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

By Mark Hugo Lopez, Karlo Barrios Marcelo, and Jared Sagoff
Updated June 2007

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. Similarly, while youth electoral participation improved between 2002 and 2006 nationally, in New Mexico, the youth voter turnout rate rose 7 percentage points from 18 percent in 2002 to 25 percent in 2006. Overall, New Mexico ranked 30th (tied with OK and PA) among all states and the District of Columbia in 2006, up from 44th in 2002.

This fact sheet reports the characteristics of young voters for the state of New Mexico, 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, an estimated 277,000 young people in New Mexico 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, Ages 18-29

Table 2 displays voter turnout rates for various groups of young people ages 18 to 29 in 2006 and 2002 in New Mexico. In 2006, voter turnout among many youth groups in New Mexico was up from 2002. Women and Latinos increased their voter turnout rates by substantial amounts, 14 and 9 points, respectively.

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>Party</th>
<th>New Mexico</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>42 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>33 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something Else</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</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, Research Associate, and Research Assistant, respectively. We also thank Peter Levine, Emily Kirby, Abby Kiesa, 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.