



FACT SHEET

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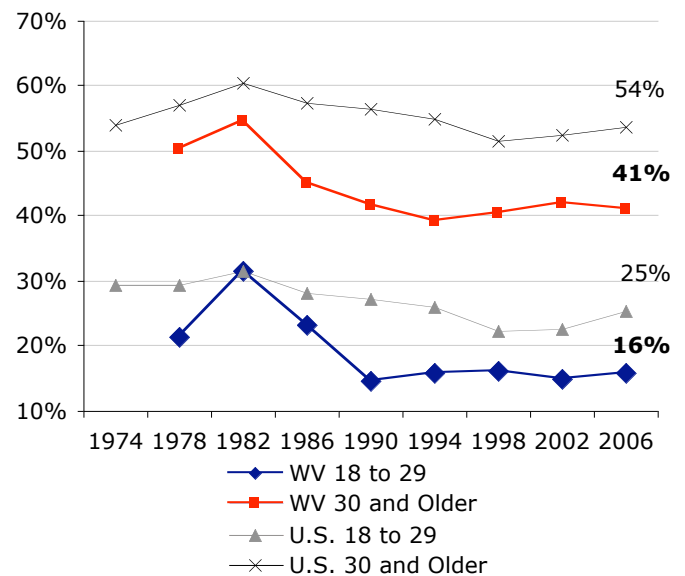
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Quick Facts about Young Voters in West Virginia: The Midterm Election Year 2006

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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.² Similarly, youth electoral participation improved between 2002 and 2006 in West Virginia, increasing one percentage point from 15 percent in 2002 to 16 percent in 2006. Overall, West Virginia ranked last among all states and the District of Columbia in 2006, similar to its ranking in 2002 (50th). Furthermore, West Virginia's youth voter turnout rate in midterm elections has been relatively stagnant, and significantly below the national average.

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



Source: Current Population Survey, November Supplements, 1974-2006.

This fact sheet reports the characteristics of young voters for the state of West 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 263,000 young people in West Virginia eligible to vote in U.S. elections. Table 1 shows voting statistics for the years 2006 and 2002.³

Table 1 – West Virginia Voter Turnout Statistics, 2006 & 2002

	Young People 18 to 29	Adults 30 and Older
2006		
Number of Votes Cast	***	472 thousand
Voter Turnout Rate	16 percent	41 percent
Share of all Voters	8 percent	92 percent
2002		
Number of Votes Cast	40 thousand	471 thousand
Voter Turnout Rate	15 percent	42 percent
Share of all Voters	8 percent	92 percent

Source: Authors' Tabulations, Current Population Survey, November Supplement 2006 and 2002. '***' indicates a sample size is too small to produce a reliable estimate.

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 West Virginia. In 2006, the voter turnout rate among all groups shown was relatively unchanged compared to 2002, though for some groups, voter turnout rates were higher. This is especially true for young women, up three percentage points, and those with some college experience, up two percentage points.

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

Voter Turnout Rate Among:	2006	2002
Gender		
Women	16 percent	13 percent
Men	17 percent	17 percent
Educational Attainment		
Less than High School	***	6 percent
High School	8 percent	7 percent
Some College	21 percent	19 percent
BA or more	***	45 percent
Marital Status		
Single Men	18 percent	18 percent
Single Women	18 percent	15 percent
Married Men	***	18 percent
Married Women	***	11 percent
Registered Voter	31 percent	35 percent
All Youth, West Virginia	16 percent	15 percent
All Youth, National	25 percent	22 percent

Source: Authors' Tabulations from the 2006 and 2002 November Supplements of the Current Population Survey. '***' indicates a sample size is too small to produce a reliable estimate.

Partisanship Among Young Voters in 2006

According to analysis of Election Pool, Exit Poll data, the plurality of young voters identified as Democrat (45 percent), regardless of how they voted, in the 2006 elections.

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.