



NEW HAMPSHIRE'S LEGIONS OF ENGAGED VOTERS

More than in any other state, New Hampshire residents seek opportunities to meet with candidates. We want to ask questions, size up the hopefuls, test their views firsthand. Nearly 20 percent of all New Hampshire residents have taken the time to shake hands with a candidate. In the 2000 campaign alone, 13 percent of residents attended a rally, speech or other event on behalf of a candidate.

We listen even when the newscasters and pundits have stopped listening. And we listen, even when we've made up our minds, to other contenders. In an era of people turning away from politics, we are engaged. Nearly 70 percent of residents reported watching one or more of the presidential debates during the primary campaign.

When it came time to vote in February 2000, 85 percent of registered Republicans and 74 percent of registered Democrats went to the polls, about 50 percent higher turnout than the national average. New Hampshire is often considered a "road test" for the candidates; they emerge from the Granite State more experienced and ready to hit the rest of the campaign trail.

Political participation is part of our cultural landscape: We are home to the town meeting; Our 400-member legislature is one of the largest in the world; and New Hampshire has more elections than any other place in the country. Because every two years we are in the midst of an election of some sort or other, we are always election ready. To govern ourselves, we must constantly meet candidates, size them up, even run for office ourselves.

*This document has been edited to make it easier to read.

Notice & Wonder

- Take note of any words you don't know and look them up in a dictionary.
- What are some examples that show Granite Staters' commitment to democracy?
- Why does the presidential primary in New Hampshire make candidates more prepared to run for president in the rest of the country?