



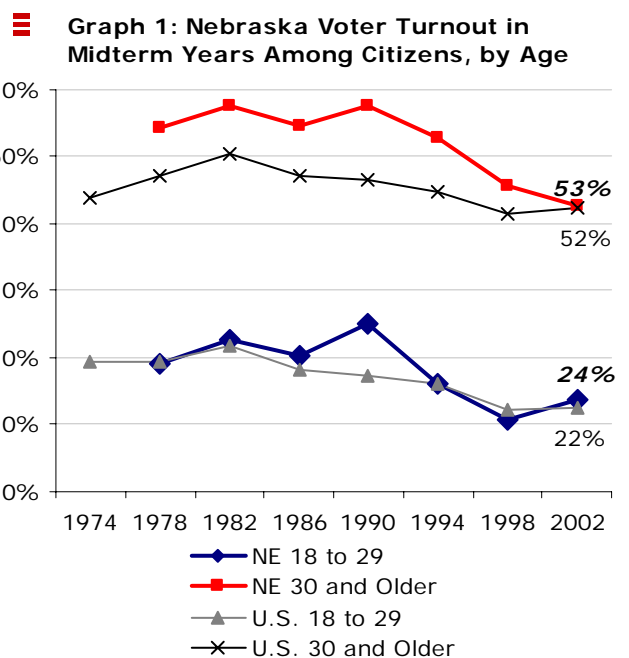
CIRCLE

The Center for Information & Research on
Civic Learning & Engagement

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

By Mark Hugo Lopez, Karlo Barrios Marcelo, and Jared Sagoff¹
September 2006

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 46 percent in Nebraska, up 7 percentage points over 2000. Compared to other states in 2004, the turnout rate among 18 to 29 year olds in Nebraska ranked 38th overall. However, despite high youth voter participation in Nebraska 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).



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

This fact sheet reports the characteristics of young voters for the state of Nebraska, 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. Just as the general trend in national voter turnout among young people during midterm elections was down between 1982 and 2002 (see Graph 1), Nebraska's youth voter turnout rate in midterm election years suffered a steady decline from 1990 to 1998. Voter participation among all Nebraska voters in 2006 relative to 2002 may be stagnant because of the lack of highly contested gubernatorial and Senate races. The incumbent Governor and Senator appear to have safe seats.

Estimates of Eligible Young Voters, 2006

In 2006, a midterm election year, there are an estimated 281,000 young people in Nebraska 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 – Nebraska Voter Turnout Statistics, 2006, 2002, and 1994

	Young People 18 to 29	Adults 30 and Older
2006		
Number of Citizens	281 thousand	965 thousand
Eligible to Vote in 2006		
2002		
Number of Votes Cast	63 thousand	471 thousand
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	24 percent	53 percent
Share of all Voters	12 percent	88 percent
1994		
Number of Votes Cast	67 thousand	563 thousand
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	26 percent	63 percent
Share of all Voters	11 percent	89 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 in 2002 and 1994 in Nebraska. In 2002, voter turnout among many youth groups in Nebraska was very low. Only among young people with a BA or more was the voter turnout rate at 40 percent or higher. In contrast, the midterm election year 1994 was a year of high voter turnout for all youth groups in Nebraska relative to 2002.

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

Voter Turnout Rate Among:	2002	1994
Gender		
Women	22 percent	21 percent
Men	25 percent	31 percent
Educational Attainment		
Less than High School	11 percent	***
High School	14 percent	14 percent
Some College	24 percent	27 percent
BA or more	47 percent	59 percent
Marital Status		
Single Men	22 percent	31 percent
Single Women	20 percent	14 percent
Married Men	36 percent	***
Married Women	26 percent	26 percent
Registered Voter	44 percent	53 percent
All Youth, Nebraska	24 percent	26 percent
All Youth, National	23 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 Nebraska

Table 3 displays important Voter Registration and Election Day Laws for the state of Nebraska. For more information on elections in Nebraska, contact the Nebraska Secretary of State at 402-471-3229 or www.nol.org/home/SIS.

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

Registration Day Laws	
Registration Deadline for all Elections	Second Friday before an election
Unrestricted Absentee Voting	Yes
In Person Early Voting	Yes
Election Day Registration	No
Allows 17 Year Olds to Vote in Primaries	Yes
Election Day Laws	
Polls Open	7/8am to 7/8pm
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 Research Director, Research Associate, and Research Assistant, respectively. We thank Peter Levine, Emily Kirby, Abby Kiesa, and Deborah Both for comments on previous drafts of this fact sheet.

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.