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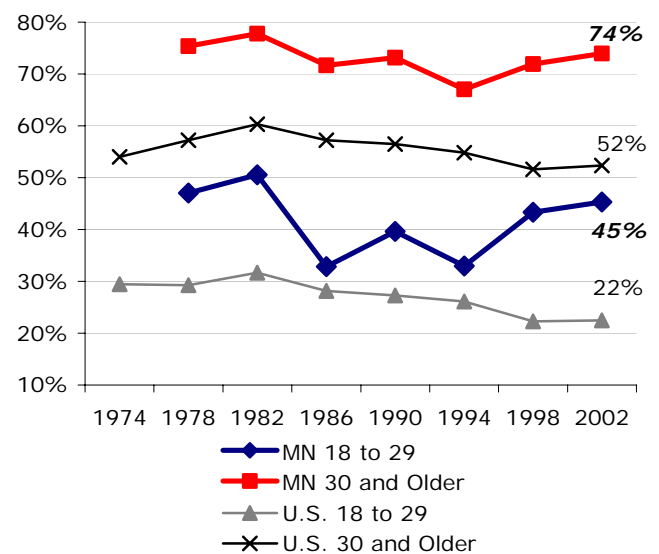
The Center for Information & Research on
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Quick Facts about Young Voters in Minnesota: The Midterm Election Year 2006

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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 71 percent in Minnesota, up an impressive 20 percentage points over 2000. Compared to other states in 2004, the turnout rate among 18 to 29 year olds in Minnesota ranked first overall. Whether the voter mobilization momentum of 2004 continues into 2006 remains unpredictable, though Minnesota has, in recent elections, seen very high levels of voter participation. Even with this recent trend in voter turnout in Minnesota, however, 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: Minnesota 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 Minnesota, 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, Minnesota, has generally seen higher, and increasing, turnout rates than the U.S., especially in the years 1998 and 2002. To some extent, Minnesota's high level of voter turnout rates among youth and adults was driven by Minnesota's election-day registration law, which allows Minnesota citizens to register to vote on election day.

Minnesota's election-day registration law went into effect in 1976. The trends in voter turnout in midterm elections in Minnesota and the U.S. as a whole are shown in Graph 1.² Given that 2006 is a gubernatorial election year for Minnesota, it is likely that Minnesota's high level of voter participation will continue in 2006.

Estimates of Eligible Young Voters, 2006

In 2006, a midterm election year, there are an estimated 779 thousand young people in Minnesota 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).³ Minnesota's youth voter turnout rate was the highest of all states in 2002, but was only in the top third of in 1994 among all 50 states and the District of Columbia.⁴

Table 1 – Minnesota 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	779 thousand	2.9 million
2002		
Number of Votes Cast	356 thousand	1.9 million
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	45 percent	74 percent
Share of all Voters	15 percent	85 percent
1994		
Number of Votes Cast	257 thousand	1.7 million
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	33 percent	67 percent
Share of all Voters	13 percent	87 percent

Source: Author's Tabulations, Current Population Survey, March Supplement 2006 and November Supplement 2002 and 1994. All the above statistics are estimates, and may differ from numbers reported from other sources.

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 Minnesota. In 2002, voter turnout among many youth groups in Minnesota was high compared to other states and all youth nationwide. Among young people with a BA or more in Minnesota the voter turnout rate was 73 percent, the highest reported in the table. In contrast the midterm election year 1994 was a year with lower levels of voter turnout for all youth groups relative to 2002.

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

Voter Turnout Rate Among:	2002	1994
Gender		
Women	46 percent	36 percent
Men	44 percent	30 percent
Educational Attainment		
Less than High School	25 percent	***
High School	35 percent	21 percent
Some College	45 percent	35 percent
BA or more	73 percent	53 percent
Marital Status		
Single Men	43 percent	28 percent
Single Women	42 percent	38 percent
Married Men	52 percent	29 percent
Married Women	59 percent	35 percent
Registered Voters	71 percent	51 percent
All Youth	45 percent	33 percent
All Youth, National	22 percent	26 percent

Source: Author's 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 Minnesota

Table 3 displays important Voter Registration and Election Day Laws for the state of Minnesota. For more information on elections in Minnesota, contact the Secretary of State of Minnesota at 877-600-8683 or 661-215-1440 or www.state.mn.us/ebranch/sos.

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

Registration Day Laws	
Registration Deadline for all Elections	Election Day
Unrestricted Absentee Voting	No
In Person Early Voting	No
Election Day Registration	Yes
Allows 17 Year Olds to Vote in Primaries	No
Election Day Laws	
Polls Open	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

¹ I thank Jared Sagoff for excellent research assistance. I also thank Peter Levine, Karlo Marcelo, Abby Kiesa, and Emily Kirby for comments on previous drafts of this fact sheet.

² For more information on the voter turnout rates of young people in presidential years, see "CIRCLE Working Paper 35: The Youth Voter 2004: With a Historical Look at Youth Voting Patterns 1972-2004."

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.

⁴ For state-by-state comparisons of voter turnout rates, see the CIRCLE fact sheet "Youth Voter Turnout in the States during the 2004 Presidential Election and the 2002 Midterm Elections."