

Subject: Number of inactive voters in Kansas hits new record high
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Number of inactive voters in Kansas hits new record high

But that's probably a good thing for future voter list maintenance

EARL F GLYNN
MAY 20



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This article is the first in a series about inactive voters and “voter bloat” in the Kansas voter file.

Expect these two additional related articles soon:

- Clusters of counties with similar patterns of inactive voter rates over time
- 2026 update: Has new Kansas law from 2022 helped mark more voters inactive sooner?



This article first looks at the Kansas inactive voter data statewide from a voter file obtained from the Secretary of State on May 4.

Then the variation in the inactive rates over time is explored both statewide and by county from voter file data and from online data in a dashboard provided by the Secretary of State.

Kansas inactive voters today

The Kansas voter file from May 4 has slightly more than 2 million voters, with 273,000 tagged with status “inactive” — about 13.6%.

The federal National Voter Registration Act of 1993 ([NVRA](#)) calls voters “inactive” when the post office cannot deliver mail to them. The public should be outraged that “inactive” actually means “invalid address” voter. This is a problem throughout the country.

So, in Kansas today there are about 273,000 potential voters that have unverifiable mailing addresses but can vote without verification of their true current address.

The “inactive” tag starts the slow purge process. This current high number of inactive voters is “good” because voters must be tagged as “inactive,” and then miss two federal elections (which can take 2 to 4 years), before they can be purged.

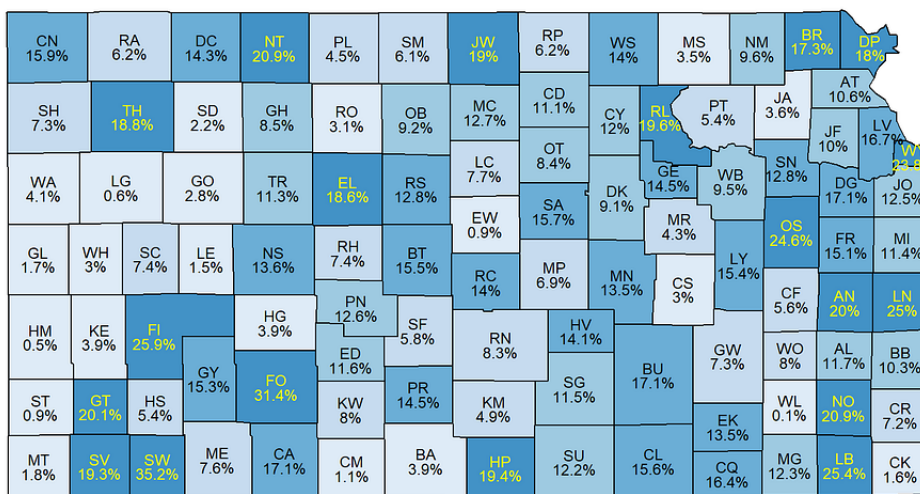
A future article will consider how a new state law from 2022 may be helping lower the bloat of the Kansas voter file by marking voters “inactive” sooner.

Statewide and by county

The map below shows there is considerable variation in the number of inactive voters across our 105 counties, with many counties having considerably higher rates than the overall state inactive rate of 13.6%.

Kansas: Percent "Inactive" Voters by County

2,007,582 voters statewide; 273,413 Inactive [13.6%]



Inactive Voters % up to 4.26% up to 8.36% up to 12.74% up to 17.1% up to 35.2%

Source: Kansas Secretary of State Voter File, 2026-05-04

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Kansas counties are divided into five groups of 21 counties by their inactive voter rates.

Two counties have current inactive rates over 30%: Seward (35.18%) and Ford (31.42%).

Three other counties exceed 25%: Finney (25.92%), Labette (25.39%) and Linn

(25.04%).

Four counties have inactive rates that are very low, less than 1%: Wilson (0.14%), Hamilton (0.45%), Logan (0.64%), Stanton (0.88%), and Ellsworth (0.94%). Perhaps these counties are doing a great job with list maintenance? Or, are the very low numbers a sign of little or no list maintenance?

