



CIRCLE

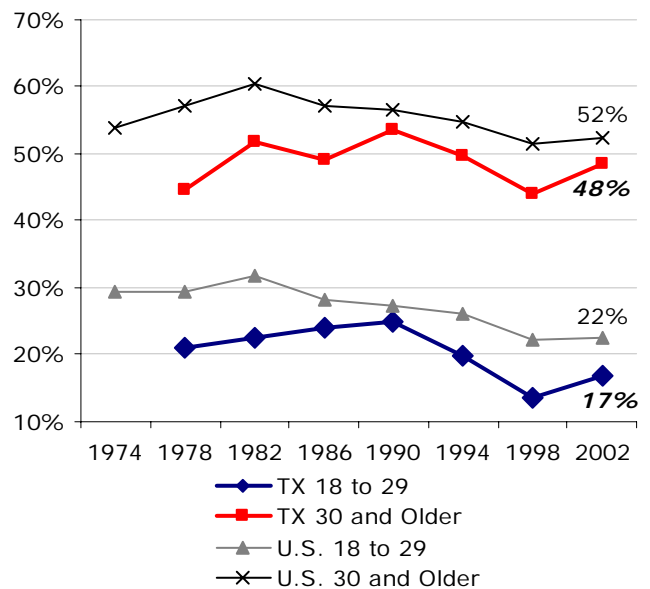
The Center for Information & Research on
Civic Learning & Engagement

Quick Facts about Young Voters in Texas: 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 42 percent in Texas, up 6 percentage points over 2000. Compared to other states in 2004, the turnout rate among 18 to 29 year olds in Texas ranked 46th overall. However, despite high youth voter participation in Texas 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: Texas 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 Texas, 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), Texas' youth voter turnout rate in midterm election years has been declining since 1990 (and has been below the national average), ending a slow increase in voter turnout from 1978 to 1990. This year, Texas may not see a higher level of voter participation among all voters in 2006 than in 2002 because of the lack of highly contested gubernatorial and Senate races.

Estimates of Eligible Young Voters, 2006

In 2006, a midterm election year, there are an estimated 3.1 million young people in Texas 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 shows the racial/ethnic characteristics of the Texas adult population. As is the case in large diverse states, the youth population in Texas is more likely to be non-White.

**Table 1A – Texas 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	3.1 million	11 million
2002		
Number of Votes Cast	518 thousand	4.9 million
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	17 percent	48 percent
Share of all Voters	9 percent	91 percent
1994		
Number of Votes Cast	564 thousand	4.4 million
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	20 percent	50 percent
Share of all Voters	11 percent	89 percent

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

**Table 1B – 2006 Population Proportion of Young People and Adults
by Citizenship and Race/Ethnicity**

	White non-Hispanics	Black non-Hispanics	Latinos
Young People, 18 to 29			
Residents	39 percent	13 percent	43 percent
Citizens	48 percent	16 percent	33 percent
Adults, 30 and older			
Residents	54 percent	11 percent	31 percent
Citizens	61 percent	12 percent	24 percent

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 Texas. In 2002, voter turnout among many youth groups in Texas was down from 1994. Also in 1994, relative to the nation as a whole, youth in Texas were less engaged electorally.

Table 2 – Texas 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	15 percent	24 percent
Black non-Hispanics	32 percent	22 percent
Latinos	13 percent	12 percent
Asian non-Hispanics	***	***
Native American non-Hispanics	***	***
<i>Gender</i>		
Women	17 percent	21 percent
Men	17 percent	18 percent
<i>Educational Attainment</i>		
Less than High School	10 percent	7 percent
High School	10 percent	12 percent
Some College	20 percent	25 percent
BA or more	32 percent	47 percent
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single Men	19 percent	21 percent
Single Women	16 percent	22 percent
Married Men	13 percent	13 percent
Married Women	18 percent	23 percent
Registered Voter	34 percent	42 percent
All Youth, Texas	17 percent	20 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 Texas

Table 3 displays important Voter Registration and Election Day Laws for the state of Texas. For more information on elections in Texas, contact the Elections Office of Texas at 512-463-5650 or 800-252-8683 or www.sos.state.tx.us.

Table 3 – Texas 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	Yes
Election Day Registration	No
Allows 17 Year Olds to Vote in Primaries	No
Election Day Laws	
Polls Open	7am to 7pm
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.

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.