

Not surprisingly there is a certain degree of geographic correlation in the presidential election results of the counties in that counties in close proximity to each other tend to be closer in agreement than counties from different regions are with each other. There are five regions or groupings by which the counties can be identified: Western Maryland (Garrett, Allegany, Washington and Frederick); Central Maryland (Anne Arundel, Howard, Carroll, Baltimore and Harford); Southern Maryland (Charles, Calvert and St. Mary's); Upper Eastern Shore (Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's); Lower Eastern Shore (Dorchester, Wicomico, Somerset and Worcester). Not all of the counties fit into a region for purposes of presidential elections and not all of the counties within each region necessarily show the strongest affinity with all of the other counties in their regions. However, these groupings do convey a general sense of electoral performance over the entire period of presidential elections.

While most counties tend to show more agreement with a neighboring county than with a distant subdivision there are some unusual exceptions. Perhaps the most remarkable correlation between counties is the identity of election results that exists between the State's least populous county, Kent, located on the upper Eastern Shore, and the State's most populous county, Prince George's, one of the two major metropolitan counties of Washington, DC. In the 49 presidential elections since 1789 the voters of Kent County have chosen the same candidate or expressed the same party preference as the voters in Prince George's County 41 times. This is a rate of agreement which neither of the two counties shares with any other county.

This unanimity has been consistent throughout the entire 185 year history of presidential elections. In the first 17 elections (1789 through 1852), Kent and Prince George's Counties disagreed only twice, in the 1800 and 1824 selection of electors pledged to different candidates. In the 17 most recent elections (1912 through 1980), the State's largest and smallest counties have differed only once—in 1960 when Kent favored Nixon by 185 votes while Prince George's voted for Kennedy. The other years of difference preceded the Civil War and later involved the candidacy of William Jennings Bryan.¹⁵

The origins of the Kent-Prince George's voting similarity can be traced to the growth of the Jefferson Democratic-Republican party which appealed to both counties when they shared a common agricultural base and lifestyle. Notwithstanding differences in the per capita income, wealth, racial composition and educational levels of the people in the two counties, their political affinity has persisted.¹⁶

There are other combinations or correlations between counties which are unexpected. The State's most affluent county, Montgomery, has agreed most often with rural Worcester County, located along the Atlantic coast in part of the DelMarVa peninsula. In 41 of the 49 elections these distant counties have concurred in their political judgement of presidential elections including a string of 25 consecutive elections from 1832 through 1920. Unlike the Prince George's/Kent connection this east-west combination appears to have been severed as the two counties have differed three times since 1960. Other distant geographic but close political relationships are Garrett with Charles and Calvert (20 out of 27),¹⁷ Somerset and Charles (41 out of 49), and Queen Anne's and Wicomico (27 out of 29).

No two Maryland subdivisions possess identical voting records in presidential