



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

POLICY RESEARCH CENTER

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Research Policy Update

Native Vote Regional Report: Northwest Region

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Native Vote initiative is a nonpartisan effort to promote American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) voter engagement throughout Indian Country. The purpose of this report is to share bi-weekly updates on the status of competitive elections during the 2020 election cycle for states in each NCAI region where turnout of the Native Vote may make a difference.



NCAI Northwest Region – Voting Age Population

For the 2020 election cycle, a number of close races have the potential to be impacted by the number of voting age AI/ANs who vote, especially if they are a significant percentage of the total population in the state. The NCAI Northwest Region includes the states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, and 44 federally recognized tribal nations have land in the three states. For the three states in the Northwest Region, the AI/AN voting age population number and percentage of the overall population for each of the states are shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: AI/AN Voting Age Statewide Population Percentage for States in the Northwest Region

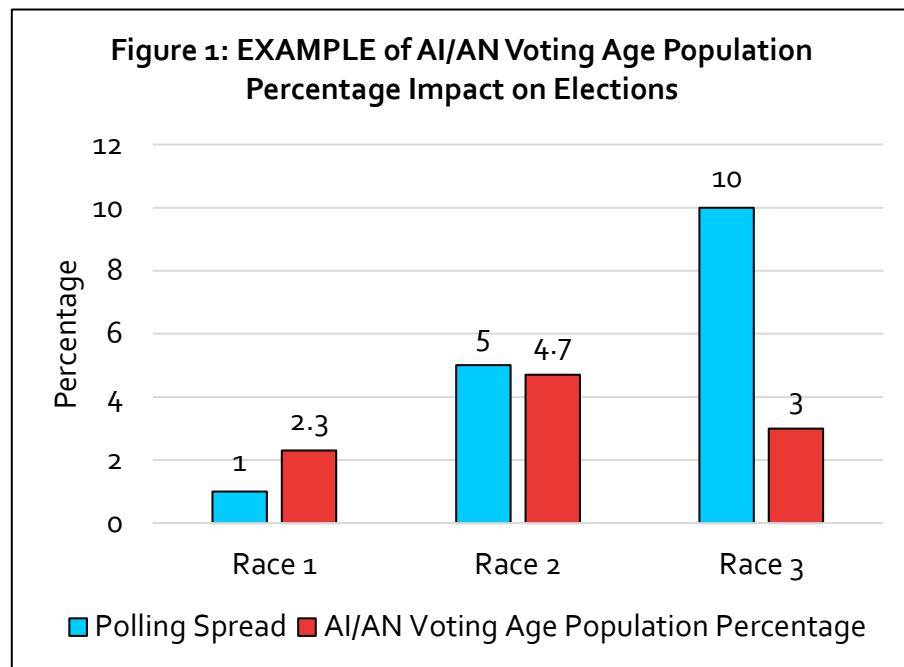
State	2019 State Total Voting Age Population Estimates	2019 AI/AN State Total Voting Age Population Estimates	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage of State Population
Idaho	1,338,864	35,153	2.64%
Oregon	3,351,175	106,019	3.16%
Washington	5,951,832	181,463	3.05%

Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5.

The AI/AN voting age population has the potential to impact competitive national, Congressional district, and state legislative races where the margin of victory is estimated to be similar to the AI/AN voting age population percentage.

Figure 1 illustrates an example of how graphs are used in this report to illustrate how the AI/AN voting age population percentage can impact close elections. The polling difference or margin between candidates is represented as a percent in the blue bars, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage of the total state population is represented in the red bars in the graph.

In *Race 1*, the AI/AN percentage in the example state (red) is larger than the polling difference between candidates (blue) in Race 1. Here AI/AN voters can clearly impact the outcome of the race.



In *Race 2*, the AI/AN voting age population percentage is close to the polling difference between candidates. AI/AN voters in elections like this example can potentially impact the outcome.

In *Race 3*, the AI/AN voting age population percentage is smaller than the polling difference between candidates. In this example, AI/AN voters may not have a big impact on the outcome.

