Quick Facts about Young Voters in the District of Columbia: The Midterm Election Year 2006

By Mark Hugo Lopez, Karlo Barrios Marcelo, and Jared Sagoff
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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 59 percent in Washington, D.C., up 4 percentage points over 2000. Compared to other states in 2004, the turnout rate among 18 to 29 year olds in D.C. ranked sixth overall. However, despite high youth voter participation in D.C. 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).

This fact sheet reports the characteristics of young voters for Washington, D.C., 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, youth voter turnout rates in Washington, D.C. have, since 1986, been higher than youth turnout rates nationally, and on an upward trajectory recently. This year, Washington, D.C. could witness a higher level of voter participation among all voters in 2006 relative to 2002 because of a high profile mayoral race.
Estimates of Eligible Young Voters, 2006

In 2006, a midterm election year, there are an estimated 99,000 young people in Washington, D.C. 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

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 Washington, D.C. In 2002, voter turnout among many youth groups in Washington, D.C. was significantly lower than in 1994, but generally high compared to young people nationally.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Young People 18 to 29</th>
<th>Adults 30 and Older</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Citizens Eligible to Vote in 2006</td>
<td>99 thousand</td>
<td>278 thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Votes Cast</td>
<td>28 thousand</td>
<td>164 thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen Voter Turnout Rate</td>
<td>32 percent</td>
<td>60 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of all Voters</td>
<td>15 percent</td>
<td>85 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1994</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Votes Cast</td>
<td>45 thousand</td>
<td>202 thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen Voter Turnout Rate</td>
<td>47 percent</td>
<td>68 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of all Voters</td>
<td>18 percent</td>
<td>82 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voter Turnout Rate Among Young Citizens ages 18 to 29, 2002 and 1994</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White non-Hispanics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black non-Hispanics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian non-Hispanics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American non-Hispanics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Attainment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Voter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Youth, DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Youth, National</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Washington, D.C.

Table 3 displays important Voter Registration and Election Day Laws for the state of Washington, D.C. For more information on elections in Washington, D.C., contact the Elections Division of Washington, D.C. at 202-727-2525 or http://www.dcboee.org/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration Day Laws</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration Deadline for all Elections</td>
<td>10 days before an election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Absentee Voting</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Person Early Voting</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election Day Registration</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows 17 Year Olds to Vote in Primaries</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election Day Laws</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polls Open</td>
<td>No later than 8 am to 6/8pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time off to Vote (Private Sector)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail Information on Poll Location</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail Sample Ballots</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Notes

1 Research Director, Research Associate, and Research Assistant, respectively. We thank Rafael Nieto for excellent research assistance and fact-checking this document. 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.