The study of a county's inactive rate over time can give clues about its list maintenance activities.

Explore current inactive and other stats for all 105 counties in Kansas in this download:



Kansas County Voter Registration Stats 2...

42.2KB · XLSX file

Stats by Kansas county showing counts of voters, active, inactive, inactive percent. Age statistics including median, 25% and 75% age quantiles. Districts summary for county: Commissioner, Congress, KS Senate, KS House, State Board of Education, School District. Numbers of cities, zips, precincts in county. Voter counts by gender and party. 105 rows.

Download

By precinct

Voter inactive rates (and other stats) within precincts can vary considerable from the county norms. For example, 10 precincts in Kansas (with 50+ voters) have 45% or more inactive voters:

County	Voters	Active	Inactive	Percent Inactive	precinct_text_name
Douglas	366	120	246	67.21	Lawrence 10
Riley	106	40	66	62.26	Manhattan City w6/p1
Sedgwick	108	46	62	57.41	GY04
Wyandotte	65	29	36	55.38	KC09-21
Reno	1611	747	864	53.63	Hutchinson 21
Seward	1092	543	549	50.27	Ward 3
Wyandotte	288	153	135	46.88	KC01-01
Finney	892	479	413	46.30	WARD 05 123
Osage	223	120	103	46.19	Precinct 08
Douglas	744	405	339	45.56	Lawrence 08

Precincts in Kansas with 45% or higher inactive voter rates. [Analysis ignores precincts with fewer than 50 voters.]

Precincts with high inactive rates often occur in places with transient populations, such as college campuses or military bases (Ft. Riley and Ft. Leavenworth).

For example, Lawrence 10 precinct in Douglas County, which is near the KU campus, has the largest percentage of inactive voters with 67.21%!

Three precincts not on the list above have the largest numbers of inactive voters:

- Labette County, precinct Parsons: 1911 inactive of 6254, 30.56%
- Butler County, precinct Andover W1: 1149 inactive of 6032, 19.05% inactive
- Sedgwick County, precinct 0601: 1048 inactive of 2732, 38.36% inactive

Explore current inactive and other stats for all 4066 precincts in Kansas derived from the voter file in this download:



Kansas Precinct Voter Registration Stats...

959KB · XLSX file

Stats by Kansas voting precinct (derived from voter file) showing counts of voters, active, inactive, inactive percent. Age statistics including median, 25% and 75% age quantiles. Districts summary for county: Commissioner, Congress, KS Senate, KS House, State Board of Education, School District. Numbers of cities, zips, precinct parts in county. Voter counts by gender and party. [Note: Kansas precinct names in the voter file often do not match exactly the names given in election results.] 4066 rows.

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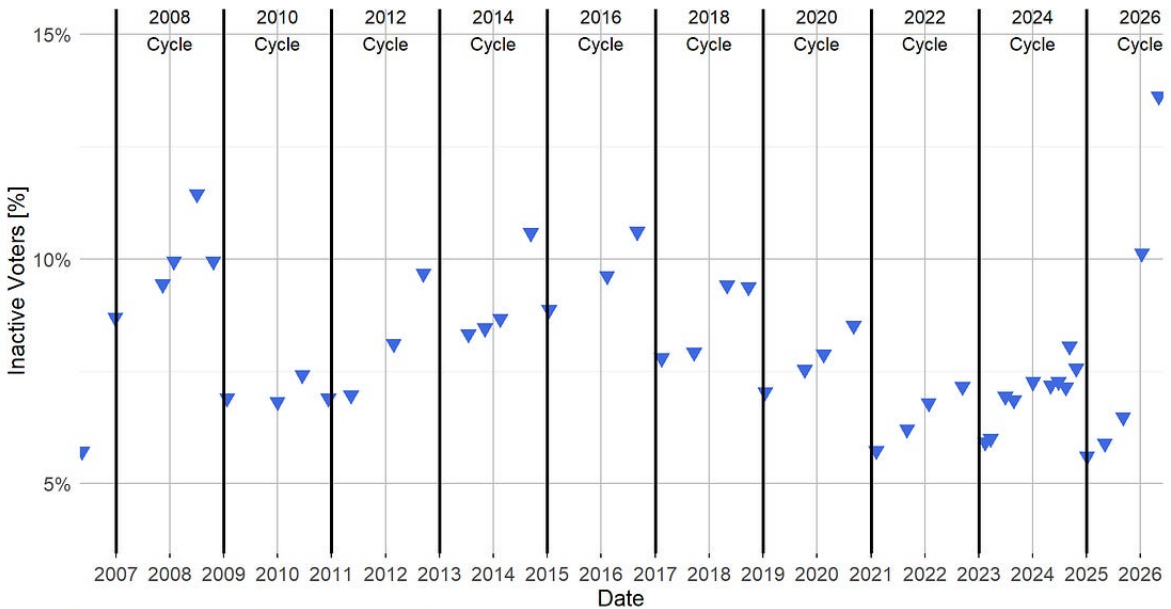
Inactive voter change over time

