Quick Facts about Young Voters in Florida: The Midterm Election Year 2006

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The 2006 midterm election was the second major election in a row that saw an increase in the electoral participation of young people ages 18-29. Between 2002 and 2006, the percentage of eligible young people who voted increased by 3 percentage points to 25 percent, the single largest increase among all age groups nationally. However, while youth electoral participation improved between 2002 and 2006 nationally, in Florida, the youth voter turnout rate fell 5 percentage points from 23 percent in 2002 to 18 percent in 2006. Overall, Florida ranked 47th (tied with LA) among all states and the District of Columbia in 2006, down from 23rd in 2002, and was seven percentage points lower than the nation as a whole.

This fact sheet reports the characteristics of young voters for the state of Florida, including estimates of the number of young voters, and voter turnout rates in 2006 and 2002 for various sub-groups of young people.

Graph 1: Florida Voter Turnout in Midterm Years Among Citizens, by Age

Estimates of Young Voters, 2006

In 2006, a midterm election year, an estimated 2.2 million young people in Florida were eligible to vote in U.S. elections. Table 1 shows voting statistics for the years 2006 and 2002.

Voter Turnout Rates in 2006 and 2002 Among Eligible Young Citizens

Table 2 displays voter turnout rates for various groups of young people in 2002 and 2006 in Florida. In 2006, voter turnout among many youth groups in Florida was low, and declined for most groups from 2002 levels. Declines were particularly evident for college graduates (17 points), single women (6 points), and Latinos (12 points).

Partisanship Among Young Voters in 2006

The plurality of young voters identified as Democrat in the 2006 elections.

Table 3 – Partisanship Among 18 to 29 year old Voters in 2006

Table 1 – Florida Voter Turnout Statistics, 2006 and 2002

Table 2 – Florida Voter Turnout Rates Among Young Citizens ages 18 to 29, 2006 and 2002

Table 3 – Partisanship Among 18 to 29 year old Voters in 2006

Florida

Democrat 38 percent
Independent 21 percent
Republican 35 percent
Something Else ***

Source: Authors' Tabulations from the National Election Pool, Exit Poll Survey, 2006. (*** – Sample size was too small to produce reliable estimates.)
Notes

1 Research Director, Research Associate, and Research Assistant, respectively. We also thank Peter Levine, Emily Kirby, Abby Kiesa, William Grayson, and Deborah Both for comments on previous drafts of this fact sheet.

2 See “Youth Voter Turnout Increases in 2006” by Mark Hugo Lopez, Karlo Barrios Marcelo, and Emily Hoban Kirby for a longer discussion of youth voter turnout trends in 2006.

3 We have defined racial/ethnic groups in the Current Population Survey November Supplements by defining anyone with Hispanic background as Latino; individuals who cite a single non-Hispanic race or ethnicity are identified as non-Hispanic white, African American, Asian American or Native American.