In this report, data on competitive and potentially competitive elections may change over time and is monitored with the *Cook Political Report*, which is a non-partisan newsletter that regularly analyzes elections at the national and state level. The *Cook Political Report* ranks races as tossups, with either candidate having a possibility to succeed, or as “leaning” or “likely” to result in a specific outcome, Democratic (“D”) or Republican (“R”).

This report also uses current polling on competitive races as collected by *FiveThirtyEight*, which is a news media source and national polling clearinghouse. Finally, this report uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau on the number and percentage of AI/AN voters in election districts. For national and statewide elections [Electoral College (Presidential), Senate, and Gubernatorial races], the data on AI/AN voting age population is drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2019 population estimates. For all other elections, AI/AN voting age population data for U.S. Congressional districts and state upper and lower legislative house levels is drawn from the Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) Census Bureau dataset from 2018. These reports are compiled using the NCAI regions, which may differ from other organizational or federal department regional designations for tribal nations. The reports for each state in this NCAI region are illustrated below.

NCAI Northwest Region – Idaho



In Idaho, the latest *Cook Political Report* does not rank any races to be competitive or potentially competitive. However, Idaho has two Native candidates running for election to the Senate and Idaho’s first Congressional district. **Table 2** illustrates the Native candidate races for Idaho, the *Cook Political Report* ranking, the voting electorate or district, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in those districts. In the Senate race, Native candidate Paulette Jordan is challenging incumbent Senator Risch. The race is currently ranked as not competitive and expected to result in a Republican outcome, or “Solid-R.” Rudy Soto is a Native candidate running for Idaho’s Congressional first district, as reported by *Indian Country Today*.

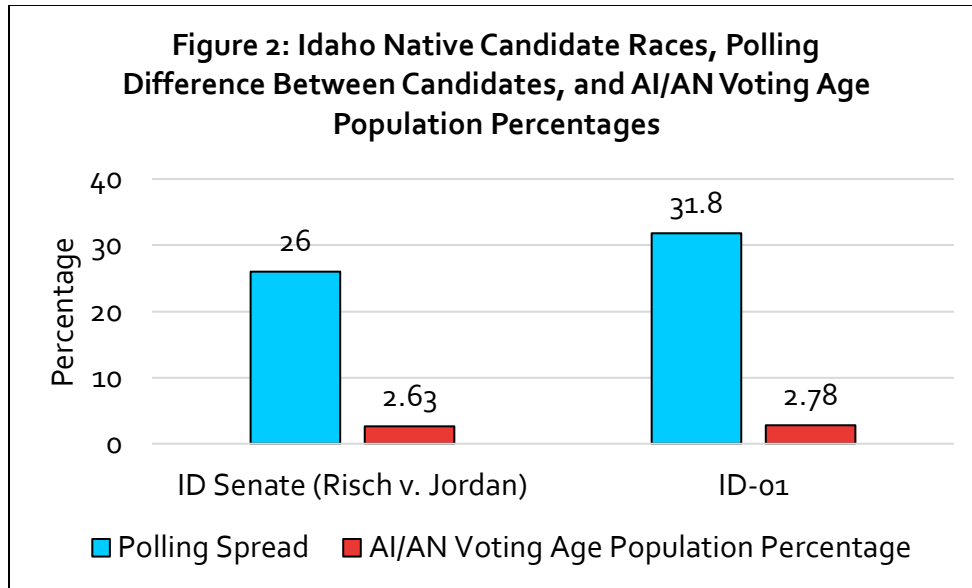
Table 2: Idaho Native Candidate Elections

Race	<i>Cook Political Report</i> Ranking	Electorate	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Senate (Risch v. Jordan)	Solid-R	Statewide	2.63%
Congressional 1st District	Unranked	Congressional District	2.78%

Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; *Cook Political Report*, Accessed October 30, 2020.

AI/AN voters can impact races where the current polling shows the candidates are expected to gain a similar percentage of votes and in areas where the percent of AI/AN voters is larger than the difference in polling percentages between the candidates.

Figure 2 illustrates the AI/AN voting age population percentages and recent polling spread or percent margins for the Senate and Congressional races in Idaho.



Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; FiveThirtyEight, Accessed October 30, 2020.

