



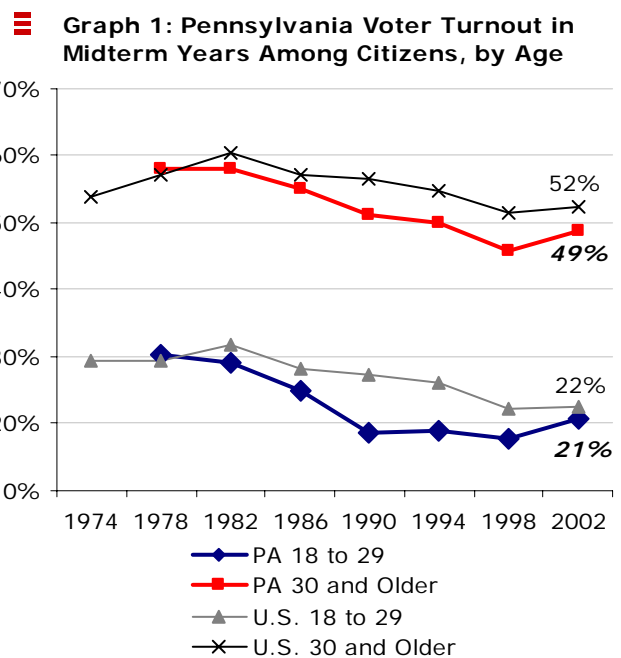
CIRCLE

The Center for Information & Research on
Civic Learning & Engagement

Quick Facts about Young Voters in Pennsylvania: 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 48 percent in Pennsylvania, up an impressive 15 percentage points over 2000. Overall the turnout rate among 18 to 29 year olds in Pennsylvania ranked 32nd among all states and the District of Columbia in 2004. However, whether the voter mobilization momentum of 2004 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 Pennsylvania, including estimates of the number of young voters, estimates of the racial/ethnic characteristics of the adult population of Pennsylvania in 2006, 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), Pennsylvania's youth voter turnout rate in midterm election years has, over the same period, experienced a sharper decline, and has been strictly below the national average since 1982. However, Pennsylvania could see a higher level of voter participation among all voters in 2006 relative to 2002 because of a high profile gubernatorial, House, (6th, 7th, and 8th Districts, respectively) and Senate races.

Estimates of Eligible Young Voters, 2006

In 2006, a midterm election year, there are an estimated 1.9 million young people in Pennsylvania 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 displays the race/ethnicity characteristics of young people and adults in Pennsylvania. Generally, young people today are more diverse racially and ethnically than their adult counterparts.

**Table 1A – Pennsylvania 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	7.2 million
2002		
Number of Votes Cast	364 thousand	3.4 million
Voter Turnout Rate	21 percent	49 percent
Share of all Voters	10 percent	90 percent
1994		
Number of Votes Cast	336 thousand	3.5 million
Voter Turnout Rate	19 percent	50 percent
Share of all Voters	9 percent	91 percent

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

**Table 1B – 2006 Population Characteristics
by Citizenship, Race/Ethnicity, and Age**

	White non-Hispanics	Black non-Hispanics	Latinos
Young People, 18 to 29			
Residents	76.0%	14.1%	6.6%
Citizens	78.5%	14.0%	5.7%
Adults, 30 and older			
Residents	87.2%	8.3%	2.3%
Citizens	88.4%	8.2%	1.9%

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

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 Pennsylvania. In 2002, voter turnout among many youth groups in Pennsylvania was up slightly over 1994. Among young people in Pennsylvania, young people with a college degree have the highest voter turnout rates in both 1994 and 2002.

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

Voter Turnout Rate	2002	1994
Among:		
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>³		
White non-Hispanics	20 percent	19 percent
Black non-Hispanics	26 percent	19 percent
Latinos	22 percent	17 percent
Asian non-Hispanics	***	***
Native American non-Hispanics	***	***
<i>Gender</i>		
Women	19 percent	20 percent
Men	22 percent	18 percent
<i>Educational Attainment</i>		
Less than High School	9 percent	9 percent
High School	15 percent	13 percent
Some College	21 percent	24 percent
BA or more	45 percent	32 percent
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single Men	22 percent	16 percent
Single Women	16 percent	19 percent
Married Men	27 percent	23 percent
Married Women	33 percent	24 percent
Registered Voter	46 percent	48 percent
All Youth, Pennsylvania	21 percent	19 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 Pennsylvania

Table 3 displays important Voter Registration and Election Day Laws for the state of Pennsylvania. For more information on elections in Pennsylvania, contact the Elections Division of Pennsylvania at 717-787-5280 or www.dos.state.pa.us.

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

Registration Day Laws	
Registration Deadline for all Elections	30 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	7am to 8pm
Time off to Vote (Private Sector)	No
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 also 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.

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.