

# Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2006

Issued June 2008

## Population Characteristics

P20-557

This report examines levels of voting and registration in the November 2006 congressional election, the characteristics of citizens who reported either registering or voting in the election, and the reasons why some registered individuals did not vote.

The data in this report are based on responses to the November 2006 Current Population Survey (CPS) Voting and Registration Supplement, which surveys the civilian noninstitutionalized population in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The estimates presented in this report may differ from those based on administrative data or exit polls. For more information, see the section "Accuracy of the Estimates."

### VOTING AND REGISTRATION OF THE VOTING-AGE CITIZEN POPULATION

#### Turnout for the November 2006 Election

In the 2006 congressional election, 48 percent of voting-age citizens voted, a slight increase over the 46 percent that turned out in 2002 (Table 1).<sup>2</sup> This was the highest voter turnout in a

<sup>1</sup> People in the military, U.S. citizens living abroad, and people in institutional housing, such as correctional institutions and nursing homes, were not included in the survey. For a discussion of the differences between the official counts of votes cast and the CPS data, see the section "Measuring Voting in the Current Population Survey."

<sup>2</sup> The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text, figures, and tables) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

#### ABOUT THIS REPORT

Voting and registration rates are historically lower in years with congressional elections than in Presidential election years. For this report, we compare only 2006 election data with data from previous congressional election years (2002, 1998, 1994, etc.).

To avoid confusion with the Presidential elections, this report refers to non-Presidential-year elections as congressional elections.

congressional election year since 1994, when 48 percent of voting-age citizens voted and when the U.S. Census Bureau started consistently producing voting estimates for the citizen population. Although the rate in 1994 was higher than that in 2006, both percentages round to 48 percent.<sup>3, 4</sup>

Overall, 96 million people voted in 2006, a turnout increase of about 7 million people since 2002. During this same 4-year period, the voting-age citizen population in the United States increased by roughly 8 million people.

Sixty-eight percent of voting-age citizens registered to vote in 2006, a modest

<sup>3</sup> Additional historical voting and registration data, as well as detailed tables addressing each of the topics discussed in this report, are available at [www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting.html).

<sup>4</sup> In 1994, due to a coding error, the citizenship recode (PRCITSHP) was in error for some individuals with an entry of either 4 or 5 (naturalized citizen or not a citizen). This partially affected the November 1994 file.

## Current Population Reports

By  
Thom File

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Table 1.  
**Reported Rates of Voting and Registration: 1994 to 2006**

(Numbers in thousands)

Congressional election year	Total	Citizens							Registered	
		Total	Registered			Voted			Percent reported voted	90-percent confidence interval
			Number	Percent	90-percent confidence interval	Number	Percent	90-percent confidence interval		
<b>Total, 18 Years and Older</b>										
2006 .....	220,603	201,073	135,847	67.6	67.3–67.9	96,119	47.8	47.5–48.1	70.8	70.5–71.1
2002 .....	210,421	192,656	128,154	66.5	66.2–66.8	88,903	46.1	45.8–46.4	69.4	69.0–69.8
1998 .....	198,228	183,450	123,104	67.1	66.8–67.4	83,098	45.3	44.9–45.7	67.5	67.1–67.9
1994 .....	190,267	177,260	118,994	67.1	66.8–67.4	85,702	48.3	48.0–48.6	72.0	71.6–72.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 1994, 1998, 2002, and 2006.

increase over the 67 percent who registered in 2002 (Table 1). The 2006 election had the highest registration rate for a congressional election since the Census Bureau's voting estimates for citizens began in 1994. Overall, 136 million people registered in 2006, an increase of approximately 8 million people since 2002.

Nearly 3 of every 4 registered voters went to the polls in 2006. Of all registered individuals, 71 percent reported voting, up slightly from 69 percent in the 2002 congressional election (Table 2). Historically, the likelihood that an individual will actually vote once registered has remained high, with the peak at 80 percent for congressional elections in 1970.

### WHO VOTES?

This section of the report highlights voting and registration rates by selected characteristics for the voting-age citizen population.

### Race and Hispanic Origin

The likelihood of registering and voting differed among race groups and Hispanics (Table 2). Non-Hispanic Whites had the highest registration rate at 71 percent.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Federal surveys now give respondents the option of reporting more than one race. Therefore, two basic ways of defining a race group are possible. A group such as Asian may be defined as those who reported Asian and no other race (the race-alone or single-race concept) or as those who reported Asian regardless of whether they also reported another race (the race-alone-or-in-combination concept). The body of this report (text, figures, and tables) shows data for people who reported they were the single race White and not Hispanic, people who reported the single race Black, and people who reported the single race Asian. Use of the single-race populations does not imply

Sixty-one percent of Blacks, 54 percent of Hispanics, and 49 percent of Asians registered to vote in 2006. Non-Hispanic White citizens also had the highest level of voter turnout in the November 2006 election at 52 percent, followed by Black citizens at 41 percent, and Hispanic and Asian citizens at 32 percent each.

Citizenship status affects racial and ethnic differences in voting and registration rates. Immigration has

that it is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data.

Because Hispanics may be any race, data in this report for Hispanics overlap slightly with data for the Black population and the Asian population. Based on the November 2006 CPS, 3 percent of the Black voting-age population and 2 percent of the Asian voting-age population were Hispanic. Of the voting-age citizen population, 2 percent of Blacks and 2 percent of Asians were Hispanic. Data for the American Indian and Alaska Native and the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander populations are not shown in this report because of their small sample size in the November 2006 CPS.

## UNDERSTANDING VOTING RATES

### Voting-Age Population

One of the primary criteria for being eligible to vote is age. Since 1972, every state has required that eligible voters be at least 18 years of age. Thus, the voting-age population, or the 18-and-older population, is a population base often used in presenting voting statistics. The Census Bureau has historically estimated voting and registration rates using this population.

### Voting-Age Citizen Population

A second criterion for voting eligibility is citizenship. In the United States, only native or naturalized citizens can legally vote in elections. While the Census Bureau has collected voting and registration data since 1964, the Current Population Survey (CPS) has gathered citizenship data in a consistent way only since 1994. Removing noncitizens decreases the voting-age population base, resulting in higher turnout rates for any given election. For example, in the November 2006 election, 44 percent of the voting-age population voted, while 48 percent of the voting-age citizen population went to the polls. This

report focuses mainly on the rates of the voting-age citizen population.

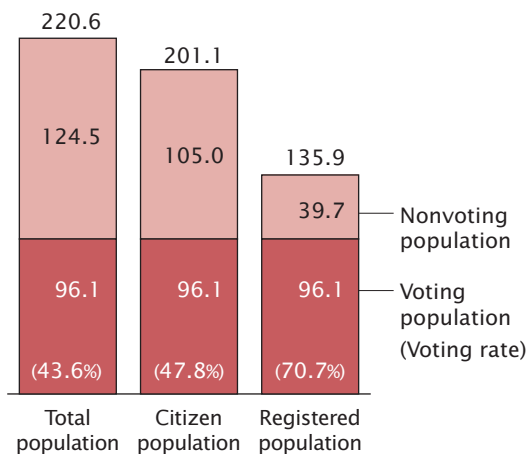
### Registered Population

A third criterion for voting eligibility is registration. With the exception of North Dakota, every state requires eligible voters to formally register before casting a ballot. In terms of methods and deadlines, registration procedures vary greatly from state to state.