Statewide inactive rates over time

Inactive voter rates were extracted from voter files from the last 20 years and shown in the plot below.

Percent Inactive Voters in Kansas over Twenty Years (May 2006 - May 2026)

Based on Kansas voter files



Source: Kansas Secretary of State Voter Files [2006 - 2026]

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Blue triangles show the statewide inactive voter registration rates from a number of voter files over time. Names could actually be connected to any of these points.

The inactive rate patterns for each two-year election cycle over the last 20 years are similar: usually lowest at the beginning of the cycle and usually highest at the end. The explanation for this pattern needs to be explored.

It's unclear why there has been such a dramatic increase in inactive voters from Jan. to May 2026.

Curiously, both the lowest and highest percentages of inactive voters have occurred in the 2026 election cycle:

- The 47 voter files represented above show the highest number of inactive voters in Kansas in the last twenty years is in the current May 4, 2026 file: 273,413 inactive, 13.62%.
- The smallest number of inactive voters in a voter file was 94,170 (5.72%) in the May 17, 2006 file from twenty years ago, but the smallest percentage was in a file from Jan. 2, 2025 with 113,210 inactive voters (5.62%).

Inactive registration rates by county over time

Starting in 2021 Kansas law KSA 25-2361 requires the Secretary of State to publish online monthly statistics about registered voters, including the number of inactive voters.

Registered Voter Reporting Requirements

The bill requires the Secretary to publish the following information on the official website of the Secretary each month:

- The total number of registered voters in each county;
- The total number of registered voters in each county who have been identified by the county election office as having mail that is undeliverable and the number of such voters as a percentage of all registered voters in the county; and
- The total number of registered voters for each political party.

Part of [summary of KSA 25-2361 \(part of Senate Sub. for HB 2183\)](#) that resulted in new [Secretary of State's Voter Registration Statistics dashboard](#).

This monthly inactive voter rate by county gives clues about voter file maintenance, or lack thereof, especially when studied over time.

