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Quick Facts about Young Voters in Orange County, CA¹: The Midterm Election Year 2006

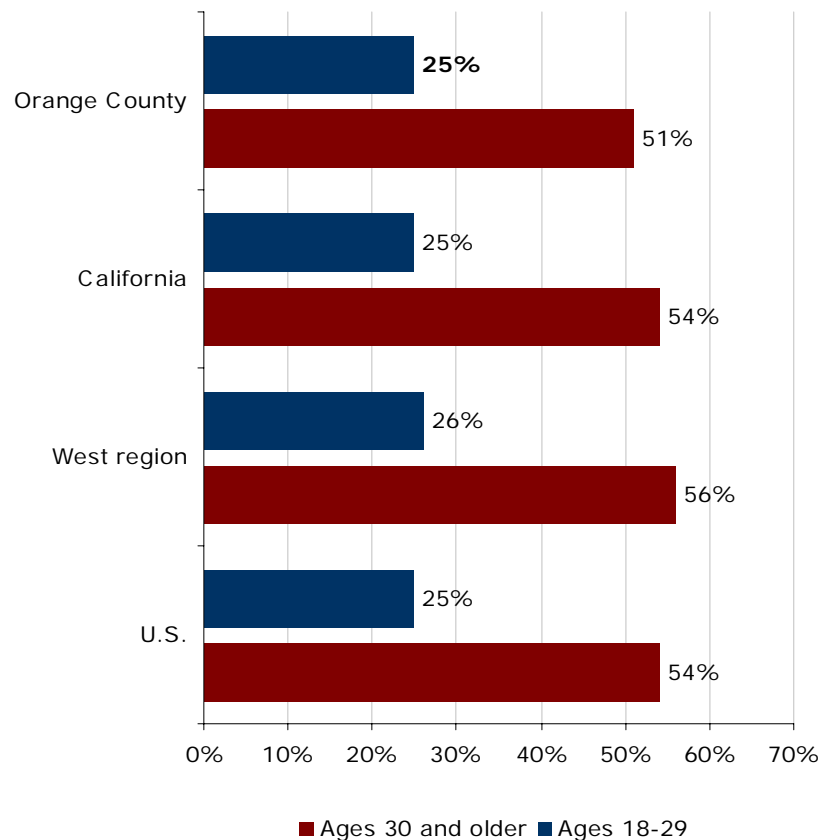
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July 2007

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.³

In Orange County, the voter turnout rate among young people was 25 percent, on par with California's state average and the national average. An estimated 200,000 young people from Orange County voted in the 2006 elections.

There was a 29 percentage point gap between young people and adults in the U.S., but this gap was smaller (26 percentage points) at the more local level of Orange County.

Figure 1: Voter Turnout Among Young Citizens



Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, November Supplement, 2006

Voter Turnout Among Subgroups in Orange County

No subgroups of young people turned out to vote at a rate of 40 percent or higher. White non-Hispanics, women, college graduates, and married people were the only subgroups of young people to vote at higher rates than the metropolitan average. Overall, youth voter turnout in Orange County was low. All subgroups of young people voted at lower rates than did their adult counterparts. See Table 1.

Table 1 –Voter Turnout Rates Among Citizens in Orange County, 2006

Voter Turnout Rate Among:	Young People (Ages 18-29)	Adults (Ages 30 and older)
<i>Race/Ethnicity⁴</i>		
White non-Hispanics	29 percent	58 percent
Black non-Hispanics	***	31 percent
Latinos	18 percent	35 percent
Asian non-Hispanics	***	35 percent
Native Americans non-Hispanics	***	***
<i>Gender</i>		
Women	30 percent	50 percent
Men	20 percent	52 percent
<i>Educational Attainment</i>		
Less than High School	***	24 percent
High School	22 percent	41 percent
Some College	23 percent	54 percent
BA or more	33 percent	58 percent
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Married	32 percent	53 percent
Single	23 percent	41 percent
Registered Voter		
	48 percent	74 percent
Orange County		
	25 percent	51 percent
California		
	25 percent	54 percent
National		
	25 percent	54 percent

Source: Author's Tabulations from the 2006 November Supplement of the Current Population Survey. *** indicates a sample size is too small to produce a reliable estimate.

Notes

¹ Orange County includes the principal cities of Santa Ana, Anaheim, Irvine, Orange, Fullerton, and Costa Mesa.

² I thank Mark Hugo Lopez and Peter Levine for comments on previous drafts of this fact sheet. All errors in fact or interpretation are my own.

³ 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. www.civicyouth.org

⁴ I 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.