Figure 1 illustrates the three measures of voting rates. In November 2006, of the 221 million people who were 18 and older, 201 million were citizens and 136 million were registered. In the November election, 96 million people voted. Thus, the voting rate was 44 percent for the total population 18 and older, 48 percent for the voting-age citizen population, and 71 percent for the registered population.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 1.  
**Voters Among the Total, Citizen,  
and Registered Voting-Age  
Populations: 2006**

(Population 18 and older, in millions)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006.

<sup>6</sup> A fourth criterion for voting eligibility is felony disenfranchisement, or the practice of prohibiting people from voting based on the fact that they have been convicted of a felony. Although the Census Bureau does not currently provide a measurement of felony disenfranchisement in the CPS, some of the people who reported not being eligible to vote on page 12 of this report were ineligible due to a felony conviction.

Table 2.  
**Reported Rates of Voting and Registration by Selected Characteristics: 2006**

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Citizens								Registered	
	Total	Total	Registered			Voted			Percent reported voted	90-percent confidence interval
			Number	Per-cent	90-percent confidence interval	Number	Per-cent	90-percent confidence interval		
<b>Total, 18 years and older</b> .....	<b>220,603</b>	<b>201,073</b>	<b>135,847</b>	<b>67.6</b>	<b>67.3–67.9</b>	<b>96,119</b>	<b>47.8</b>	<b>47.5–48.1</b>	<b>70.8</b>	<b>70.5–71.1</b>
<b>Sex</b>										
Male .....	106,531	96,144	63,425	66.0	65.6–66.4	45,118	46.9	46.4–47.4	71.1	70.7–71.5
Female .....	114,073	104,928	72,422	69.0	68.6–69.4	51,001	48.6	48.2–49.0	70.4	70.0–70.8
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>										
White alone .....	179,873	165,637	115,135	69.5	69.2–69.8	82,387	49.7	49.4–50.0	71.6	71.3–71.9
White alone, non-Hispanic .....	152,998	149,761	106,620	71.2	70.9–71.5	77,280	51.6	51.2–52.0	72.5	72.2–72.8
Black alone .....	25,722	24,229	14,765	60.9	59.8–62.0	9,937	41.0	39.9–42.1	67.3	66.3–68.3
Asian alone .....	9,855	6,614	3,245	49.1	46.9–51.3	2,145	32.4	30.3–34.5	66.1	64.4–67.8
Hispanic (any race) .....	28,945	17,315	9,304	53.7	52.0–55.4	5,595	32.3	30.6–34.0	60.1	58.8–61.4
<b>Nativity Status</b>										
Total citizens .....	201,073	201,073	135,847	67.6	67.3–67.9	96,119	47.8	47.5–48.1	70.8	70.5–71.1
Native .....	187,132	187,132	128,282	68.6	68.3–68.9	91,010	48.6	48.3–48.9	70.9	70.6–71.2
Naturalized .....	13,941	13,941	7,565	54.3	53.1–55.5	5,109	36.6	35.4–37.8	67.5	66.4–68.6
<b>Age</b>										
18 to 24 years .....	27,774	24,954	11,554	46.3	45.4–47.2	5,524	22.1	21.4–22.8	47.8	47.0–48.6
25 to 34 years .....	39,370	33,215	19,822	59.7	58.9–60.5	11,137	33.5	32.8–34.2	56.2	55.5–56.9
35 to 44 years .....	42,633	37,520	25,277	67.4	66.7–68.1	17,079	45.5	44.8–46.2	67.6	67.0–68.2
45 to 54 years .....	43,183	40,322	29,054	72.1	71.5–72.7	21,708	53.8	53.1–54.5	74.7	74.1–75.3
55 years and older .....	67,644	65,061	50,140	77.1	76.6–77.6	40,671	62.5	62.0–63.0	81.1	80.6–81.6
65 to 74 years .....	18,954	18,208	14,283	78.4	77.5–79.3	11,700	64.3	63.3–65.3	81.9	81.1–82.7
75 years and older .....	16,867	16,420	12,740	77.6	76.7–78.5	9,954	60.6	59.5–61.7	78.1	77.2–79.0
<b>Marital Status</b>										
Married .....	123,797	111,710	83,204	74.5	74.1–74.9	62,832	56.2	55.8–56.6	75.5	75.2–75.8
Widowed .....	13,799	13,232	9,341	70.6	69.5–71.7	6,744	51.0	49.8–52.2	72.2	71.1–73.3
Divorced .....	23,180	22,186	14,242	64.2	63.3–65.1	9,518	42.9	42.0–43.8	66.8	65.9–67.7
Separated .....	4,591	4,042	2,271	56.2	54.0–58.4	1,335	33.0	30.9–35.1	58.8	56.7–60.9
Never married .....	55,237	49,903	26,789	53.7	53.1–54.3	15,691	31.4	30.8–32.0	58.6	58.0–59.2
<b>Educational Attainment</b>										
Less than high school graduate .....	32,269	24,349	11,574	47.5	46.6–48.4	6,678	27.4	26.6–28.2	57.7	56.9–58.5
High school graduate or GED .....	69,948	64,949	40,205	61.9	61.4–62.4	26,335	40.5	40.0–41.0	65.5	64.7–66.3
Some college or associate's degree .....	60,207	57,602	41,096	71.3	70.8–71.8	28,472	49.4	48.8–50.0	69.3	68.8–69.8
Bachelor's degree .....	38,692	36,204	28,187	77.9	77.3–78.5	22,127	61.1	60.4–61.8	78.5	77.9–79.1
Advanced degree .....	19,488	17,968	14,786	82.3	81.5–83.1	12,507	69.6	68.6–70.6	84.6	83.9–85.3
<b>Annual Family Income<sup>1</sup></b>										
Total family members .....	163,156	148,690	103,610	69.7	69.4–70.0	74,451	50.1	49.7–50.5	71.9	71.6–72.2
Less than \$20,000 .....	15,997	13,320	7,437	55.8	54.6–57.0	4,166	31.3	30.2–32.4	56.0	56.1–57.1
\$20,000 to \$29,999 .....	14,375	12,154	8,061	66.3	65.1–67.5	5,359	44.1	42.8–45.4	66.5	65.4–67.6
\$30,000 to \$39,999 .....	16,491	14,415	9,713	67.4	66.3–68.5	6,581	45.7	44.5–46.9	67.8	66.8–68.8
\$40,000 to \$49,999 .....	12,271	11,036	7,957	72.1	70.9–73.3	5,795	52.5	51.2–53.8	72.8	71.7–73.9
\$50,000 to \$74,999 .....	29,085	27,218	20,637	75.8	75.1–76.5	14,795	54.4	53.5–55.3	71.7	71.0–72.4
\$75,000 to \$99,999 .....	19,262	18,256	14,142	77.5	76.6–78.4	10,472	57.4	56.4–57.4	74.0	73.1–74.9
\$100,000 and over .....	28,437	27,141	22,315	82.2	81.5–82.9	17,418	64.2	63.4–65.0	78.1	77.4–78.8
Income not reported .....	27,238	25,150	13,348	53.1	53.2–54.0	9,865	39.2	38.3–40.1	73.9	73.1–74.7
<b>Employment Status</b>										
In the civilian labor force .....	150,072	136,043	93,060	68.4	68.0–68.8	64,880	47.7	47.3–48.1	69.7	69.4–70.0
Employed .....	143,828	130,429	90,034	69.0	68.6–69.4	63,132	48.4	48.0–48.0	70.1	69.8–70.4
Unemployed .....	6,244	5,614	3,026	53.9	52.0–55.8	1,748	31.1	29.4–32.8	57.8	56.0–58.6
Not in the labor force .....	70,531	65,029	42,787	65.8	65.3–66.3	31,239	48.0	47.4–48.6	73.0	72.5–73.5