In addition to no competitive or potentially competitive Senate, Electoral College, gubernatorial, and Congressional district races, *Cook Political Report* does not rank the state upper or lower legislative houses to be competitive, and no Native candidates are running for state legislative office in Idaho according to *Indian Country Today*.

NCAI Northwest Region – Oregon

Oregon Competitive & Potentially Competitive Races

- 1 Congressional District Race Both Upper and Lower State Legislative Houses**
- 2 Native Candidates**

In Oregon, the latest *Cook Political Report* shows one competitive race. **Table 3** illustrates the competitive race for Oregon, the *Cook Political Report* ranking, the voting electorate or district, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in the district. The competitive race is Oregon’s fourth Congressional district race. The race ranks competitive and potentially may result in a Democratic outcome, or “Lean-D.” The *Cook Political Report* also considers control of Oregon’s upper and lower state legislative houses to be potentially competitive. Both the upper and lower state legislative houses in Oregon rank as likely to result in a Democratic win, or “Likely-D.”

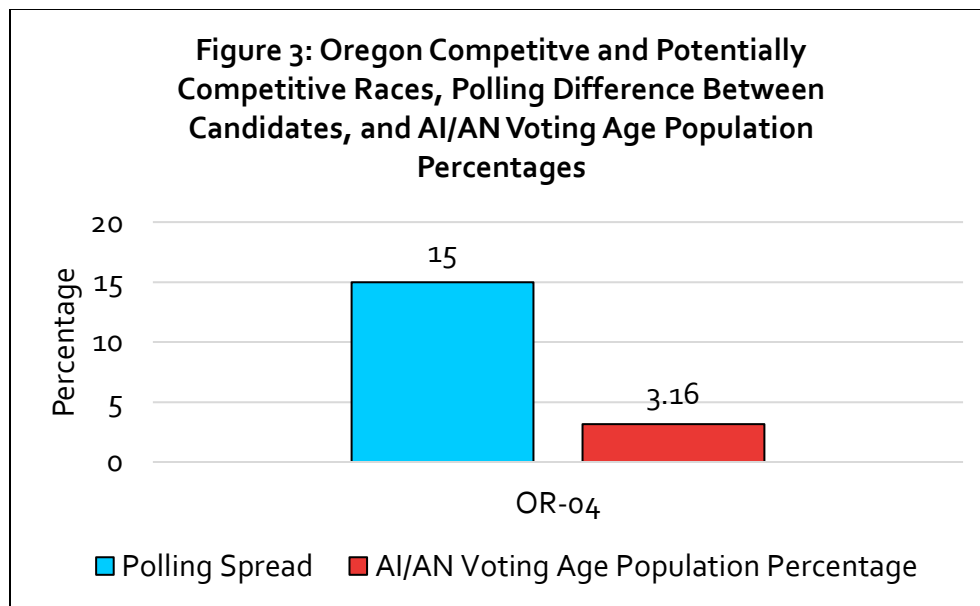
Table 3: Oregon Competitive and Potentially Competitive Elections

Race	Cook Political Report Ranking	Electorate	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Congressional 4th District	Lean-D	Congressional District	3.16%
Upper State Legislative House	Likely-D	State Legislative District	Varies by District
Lower State Legislative House	Likely-D	State Legislative District	Varies by District

Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; Cook Political Report, Accessed October 30, 2020.

AI/AN voters can impact races where the current polling shows the candidates are expected to gain a similar percentage of votes and in areas where the percent of AI/AN voters is larger than the difference in polling percentages between the candidates.

Figure 3 illustrates the AI/AN voting age population percentages and recent polling spread or percent margins for the Congressional district race in Oregon.



Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; FiveThirtyEight, Accessed October 30, 2020.

In Oregon, two Native candidates are running for state legislative office according to *Indian Country Today* (2020). **Table 4** describes each Native candidate, their district race, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in the district.

Table 4: Oregon State Congressional Candidates and AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage

Candidate	District Race	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Carina Miller	State Senate District 30	5.16%
Tawna Sanchez	State House District 43	1.72%

Source: Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; Indian Country Today, Accessed October 30, 2020.

For the state house race in Oregon, the AI/AN voting age population percentage is below 2%, while in the state senate race, the AI/AN voting age population percentage is 5.16%, which has the potential to impact the outcome of the race if it is close.

