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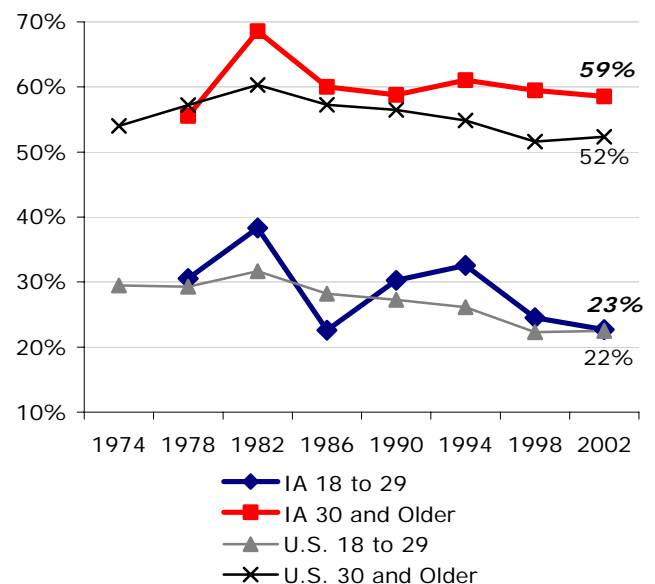
The Center for Information & Research on
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Quick Facts about Young Voters in Iowa: The Midterm Election Year 2006

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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 59 percent in Iowa, up 8 percentage points over 2000. Compared to other states in 2004, the turnout rate among 18 to 29 year olds in Iowa ranked 4th overall. However, despite high youth voter participation in Iowa 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: Iowa 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 Iowa, 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 Iowans has generally tracked, but remained above, the national trend in youth voter turnout in midterm elections. However, the decline in youth voter turnout for Iowa in midterm elections has been steeper since 1994 than the decline in the national youth voter turnout rate. Iowa could see a higher level of voter participation among all voters in 2006 relative to 2002, however, because of a high profile open-seat gubernatorial race and two highly contested House races (1st and 3rd Districts, respectively).

Estimates of Eligible Young Voters, 2006

In 2006, a midterm election year, there are an estimated 480,000 young people in Iowa 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 – Iowa Voter Turnout Statistics, 2006, 2002, and 1994

	Young People 18 to 29	Adults 30 and Older
2006		
Number of Citizens	480 thousand	1.7 million
Eligible to Vote in 2006		
2002		
Number of Votes Cast	104 thousand	934 thousand
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	23 percent	59 percent
Share of all Voters	10 percent	90 percent
1994		
Number of Votes Cast	175 thousand	905 thousand
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	33 percent	61 percent
Share of all Voters	16 percent	84 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 Iowa. In 2002, voter turnout among many youth groups in Iowa was low. Only among young people with a BA or more was the voter turnout rate at 40 percent or more. Overall, the midterm election year 1994 was a year of high voter turnout for all youth groups in Iowa relative to 2002. Since 1994, there has been a decline in turnout rates among all groups of young people.

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

Voter Turnout Rate Among:	2002	1994
Gender		
Women	22 percent	37 percent
Men	23 percent	29 percent
Educational Attainment		
Less than High School	12 percent	***
High School	16 percent	19 percent
Some College	25 percent	35 percent
BA or more	45 percent	50 percent
Marital Status		
Single Men	21 percent	26 percent
Single Women	22 percent	39 percent
Married Men	31 percent	33 percent
Married Women	27 percent	39 percent
Registered Voter	45 percent	54 percent
All Youth, Iowa	23 percent	33 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 Iowa

Table 3 displays important Voter Registration and Election Day Laws for the state of Iowa. For more information on elections in Iowa, contact the Iowa Secretary of State, Voter Elections Center at 515-281-5865 or www.sos.state.ia.us.

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

Registration Day Laws	
Registration Deadline for all Elections	10 days before an election
Unrestricted Absentee Voting	Yes
In Person Early Voting	Yes
Election Day Registration	No
Allows 17 Year Olds to Vote in Primaries	No
Election Day Laws	
Polls Open	7am to 9pm
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.