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2.  
**Reported Rates of Voting and Registration by Selected Characteristics: 2006**—Con.

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Citizens									Registered	
	Total	Registered				Voted			Percent reported voted	90-percent confidence interval	
		Total	Number	Per-cent	90-percent confidence interval	Number	Per-cent	90-percent confidence interval			
<b>Duration of Residence<sup>2</sup></b>											
Less than 1 year .....	31,423	26,589	14,517	54.6	53.7–55.5	7,582	28.5	27.7–29.3	52.2	51.6–53.0	
1 to 2 years .....	31,699	26,736	17,566	65.7	64.9–66.5	10,990	41.1	40.3–41.9	62.6	61.8–63.2	
3 to 4 years .....	27,359	24,318	18,440	75.8	75.0–76.6	12,629	51.9	51.0–52.8	68.5	67.7–69.3	
5 years or longer .....	106,557	102,118	83,839	82.1	81.8–82.4	63,930	62.6	62.2–63.0	76.3	75.9–76.7	
Not reported .....	23,566	21,311	1,485	7.0	6.5–7.5	987	4.6	4.2–5.0	66.5	64.6–67.4	
<b>Region</b>											
Northeast .....	41,151	37,567	24,830	66.1	65.4–66.8	17,632	46.9	46.2–47.6	71.0	70.3–71.7	
Midwest .....	49,078	46,733	33,511	71.7	71.1–72.3	24,885	53.2	52.5–53.9	74.3	73.7–74.9	
South .....	79,977	73,363	49,561	67.6	67.1–68.1	32,232	43.9	43.4–44.4	65.0	64.5–65.5	
West .....	50,397	43,410	27,945	64.4	63.8–65.0	21,370	49.2	48.6–49.8	76.5	76.0–77.0	
<b>Veteran Status<sup>3</sup></b>											
Total population .....	220,575	201,108	135,921	67.6	67.3–67.9	96,170	47.8	47.5–48.1	70.8	70.5–71.1	
Veteran .....	22,986	22,853	17,546	76.8	76.0–77.6	13,965	61.1	60.2–62.0	79.6	78.8–80.2	
Nonveteran .....	197,589	178,255	118,375	66.4	66.1–66.7	82,205	46.1	45.8–46.4	69.4	69.1–69.7	
<b>Tenure</b>											
Owner .....	160,624	152,111	110,305	72.5	72.2–72.8	81,800	53.8	53.4–54.2	74.2	73.9–74.5	
Renter .....	57,570	46,757	24,244	51.9	51.2–52.6	13,497	28.9	28.3–29.5	55.7	55.1–56.3	

<sup>1</sup> Limited to people in families.

<sup>2</sup> Data on duration of residence were obtained from responses to the question “How long has (this person) lived at this address?”

<sup>3</sup> These estimates were derived using the veteran weight, which uses different procedures for construction than the person weight used to produce estimates elsewhere in this table; therefore, population totals differ while proportions are not affected.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006.

contributed to different proportions of noncitizens in various racial and ethnic groups—in 2006, 2 percent of non-Hispanic Whites were non-citizens, compared with 6 percent of Blacks, 33 percent of Asians, and 40 percent of Hispanics—and voting rates by citizenship status differed the most for Asians and Hispanics (Figure 2). Based on the voting-age population, the voting rate was 22 percent for Asians and approximately 19 percent for Hispanics. Based on the voting-age citizen population, however, these percentages increase to roughly 32 percent for both Asians and Hispanics.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The difference in voting rates by citizenship status for Asians and Hispanics was not statistically significant.

In 2006, non-Hispanic White citizens turned out to vote at a rate (52 percent) higher than in 2002 (49 percent). In this election, non-Hispanic Whites also registered at a higher rate (71 percent) than in 2002 (69 percent). In 2006, no such changes were observed for other groups, as voting and registration rates for Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics did not differ statistically from their voting and registration rates in 2002.

Another key to voter turnout is registration, as the majority of registered voters among all race groups and Hispanics voted in the 2006 election. Among the registered citizen population, 73 percent of non-Hispanic Whites and about

67 percent of Blacks and Asians voted. Roughly 60 percent of registered Hispanics voted.

### Age

In the Presidential election in 2004, registration and voting rates increased dramatically among younger citizens. While young adults still had the lowest voting and registration rates in 2004, relative to all other age groups, they also experienced the largest increase in both rates since the 2000 Presidential election.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For a full analysis of the 2004 election, see Kelly Holder, *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2004*, Current Population Reports P20-556, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2006, <www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/p20-556.pdf>.

The congressional election of 2006, examined in this report, showed a smaller increase in voting and registration rates among younger citizens than was seen in the Presidential election of 2004. Despite once again holding the lowest overall voting and registration rates (22 percent and 46 percent, respectively) in relation to all other age groups, 18- to 24-year-olds increased their registration and voting rates by roughly 3 percentage points between the 2002 and 2006 elections (Table 2). Compared with other age subgroups, these figures represent the largest increases for both voting and registration estimates in the most recent congressional election.

