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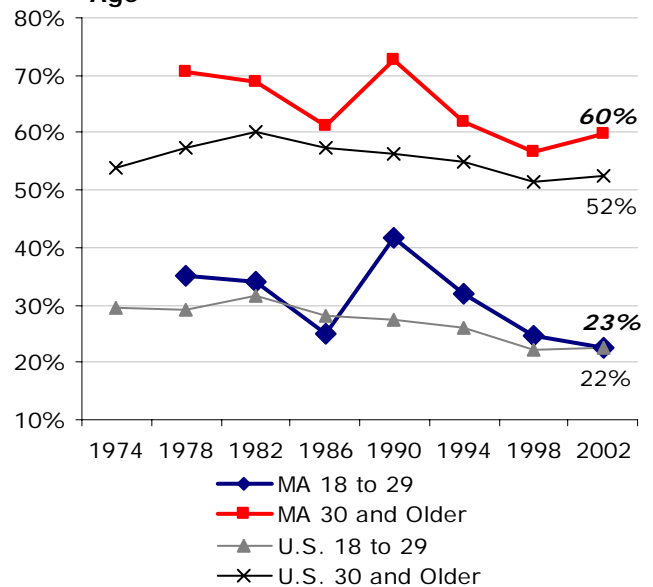
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Quick Facts about Young Voters in Massachusetts: The Midterm Election Year 2006

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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 51 percent in Massachusetts, up 7 percentage points over 2000. Compared to other states in 2004, the turnout rate among 18 to 29 year olds in Massachusetts ranked 20th overall. However, despite high youth voter participation in Massachusetts 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: Massachusetts 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 Massachusetts, 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 (see Graph 1), Massachusetts' youth voter turnout rate in midterm election years has been higher, but declining more sharply, than the national youth turnout rate since 1990. This year, Massachusetts could see a higher level of voter participation among all voters relative to 2002 because of a high profile gubernatorial race.

Estimates of Eligible Young Voters, 2006

In 2006, a midterm election year, there are an estimated 842,000 young people in Massachusetts 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 – Massachusetts Voter Turnout Statistics, 2006, 2002, and 1994

	Young People 18 to 29	Adults 30 and Older
2006		
Number of Citizens	842 thousand	3.5 million
Eligible to Vote in 2006		
2002		
Number of Votes Cast	194 thousand	2.0 million
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	23 percent	60 percent
Share of all Voters	9 percent	91 percent
1994		
Number of Votes Cast	317 thousand	2.0 million
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	32 percent	62 percent
Share of all Voters	13 percent	87 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, Ages 18-29

Table 2 displays voter turnout rates for various groups of young people ages 18 to 29 in 2002 and 1994 in Massachusetts. In 2002, voter turnout among many youth groups in Massachusetts was down from 1994. Also in 1994, relative to the nation as a whole, youth in Massachusetts were more engaged electorally.

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

Voter Turnout Rate Among:	2002	1994
Gender		
Women	25 percent	31 percent
Men	20 percent	33 percent
Educational Attainment		
Less than High School	15 percent	9 percent
High School	10 percent	24 percent
Some College	27 percent	33 percent
BA or more	32 percent	50 percent
Marital Status		
Single Men	19 percent	31 percent
Single Women	28 percent	28 percent
Married Men	***	45 percent
Married Women	***	44 percent
Registered Voter	50 percent	65 percent
All Youth, Massachusetts		
All Youth, National	23 percent	32 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 Massachusetts

Table 3 displays important Voter Registration and Election Day Laws for the state of Massachusetts. For more information on elections in Massachusetts, contact the Elections Division of Massachusetts at 617-727-2828 or www.state.ma.us/sec.

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

Registration Day Laws	
Registration Deadline for all Elections	20 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	No later than 7am to 8pm
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.