

## Fun Election Facts

Besides Thanksgiving and Veterans Day, November is also known for Election Day. How well do you know United States election history? Check your knowledge against the following fun facts.

- **The vice presidency used to go to the second place winner of the presidential election and was not a separately elected office.** Up until 1804 (when the Twelfth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified), the presidential candidate who got the second highest number of votes became vice president of the United States. The Twelfth Amendment was introduced after the 1796 election resulted in a president and vice president from opposing parties, and the 1800 election resulted in a tie, requiring thirty-six ballots in the House of Representatives to break the tie.
- **Why is Election Day in November?** In the 1800s, the weather and the agrarian-based economy were important factors in determining when elections were held. Farmers were unable to leave their farms until after the harvest was over. In addition, winter conditions made travel a problem in many areas, so elections happened in the late fall to accommodate these circumstances.
- **Not all states hold elections on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.** The Constitution did not dictate when Election Day was to be held, so states were left to choose their own election days. In 1845, Congress set the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November as a uniform day for presidential elections. However, in years when federal elections are not held, not all states follow the tradition of holding elections on Election Day. In 2015, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and Louisiana held elections later in the month.
- **A single vote can make a big difference.** Many Americans feel like their voice is not heard and that their vote does not matter, but quite literally every vote counts. In fact, over the last twenty years, more than a dozen races have been decided by a single vote or ended in a tie. For example, in 2017, a Virginia House of Delegates race ended in a tie, which was broken by pulling a name out of a bowl. The win gave Republicans control of the state House by one seat. And who can forget the 2000 presidential election in which George W. Bush won Florida by a 537-vote margin out of almost 6 million total votes cast. Bottom line, one vote (your vote) can make all the difference.