### Sex

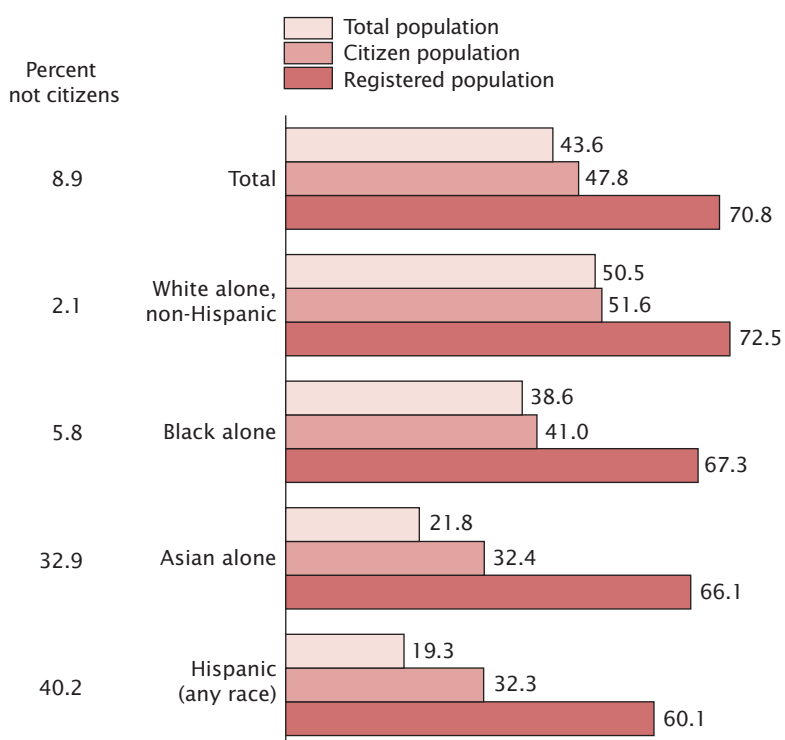
Among the voting-age citizen population, 69 percent of women and 66 percent of men registered to vote in the 2006 congressional election (Table 2). Women were similarly more likely than men to vote (49 percent compared with 47 percent), a result that mirrors gender differences in congressional elections since 1998. Although men historically have voted at higher rates than women, women's rates surpassed those of men in the entire 18-and-older population for the first time in the Presidential election of 1984.

### Nativity Status

In 2006, 93 percent of voting-age citizens were born in the United States, in its territories, or abroad to a U.S. citizen, automatically giving them U.S. citizenship at birth (native citizens). Of the estimated 221 million people of voting age, 34 million were not citizens at birth, having immigrated to the United States at a later date. Of

Figure 2.  
**Type of Voting Rate by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2006**

(Population 18 and older, in percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006.

those, 14 million (42 percent) were naturalized citizens and consequently eligible to register and vote in the November 2006 election. The remaining 20 million immigrants were of voting age but did not have U.S. citizenship and therefore could not participate in the electoral process (Table 2).

In 2006, a larger percentage of native citizens (69 percent) registered to vote than naturalized citizens (54 percent). Native citizens also had a higher voting turnout rate (49 percent compared with 37 percent). Native citizens have also been more likely to vote than naturalized citizens in recent congressional elections.

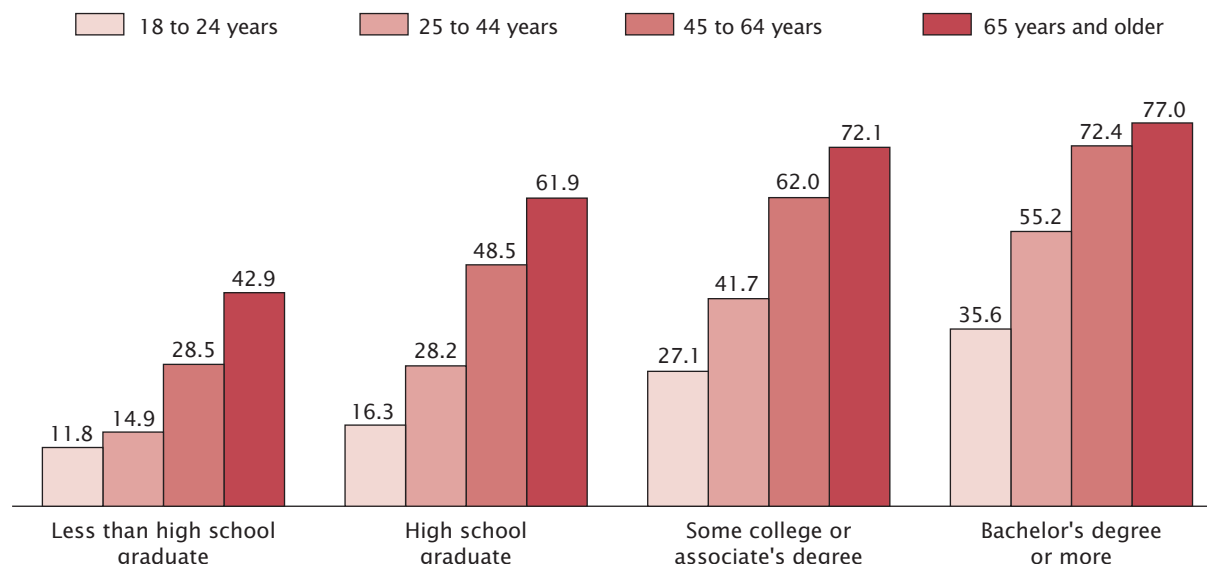
### Marital Status<sup>9</sup>

Married individuals had the highest rates of both registration (75 percent) and voting (56 percent) in 2006 relative to nonmarried people in other marital statuses (Table 2). Of voting-age citizens who were not married, widowed individuals had the highest registration rate (71 percent). Widowed individuals also voted at a higher rate (51 percent) than all other nonmarried citizens, including those who were divorced (43 percent), separated

<sup>9</sup> For the purpose of this analysis, "married individuals" include both those married with a spouse present in the home and those married with a spouse absent from the home. The term "not married" refers to individuals who were divorced, separated, widowed, or never married.



Figure 3.  
**Voting Rates by Educational Attainment and Age Groups: 2006**  
 (Citizens 18 and older, in percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006.

(33 percent), or never married (31 percent).<sup>10, 11</sup>

Across most marital statuses in 2006, women generally registered and voted at higher rates than men. Although these disparities were relatively small, divorced women had higher registration rates than divorced men (67 percent compared with 60 percent) and voting rates (45 percent compared with 41 percent). Similarly, separated women were also more likely than separated men to both register (59 percent compared with 52 percent)

<sup>10</sup> See the *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2006* table package for complete voting and registration rates based on marital status characteristics, available on the Census Bureau's Web site at [www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting.html).

<sup>11</sup> Voting estimates for separated and never-married individuals were not statistically different from one another.

and vote (35 percent compared with 30 percent).<sup>12</sup>

### Educational Attainment

At each successive level of educational attainment, registration and voting rates increased in 2006 (Table 2). The registration rate of citizens with a bachelor's degree (78 percent) was higher than that of citizens who had not received a high school diploma (48 percent). Similarly, the voting rate of citizens who had a bachelor's degree (61 percent) was larger than that of citizens who had not completed high school (27 percent).