NCAI Northwest Region – Washington



In Washington, the latest *Cook Political Report* shows two potentially competitive races. **Table 5** illustrates the competitive races for Washington, the *Cook Political Report* ranking, the voting electorate or district, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in those districts. The races include the third and eighth Congressional districts. The third Congressional district ranks competitive and to potentially result in a Republican win, or “Lean-R,” while the eighth Congressional district ranks to potentially result

in a Democratic win, or “Likely-D.” Washington’s upper state legislative house is considered potentially competitive and ranks likely to result in a Democratic win, or “Likely-D.”

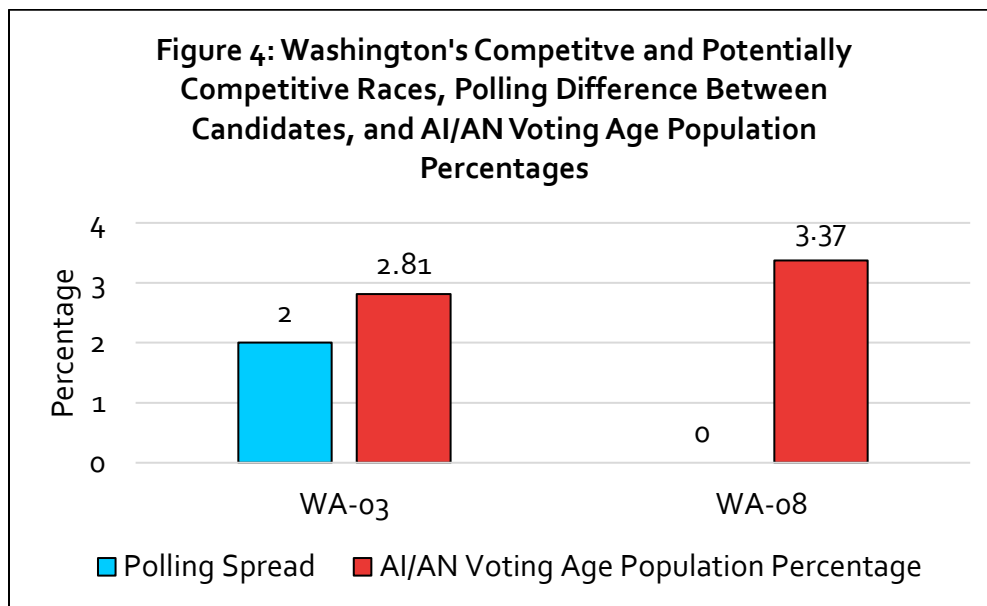
Table 5: Washington Competitive and Potentially Competitive Elections

Race	<i>Cook Political Report</i> Ranking	Electorate	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Congressional 3rd District	Lean-R	Congressional District	2.81%
Congressional 8th District	Likely-D	Congressional District	3.37%
Upper State Legislative House	Likely-D	State Legislative District	Varies by District

Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; Cook Political Report, Accessed October 30, 2020.

AI/AN voters can impact races where the current polling shows the candidates are expected to gain a similar percentage of votes and in areas where the percent of AI/AN voters is larger than the difference in polling percentages between the candidates.

Figure 4 illustrates the AI/AN voting age population percentages and recent polling spread or percent margins for the Congressional district races for Washington. The AI/AN voting age population percentage in both Congressional districts is larger than the current polling differences between candidates. AI/AN voters can impact the outcome of these close races.



Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; FiveThirtyEight, Accessed October 30, 2020; 27otowin, Accessed September 15, 2020.

In Washington, one Native candidate is running for state legislative office according to *Indian Country Today* (2020). **Table 6** describes the Native candidate, their district race, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in the district.

Table 6: Washington State Congressional Candidates and AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage

Candidate	District Race	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Debra Lekanoff	State House District 40	1.83%

Source: Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; Indian Country Today, Accessed October 30, 2020.

For the state house race in Washington, the AI/AN voting age population percentage is below 2%, which has the potential to impact the outcome of the race if it is close.

For more information, email research@ncai.org or visit NCAI's Native Vote website at: <http://www.nativevote.org/>

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