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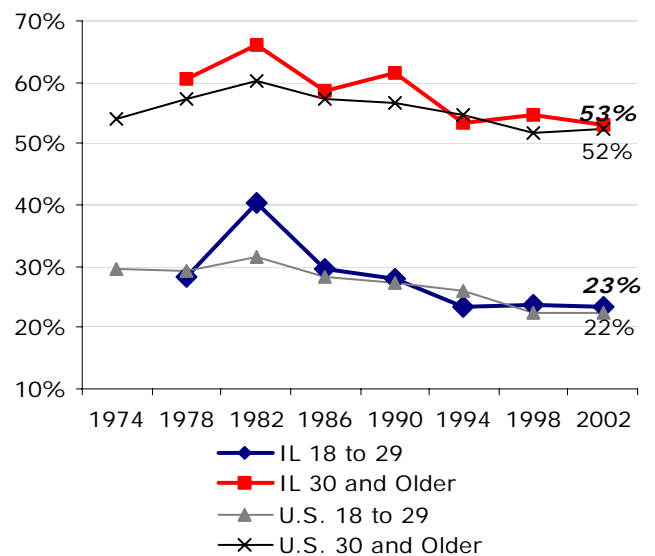
The Center for Information & Research on
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Quick Facts about Young Voters in Illinois: The Midterm Election Year 2006

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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 Illinois, up 5 percentage points over 2000. Compared to other states in 2004, the turnout rate among 18 to 29 year olds in Illinois ranked 24th overall. However, despite an increase in youth voter participation in Illinois 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: Illinois 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 Illinois, 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. The trend in youth voter turnout among young people in Illinois has followed closely the declining national trend in youth voter turnout since 1986. However, Illinois could see a higher level of voter participation among all voters in 2006 than in 2002 because of a high profile gubernatorial race.

Estimates of Eligible Young Voters, 2006

In 2006, a midterm election year, there are an estimated 1.9 million young people in Illinois who are eligible to vote in U.S. elections. Table 1A 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 1B shows the racial/ethnic characteristics of Illinois' adult population. As is the case in many large diverse states, the youth population in Illinois is more diverse racially and ethnically than its adult population.

**Table 1A – Illinois Voter Turnout Statistics,
2006, 2002, and 1994**

	Young People 18 to 29	Adults 30 and Older
2006		
Number of Citizens Eligible to Vote in 2006	1.9 million	6.7 million
2002		
Number of Votes Cast	416 thousand	3.4 million
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	23 percent	53 percent
Share of all Voters	11 percent	89 percent
1994		
Number of Votes Cast	450 thousand	3.2 million
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	23 percent	53 percent
Share of all Voters	12 percent	88 percent

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

**Table 1B – 2006 Population Proportion of Young People and Adults
by Citizenship and Race/Ethnicity**

	White non-Hispanics	Black non-Hispanics	Latinos
Young People, 18 to 29			
Residents	67 percent	14 percent	12 percent
Citizens	71 percent	16 percent	7 percent
Adults, 30 and older			
Residents	72 percent	13 percent	9 percent
Citizens	76 percent	14 percent	6 percent

Source: Authors' Tabulations, Current Population Survey, March Supplement 2006

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 Illinois. In 2002, voter turnout among many youth groups in Illinois was low. However this was not true for Black non-Hispanic youth. Only for young Black non-Hispanics did voter turnout increase substantially between 1994 and 2002. This reflects a trend of increasing youth voter participation in midterm election years for Black youth. (See Graph 2.)

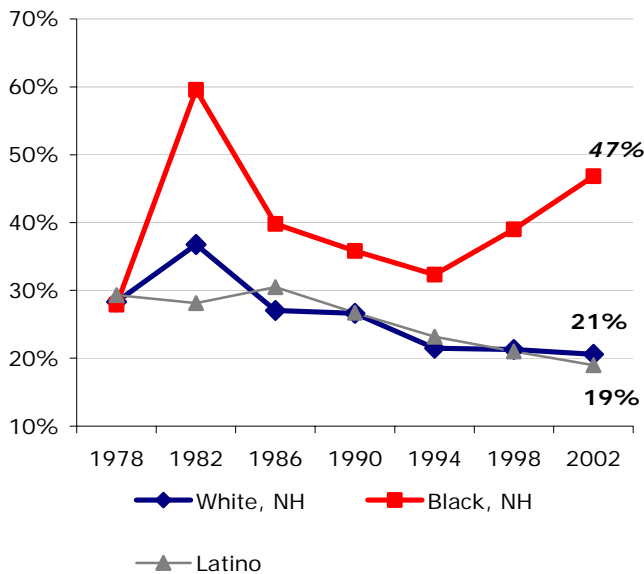
For all other groups of young people, voter turnout rates were relatively unchanged between 1994 and 2002, with declines evident for young Latinos (down 4 points), young men (down 4 points), young people with less than a high school diploma (down 4 points), single men (down four points), and those with some college experience (down 2 points).

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

Voter Turnout Rate Among:	2002	1994
Race/Ethnicity³		
White non-Hispanics	21 percent	21 percent
Black non-Hispanics	47 percent	32 percent
Latinos	19 percent	23 percent
Asian non-Hispanics	***	***
Native American non-Hispanics	***	***
Gender		
Women	27 percent	24 percent
Men	19 percent	23 percent
Educational Attainment		
Less than High School	15 percent	19 percent
High School	19 percent	16 percent
Some College	24 percent	26 percent
BA or more	36 percent	32 percent
Marital Status		
Single Men	18 percent	22 percent
Single Women	26 percent	23 percent
Married Men	26 percent	27 percent
Married Women	39 percent	23 percent
Registered Voter	50 percent	50 percent
All Youth, Illinois	23 percent	23 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.

Graph 2: Illinois Voter Turnout in Midterm Years Among 18 to 29 year old Citizens, by Race/Ethnicity



Source: Current Population Survey, November Supplements, 1978-2002.

Voter Registration and Election Day Laws in Illinois

Table 3 displays important Voter Registration and Election Day Laws for the state of Illinois. For more information on elections in Illinois, contact the Illinois Board of Elections at 217-782-4141 or 312-814-6440 or www.elections.state.il.us.

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

Registration Day Laws	
Registration Deadline for all Elections	28 days before an election
Unrestricted Absentee Voting	No
In Person Early Voting	No
Election Day Registration	No
Allows 17 Year Olds to Vote in Primaries	No
Election Day Laws	
Polls Open	6am to 7pm
Time off to Vote (Private Sector)	Yes
Mail Information on Poll Location	No
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.