<sup>12</sup> The 7 percent difference between the registration rates of divorced women and divorced men (67 percent and 60 percent, respectively) was not statistically different from the 7 percent difference between registration rates of separated women and separated men. The latter difference was not statistically different from the 5 percent difference in the voting rates of separated women and separated men, which, in turn, was not statistically different from the 4 percent difference in the voting rates of divorced women and divorced men.

Overall, younger adults had lower voting rates; however, some subgroups of this population had relatively high voting rates, especially the highly educated (Figure 3). Young adults with a bachelor's degree or more education had a higher voting rate (36 percent) than young adults with lower levels of educational attainment (12 percent to 27 percent). Young adults with at least a bachelor's degree also had a higher voting rate than 25- to 44-year-olds with a high school diploma (28 percent) and both 25- to 44-year-olds and 45- to 65-year-olds whose highest level of education was less than a high school diploma (15 percent and 29 percent, respectively).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The voting rate for 24- to 44-year-olds with a high school diploma was not statistically different from the voting rate for 45- to 65-year-olds without a high school diploma.

## Annual Family Income and Employment Status

Citizens with higher incomes were generally more likely to register and to vote (Table 2). The registration and voting rates among citizens living in families with annual incomes of \$50,000 or more were 79 percent and 59 percent, respectively. For families with incomes under \$20,000, registration and voting rates were 56 percent and 31 percent, respectively.<sup>14</sup>

Employment status was another key indicator of voting in the 2006 congressional election. Forty-eight percent of employed citizens reported voting, compared with 31 percent of those who were in the labor force but not employed. Citizens outside the labor force—a group that included many retired people—and employed citizens both had voting rates of about 48 percent.

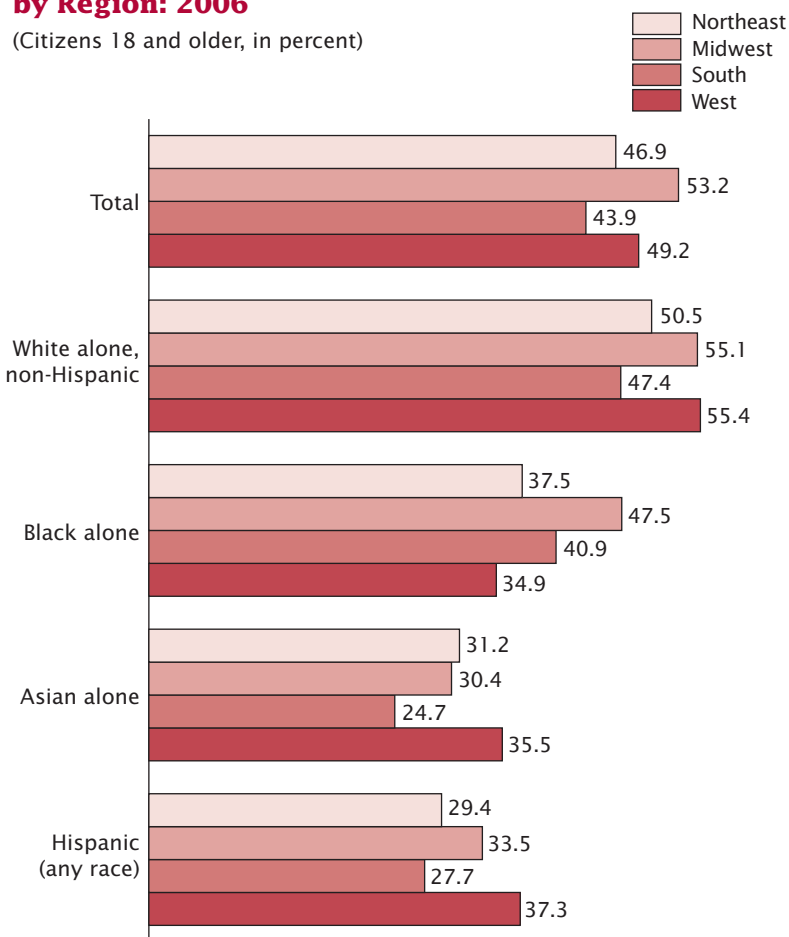
## Veterans

Veterans had higher registration (77 percent) and voting rates (61 percent) in the 2006 congressional election than nonveterans—66 percent and 46 percent, respectively (Table 2). Voting rates for veterans also varied by selected characteristics. Veterans registered and voted in higher percentages than nonveterans at every level of educational attainment. Veterans whose highest level of education was a high school diploma or less voted at a higher rate than their nonveteran peers by about 24 percentage points. Veterans with a bachelor's degree or more education voted at a higher rate than nonveterans with similar educational attainment by approximately 13 percentage points.

<sup>14</sup> Data on income are limited to people living in families. Families include only the reference person and people related to the reference person.

Figure 4.  
**Voting Rates by Race and Hispanic Origin by Region: 2006**

(Citizens 18 and older, in percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006.

Female veterans, although a small proportion of the total veteran population (7 percent), had a voting rate (55 percent) that was lower than that of their male counterparts (62 percent). This result differed statistically from the nonveteran population, where women voted more frequently than men by approximately 6 percentage points.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Please see the *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2006* table package for complete voting and registration rates based on veteran characteristics, available on the Census Bureau's Web site at <[www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting.html)>.

## Region

Citizens residing in the Midwest were more likely to register and to vote than those in other regions (Table 2). In 2006, 72 percent of citizens in the Midwest registered to vote and 53 percent actually voted. Of the 6 states that currently allow eligible citizens to register at the polls on the day of an election, 2 are located in the Midwest.<sup>16</sup> The voting rate in the West was 49 percent, compared with 47 percent in the Northeast and 44 percent in the South (Figure 4).

<sup>16</sup> Idaho, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, and Wyoming have Election Day registration. North Dakota has no formal voter registration.



Among citizens in 2006, non-Hispanic Whites in the Midwest and the West had higher voting rates (about 55 percent each) than their counterparts in either the Northeast (51 percent) or the South (47 percent). Among Black citizens, those living in the Midwest were most likely to vote—48 percent compared with 41 percent in the South, 38 percent in the Northeast, and 35 percent in the West.<sup>17</sup> Voting rates for Asian and Hispanic citizens were higher in the West than in the South. Most other differences across regions were not statistically significant for these groups.<sup>18</sup>

### States

Excluding North Dakota, which has no formal voter registration process, Maine, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Iowa had the highest levels of voter registration in the country (approximately 78 percent).<sup>19</sup> Maine, Minnesota, Wisconsin (each 72 percent), New Hampshire (70 percent), Wyoming (66 percent), and Idaho (66 percent) all allow potential voters to register on the day of a general election (Figure 5).<sup>20</sup>

Hawaii, Nevada, and Utah shared the lowest registration rates at about 56 percent. Overall, 15 states had registration rates that were not statistically different from the national average of 68 percent.

<sup>17</sup> Registration rates for Black respondents in the West and Northeast regions were not statistically different from one another.

