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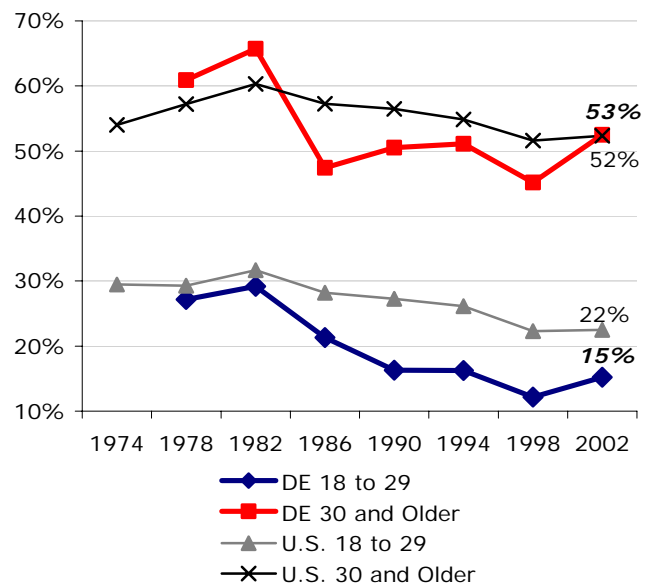
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Quick Facts about Young Voters in Delaware: The Midterm Election Year 2006

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This year's elections follow a presidential election that witnessed the highest level of national youth voter participation in over a decade, and a youth voter turnout rate of 50 percent in Delaware, up 8 percentage points over 2000. Compared to other states in 2004, the turnout rate among 18 to 29 year olds in Delaware ranked 23rd overall. However, despite high youth voter participation in Delaware in 2004, whether this voter mobilization momentum continues into 2006 remains unpredictable. Furthermore, it would be a mistake to compare either state-level or national youth voter turnout in 2006 to 2004 since presidential elections generally draw more voters to the polls, and hence have higher voter turnout rates. Instead, the two appropriate comparisons are 2002, the last time midterm elections occurred, and 1994, the last time midterm elections followed a surge in youth voting in a presidential election (1992).

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



Source: Current Population Survey, November Supplements, 1974-2002.

This fact sheet reports the characteristics of young voters for the state of Delaware, including estimates of the number of young voters, voter turnout in 2002 and 1994 for various sub-groups of young people, and a listing of voter registration and election day laws that may affect young voters. While the general trend in national voter turnout among young people during midterm elections was down between 1982 and 2002, Delaware's voter turnout among young people in midterm election years has been strictly below the national youth voter turnout rate, and exhibited a more pronounced decline since 1982. In 2002, despite a slight increase in youth voter participation over 1998, the youth voter turnout rate in Delaware was among the three lowest among all states and the District of Columbia. It is unlikely that Delaware will see a higher level of voter participation among all voters in 2006 relative to 2002 because of a lack of high profile midterm races.

Estimates of Eligible Young Voters, 2006

In 2006, a midterm election year, there are an estimated 120,000 young people in Delaware who are eligible to vote in U.S. elections. Table 1 shows voting statistics for the years 2002, the last midterm election year, and 1994, the last midterm election year that followed a surge in youth voting in a presidential election year (1992).²

Table 1 – Delaware Voter Turnout Statistics, 2006, 2002, and 1994

	Young People 18 to 29	Adults 30 and Older
2006		
Number of Citizens	120 thousand	478 thousand
Eligible to Vote in 2006		
2002		
Number of Votes Cast	17 thousand	233 thousand
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	15 percent	53 percent
Share of all Voters	7 percent	93 percent
1994		
Number of Votes Cast	21 thousand	198 thousand
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	16 percent	51 percent
Share of all Voters	10 percent	90 percent

Source: Authors' Tabulations, Current Population Survey, March Supplement 2006 and November Supplement 2002 and 1994

Voter Turnout Rates in 2002 and 1994 Among Eligible Young Citizens

Table 2 displays voter turnout rates for various groups of young people in 2002 and 1994 in Delaware. In 2002, voter turnout among many youth groups in Delaware was very low, with declines in voter turnout rates between 1994 and 2002 evident for black non-Hispanics, college graduates, and registered voters.

Table 2 – Delaware Voter Turnout Rates Among Young Citizens ages 18 to 29, 2002 and 1994

Voter Turnout Rate Among:	2002	1994
Race/Ethnicity³		
White non-Hispanics	18 percent	16 percent
Black non-Hispanics	8 percent	12 percent
Latinos	***	***
Asian non-Hispanics	***	***
Native American non-Hispanics	***	***
Gender		
Women	18 percent	13 percent
Men	12 percent	20 percent
Educational Attainment		
Less than High School	12 percent	***
High School	11 percent	10 percent
Some College	17 percent	23 percent
BA or more	24 percent	31 percent
Registered Voter	31 percent	42 percent
All Youth, Delaware	15 percent	16 percent
All Youth, National	22 percent	26 percent

Source: Authors' Tabulations from the 2002 and 1994 November Supplements of the Current Population Survey. '***' indicates a sample size is too small to produce a reliable estimate.

Voter Registration and Election Day Laws in Delaware

Table 3 displays important Voter Registration and Election Day Laws for the state of Delaware. For more information on elections in Delaware, contact the Elections Division of Delaware at 302-739-4277 or www.state.de.us/election/.

Table 3 – Delaware Voter Registration and Election Day Laws, 2006

Registration Day Laws	
Registration Deadline for all Elections	21 days before a primary; 20 days before a general election
Unrestricted Absentee Voting	No
In Person Early Voting	No
Election Day Registration	No
Allows 17 Year Olds to Vote in Primaries	Yes
Election Day Laws	
Polls Open	7am to 8pm
Time off to Vote (Private Sector)	No
Mail Information on Poll Location	Yes
Mail Sample Ballots	No

Source: CIRCLE Fact Sheet "State Voter Registration and Election Day Laws", June 2004 and NAACP Voter Empowerment Guide "Value Our Vote" July 2006

Notes

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² 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.

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.