith Waitt	Elected 2016, 2018
Nora Lucas	Elected 2017, 2019
Dan Natchez	Elected 2018, 2020
Kelly Wenstrup	Elected 2020

A common concern is that new candidates will be deterred from running for village trustee or mayor due to 4 year terms.

Our analysis shows that a large proportion of village trustees in the past have sought 4 years as a trustee even with 2 year term lengths.

**23 Village Trustees have won at least one 2 year term from 2000-2020**

**17 of those Village Trustees have run for a second 2 year term (Two were not given opportunity to run again, Andres Ez-Halst and Dave Finch, didn't decide on own to not run)**

**17/23 = 73.9%**

**73.9% of past VoM Village Trustees have run for another term after their first two year term.**

**This indicates that 4 year commitments are commonly sought after by Village Trustees**

# Benefits of 4 year terms

"You learn what the areas of expertise are for your other board members and you work to complement each other. When making decisions you can figure out what is going to be important to each board member and are able to make any necessary trade-offs earlier in the process without as many surprises... Things take a long time to get done in the government world. With a 4-year term you can advocate for projects and are there to steer them through to completion."

**-Abby Katz (Town of Mamaroneck Trustee)**

# Conclusion

A dark blue, diagonal shape that starts from the bottom left corner and extends towards the top right, covering the bottom half of the slide.

# Implications

Our initiative has the following important implications

1. Increases Government Accountability
2. Makes County Election Administration More Efficient
3. Boosts the Effectiveness and Expertise of Village Officials
4. Makes Voting in Village Elections Easier