<sup>18</sup> Voting rates for Hispanics living in the West were statistically higher than for Hispanics living in the Northeast. In the West, voting rates for Blacks were not statistically different from voting rates for either Asians or Hispanics.

<sup>19</sup> Registration rates for Iowa were not statistically different from those in Missouri, Alabama, Alaska, or the District of Columbia.

<sup>20</sup> Registration rates were not statistically different between New Hampshire and Wisconsin, New Hampshire and Wyoming, and Wyoming and Idaho.

### CITIZENSHIP AND VOTER TURNOUT BY STATE

The distribution of citizens and noncitizens throughout the United States influences voting rates among states. For states with a higher proportion of noncitizens, voting rates based on the voting-age population are lower than rates based on the voting-age citizen population. For states with low proportions of noncitizens, there is no statistical difference between the two rates.

At least 90 percent of the voting-age population in the majority of states were citizens. The exceptions were California (81 percent citizens); New Jersey, Arizona, Florida, Texas, Nevada, and New York (about 87 percent); and the District of Columbia and Illinois (89 percent).<sup>21</sup>

Minnesota and South Dakota had the highest citizen voting rates in the country (about 64 percent).<sup>22</sup> Utah, West Virginia, and Texas had the lowest voting rates in the country at approximately 37 percent each. Overall, 15 states had voting rates that were not statistically different from the national average of 48 percent.

### PROFILE OF VOTERS

Earlier parts of this report have addressed the question “How likely were members of a certain group to vote?” This section will display

<sup>21</sup> Citizenship rates for Illinois and the District of Columbia were not statistically different from 90 percent nor were they statistically different from citizenship rates for either New York or Nevada. Citizenship rates for New York were statistically different from both Florida and New Jersey.

<sup>22</sup> Voting rates for South Dakota were not statistically different from those of either Oregon or Montana. Voting rates for Texas were not statistically different from those of North Carolina, while voting rates for Louisiana were not statistically different from the rates in Texas, West Virginia, or Utah.

characteristics of those who actually voted, such as what proportion of voters were aged 18 to 24.

The answers to these questions are quite different. For example, while 22 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds voted in the 2006 election, young adults in this age group constituted 12 percent of the total voting-age citizen population and 6 percent of the voting population (Table 3). In comparison, 63 percent of adults aged 65 and older voted in the most recent election, and this age group made up 17 percent of the voting-age citizen population and 23 percent of the population that actually voted.

### Race and Hispanic Origin

In 2006, the non-Hispanic White population constituted the majority of all voting-age citizens (75 percent), followed by Blacks (12 percent), Hispanics (9 percent), and Asians (3 percent). Of those who voted, 80 percent were non-Hispanic White, 10 percent were Black, 6 percent were Hispanic, and 2 percent were Asian (Table 3).

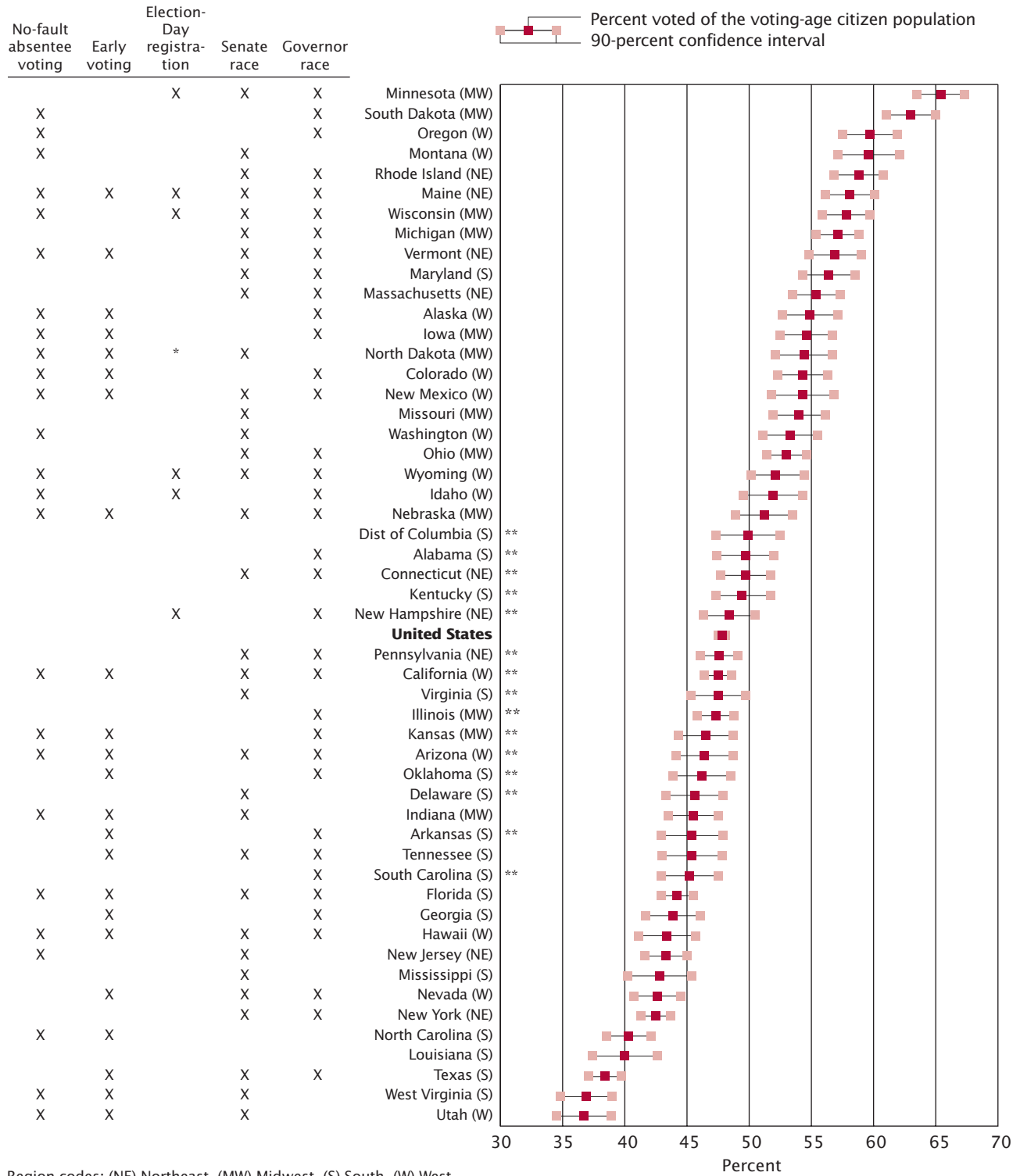
### Marital Status

In 2006, 56 percent of voting-age citizens were married, compared with 65 percent of voters (Table 3). Meanwhile, nonmarried individuals constituted a lower proportion of voters (35 percent) than of the voting-age citizen population (44 percent).