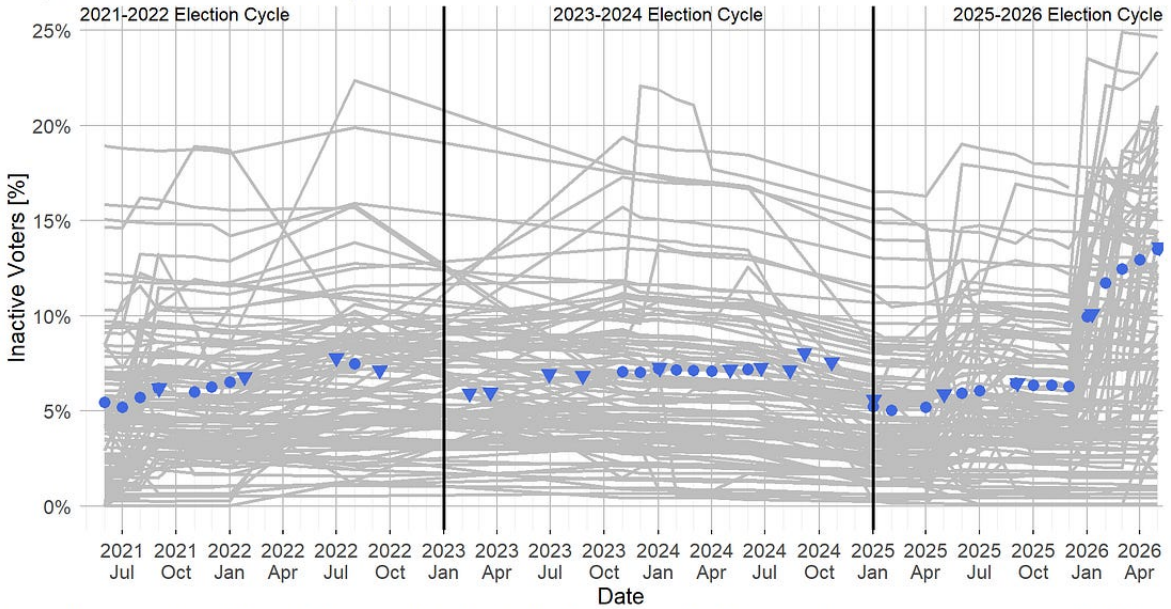
This information is now free instead of relying on extracting data from an expensive voter file.

Unfortunately, a number of the monthly files mandated by the legislature are missing online since June 2021, but the 29 files that are available show patterns at the county level that would not otherwise be known.

The chart below shows the Kansas state inactive voter rate from both these 29 free online files (blue circles), and 19 voter files (blue triangles) in the last three election cycles:

Percent Inactive Voters in Kansas (July 2021 - May 2026)

Grey lines show inactive voter rate profiles for each of the 105 Kansas counties



Source: Kansas Secretary of State Online Voter Registration Statistics Dashboard (circles); Voter Files (triangles)

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Blue circles show statewide inactive voter registration rates from the Secretary of State’s online dashboard, while blue triangles represent statewide inactive registration rates from voter files. Grey lines show lines of inactive voter registration rates over time for the 105 Kansas counties.

The blue circles and triangles above show a surprising increase in the number of inactive voters statewide starting in Jan. 2026, which appears to still be increasing in May.

The grey lines connect similar inactive rate data for each of the 105 Kansas counties. There is considerable variation in inactive rates among the counties.

[Note: a few outliers were above 25% and not shown above.]

At what point does this huge variation across the counties in the state become a violation of the US Constitution’s “equal protection clause” in the 14th Amendment, which mandates similar treatment of all citizens?

A future article will explore seven clusters of counties with different inactive rate patterns over time. Each cluster of counties shows a similar pattern, but there are pattern differences between clusters.

One of the clusters shows an inactive voter rate pattern very similar to the state overall numbers. But, another cluster shows an inactive voter rate pattern nearly constant, and changing little over time — likely an indication of little or no list maintenance.

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Kansas Secretary of State hikes price of voter registration data by 50%

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Kansas has 27,000 fewer "inactive" voters than a year ago

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George Soros' Foundation to Promote Open Society provided \$450K for "VoteShield" startup in 2018, which now closely monitors voter registration changes in 24 states

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Why has DC-based "Protect Democracy" purchased 68 updates of the Kansas voter registration file since 2020 for its VoteShield project?

Ancient articles — little has changed

Kansas has almost 138,000 inactive voters, Earl Glynn, *Kansas Watchdog*, Oct. 25, 2010.

Eight representatives in the Kansas House currently have inactive voters registered at their home address ... Four Kansas senators also have inactive voters listed at their home address.

Kansas May Have About 190,000 Phantom Voters: Could Voter Fraud in Kansas Be Relatively Easy?, Earl Glynn, *Kansas Meadowlark*, Jan. 13, 2008.

Federal law keeps many on the voting rolls in Kansas (and other states), but more could be done to keep a more accurate list, and more could be done to protect the integrity of Kansas elections.

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