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

By Mark Hugo Lopez and Karlo Barrios Marcelo
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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 Minnesota, the youth voter turnout rate fell 2 percentage points from 45 percent in 2002 to 43 percent in 2006. Overall, Minnesota ranked 1st (unchanged from 2002) among all states and the District of Columbia in 2006, and was eighteen percentage points higher than the nation as a whole.

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

In 2006, a midterm election year, there were an estimated 779 thousand young people in Minnesota who 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 2006 and 2002 in Minnesota. In 2006, voter turnout among many youth groups in Minnesota was high compared to other states and all youth nationwide. Many groups of young people reported voter turnout rates of 40 percent or more.

Partisanship Among Young Voters in 2006

The plurality of young voters identified as Democrat, regardless of how they voted, in the 2006 elections.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minnesota</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>43 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>14 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>34 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something Else</td>
<td>***</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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 and Research Associate, respectively. We thank Jared Sagoff for excellent research assistance. I also thank Peter Levine, Abby Kiesa, and Emily Kirby 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.