### Educational Attainment

People with a bachelor's degree or more education accounted for 27 percent of voting-age citizens and 36 percent of those who reported voting in the 2006 election. Individuals who did not graduate from high school made up 12 percent of the population that could potentially vote in 2006 and 7 percent of actual voters (Table 3).

Figure 5.  
**Voting by State: 2006**  
 (Citizens 18 and older)



Region codes: (NE) Northeast, (MW) Midwest, (S) South, (W) West.

\* North Dakota does not have a formal registration process.

\*\* Not statistically different from the national average.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006; National Conference of State Legislatures <[www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org)>; Project Vote Smart <[www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org)>.

Table 3.  
**Characteristics of Voters and Nonvoters: 2006**

Characteristic	Percent distribution		
	Voting-age total citizens	Voters	Nonvoters <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total, 18 years and older ...</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Sex</b>			
Male .....	47.8	46.9	48.6
Female .....	52.2	53.1	51.4
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>			
White alone .....	82.4	85.7	79.3
White alone, non-Hispanic .....	74.5	80.4	69.1
Black alone .....	12.1	10.3	13.6
Asian alone .....	3.3	2.2	4.3
Hispanic (any race) .....	8.6	5.8	11.2
<b>Nativity Status</b>			
Native .....	93.1	94.7	91.6
Naturalized .....	6.9	5.3	8.4
<b>Age</b>			
18 to 24 years .....	12.4	5.8	18.5
25 to 44 years .....	35.2	29.4	40.5
45 to 64 years .....	35.2	42.4	28.6
65 years and older .....	17.2	22.5	12.4
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Married .....	55.6	65.4	46.6
Not married .....	44.4	34.6	53.4
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			
Less than high school graduate .....	12.1	7.0	16.8
High school graduate or GED .....	32.3	27.4	36.8
Some college or associate's degree ...	28.7	29.6	27.8
Bachelor's degree or more .....	26.9	36.0	18.6
<b>Annual Family Income<sup>2</sup></b>			
Total family members .....	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than \$20,000 .....	9.0	5.6	12.3
\$20,000 to \$29,999 .....	8.2	7.2	9.2
\$30,000 to \$39,999 .....	9.7	8.8	10.6
\$40,000 to \$49,999 .....	7.4	7.8	7.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999 .....	18.3	19.9	16.7
\$75,000 to \$99,999 .....	12.3	14.1	10.5
\$100,000 and over .....	18.3	23.4	13.1
Income not reported .....	16.9	13.3	20.6
<b>Employment Status</b>			
In the civilian labor force .....	67.7	67.5	67.8
Employed .....	60.0	65.7	64.1
Unemployed .....	2.8	1.8	3.7
Not in the labor force .....	32.3	32.5	32.2
<b>Duration of Residence</b>			
Less than 1 year .....	13.2	7.9	18.1
1 to 2 years .....	13.3	11.4	15.0
3 years or longer .....	62.9	79.4	47.5
Not reported .....	10.6	1.0	19.3
<b>Region</b>			
Northeast .....	18.7	18.3	19.0
Midwest .....	23.2	25.9	20.8
South .....	36.5	33.5	39.2
West .....	21.6	22.2	21.0
<b>Veteran Status</b>			
Veteran .....	11.3	14.5	8.5
Nonveteran .....	88.6	85.5	91.5

<sup>1</sup> The nonvoters category only includes respondents who answered "no" to the question "Did you vote in the election held on Tuesday, November 2, 2006?" Respondents who answered "don't know" and those who did not respond are not included.

<sup>2</sup> Limited to people in families.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006.

## Income

Voting-age citizens who lived in families with incomes below \$20,000 represented 9 percent of the total voting-age citizen population and 6 percent of the voting population, while those who lived in families with incomes of \$50,000 or more composed 49 percent of the total voting-age citizen population and 57 percent of voters. Of the total voting-age citizen population, 18 percent lived in families with incomes of \$100,000 or more, while 23 percent of the voting population was in this income bracket (Table 3).

## METHODS OF REGISTRATION

In 2006, when asked how or where they registered to vote, 22 percent of the registered population reported that they registered at a county or government registration office. Another 21 percent registered while obtaining a driver's license or identification card at a department of motor vehicles, while 13 percent mailed a registration form to a local election office. Eight percent of registered voters reported registering at the polls on Election Day (Figure 6).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> In 1998 and 2002, only people who had registered since 1995 were asked the question about method of registration. In 2006, all respondents who reported being registered were asked this question. Therefore, the findings for 2006 are not directly comparable with results from earlier years.

## Methods of Voting

In the 2006 election, 81 percent of voters reported that they voted on Election Day and 19 percent voted before Election Day—either in person or by mail (Table 4). All states offer voters the option to vote prior to the election, and mail-in ballots constitute the majority of absentee ballots cast. Twenty-six states currently offer “no-fault” absentee voting, meaning that voters can vote absentee without offering an explanation, while all other states permit absentee voting under a set of limited circumstances that vary from state to state. Oregon requires all voters to cast their ballot through the mail.<sup>24</sup> Other states with high voting rates by mail (either on or before Election Day) included Washington (84 percent), Arizona, Colorado, and California (about 37 percent each). All these states have no-fault absentee voting policies.

## Reasons for Not Registering

Of the 40 million citizens who were not registered to vote in 2006, 48 percent reported that they were not interested in the election or were not involved in politics (Table 5).<sup>25</sup> Another 14 percent reported that they did not meet the registration deadlines. Other reasons for not being registered included not being eligible to vote (7 percent), not knowing where or how to register (6 percent), having a permanent illness or disability (5 percent), and not meeting residency requirements (5 percent). Additionally, approximately 3 percent of the nonregistered population indicated

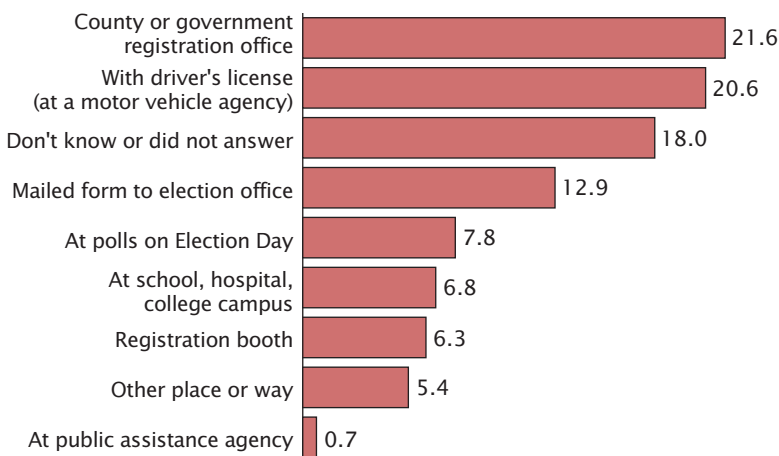
<sup>24</sup> Information about state regulations for registration and voting can be found on the National Conference of State Legislatures Web site at <www.ncsl.org> or from individual state election offices.

