Quick Facts about Young Voters in Virginia: 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, and impressively, youth electoral participation improved between 2002 and 2006 in Virginia, increasing 14 percentage points from 18 percent in 2002 to 32 percent in 2006. Overall, Virginia ranked 9th (tied with ME, MO, and OR) among all states and the District of Columbia in 2006, up from 44th in 2002. Much of this surge in participation was likely due to high profile races.

This fact sheet reports the characteristics of young voters for the state of Virginia, 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 1.1 million young people in Virginia who are eligible to vote in U.S. elections. Table 1 shows voting statistics for the years 2006 and 2002.³

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 Virginia. In 2006, voter turnout among all groups shown was up over 2002.

Partisanship Among Young Voters in 2006

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

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

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Virginia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>34 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>41 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something Else</td>
<td>***</td>
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</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 For a full discussion of the different ways voter turnout can be calculated please see “CIRCLE Working Paper 35: The Youth Voter 2004: With a Historical Look at Youth Voting Patterns 1972-2004.” All voter turnout estimates presented in this fact sheet are calculated for U.S. citizens only, and according to the “Census Citizen Method” described in CIRCLE Working Paper 35.

4 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.