<sup>25</sup> Only individuals who reported that they had not registered were asked the question about the reason for not registering. This population does not include those who responded “do not know” or who refused to answer the question.

Figure 6.

## Method of Registration to Vote: 2006

(Percent distribution of registered voters)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006.

a belief that their vote would not make a difference.

Non-Hispanic Whites were more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to report not registering because of a lack of interest in the election (51 percent), and this was the most frequent response for all race groups and Hispanics when asked why they did not register to vote. Forty-one percent of Blacks, 36 percent of Asians, and 39 percent of Hispanics reported this response.<sup>26</sup>

## Reasons for Not Voting

Of the 136 million people who reported that they were registered to vote, 40 million (29 percent) did not vote in the 2006 congressional election (Table 6). Of these registered nonvoters, 27 percent reported that they did not vote because they were too busy or had conflicting work or school schedules. Another 12 percent reported that they did not vote

<sup>26</sup> The percentage of Hispanics reporting lack of interest in the election was not statistically different from the percentage of Blacks or Asians reporting the same answer.

because they were ill, disabled, or had a family emergency. Additionally, 12 percent did not vote because they were not interested or felt their vote would not make a difference, while 11 percent reported not voting because they were out of town on Election Day.<sup>27</sup> Other specified reasons for not voting included not liking the candidates or the issues (7 percent), forgetting to vote (6 percent), confusion or uncertainty about registration procedures (4 percent), and inconvenient polling places (3 percent).<sup>28</sup>

By age, among registered voters, 30 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds, 35 percent of 25- to 44-year-olds, and 25 percent of 45- to 64-year-olds reported being too busy to vote. Older voters were more likely to report not voting because of a permanent illness or injury, and 43 percent of respondents 65 years of age and older reported this reason.

<sup>27</sup> Although estimates regarding nonvoting due to illness and lack of interest both round to 12 percent, these estimates were statistically different from one another.

<sup>28</sup> Only individuals who reported being registered and also reported not voting were asked the question about reason for not voting.

Table 4.  
**Methods of Voting by State: 2006**

(Numbers in thousands)

State	Total <sup>1</sup>	Voted on Election Day		Voted before Election Day	
		In person	By mail	In person	By mail
<b>United States . . . . .</b>	<b>95,741</b>	<b>80.4</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>12.8</b>
Alabama . . . . .	1,668	97.9	–	0.5	1.6
Alaska . . . . .	246	84.2	0.4	7.4	8.1
Arizona . . . . .	1,769	60.6	1.9	0.7	36.8
Arkansas . . . . .	909	72.8	0.0	24.3	2.9
California . . . . .	9,989	63.8	2.6	0.9	32.7
Colorado . . . . .	1,722	49.3	1.7	14.7	34.4
Connecticut . . . . .	1,210	96.0	0.1	0.5	3.4
Delaware . . . . .	273	97.3	–	0.8	2.0
District of Columbia . . . . .	187	90.4	0.3	1.1	8.2
Florida . . . . .	5,318	72.9	0.2	13.1	13.8
Georgia . . . . .	2,663	87.1	–	6.3	6.6
Hawaii . . . . .	384	66.2	0.4	5.7	27.6
Idaho . . . . .	523	90.1	0.3	2.3	7.3
Illinois . . . . .	3,944	93.8	0.3	3.4	2.6
Indiana . . . . .	2,050	92.8	0.6	3.1	3.5
Iowa . . . . .	1,178	79.8	0.1	3.9	16.3
Kansas . . . . .	901	81.0	0.2	5.4	13.5
Kentucky . . . . .	1,508	97.0	–	1.0	2.0
Louisiana . . . . .	1,197	96.5	0.4	1.7	1.4
Maine . . . . .	594	86.2	0.4	4.3	9.1
Maryland . . . . .	2,142	93.4	–	0.3	6.2
Massachusetts . . . . .	2,434	96.3	–	0.5	3.2
Michigan . . . . .	4,077	85.3	0.6	0.3	13.9
Minnesota . . . . .	2,369	95.0	0.4	1.4	3.3
Mississippi . . . . .	879	96.8	0.6	1.2	1.4
Missouri . . . . .	2,310	95.5	0.1	2.3	2.1
Montana . . . . .	435	72.2	0.3	3.0	24.6
Nebraska . . . . .	634	81.4	0.5	2.2	15.9
Nevada . . . . .	683	48.2	0.2	38.5	13.1
New Hampshire . . . . .	475	95.2	0.1	0.5	4.3
New Jersey . . . . .	2,403	95.6	0.9	0.0	3.5
New Mexico . . . . .	731	68.8	0.2	18.3	12.7
New York . . . . .	5,402	97.1	0.4	0.1	2.3
North Carolina . . . . .	2,411	86.1	0.3	11.6	2.1
North Dakota . . . . .	259	86.7	–	2.9	10.3
Ohio . . . . .	4,389	87.3	0.3	2.0	10.4
Oklahoma . . . . .	1,174	95.9	–	2.2	1.9
Oregon . . . . .	1,589	2.6	8.0	1.2	88.3
Pennsylvania . . . . .	4,391	96.2	0.4	0.2	3.3
Rhode Island . . . . .	430	96.8	–	0.7	2.5
South Carolina . . . . .	1,372	94.5	0.2	1.7	3.6
South Dakota . . . . .	358	79.3	0.4	10.3	10.1
Tennessee . . . . .	1,991	64.0	–	34.3	1.7
Texas . . . . .	5,475	62.7	0.1	32.9	4.4
Utah . . . . .	601	86.3	0.5	9.6	3.6
Vermont . . . . .	273	83.1	0.4	3.3	13.2
Virginia . . . . .	2,429	96.4	–	0.9	2.7
Washington . . . . .	2,329	16.0	11.7	0.2	72.1
West Virginia . . . . .	512	90.4	–	8.1	1.5
Wisconsin . . . . .	2,352	93.1	0.1	1.4	5.5
Wyoming . . . . .	199	85.4	0.5	5.4	8.7

– Represents or rounds to zero.

<sup>1</sup> Does not include “don’t know” or “refused” to the questions about when and how the respondent voted.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006.

Table 5.  
**Reasons for Not Registering by Selected Characteristics: 2006**

(In thousands)

Characteristic	Total <sup>1</sup>	Percent distribution of reasons for not registering									
		Not interested in the election or not involved in politics	Did not meet registration deadlines	Not eligible to vote	Don't know or refused	Other	Did not know where or how to register	Permanent illness or disability	Did not meet residency requirements	My vote would not make a difference	Difficulty with English
<b>Total, 18 years and older .....</b>	<b>39,599</b>	<b>47.6</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.1</b>
<b>Sex</b>											
Male .....	20,107	47.6	14.3	7.8	6.4	5.5	5.0	4.2	4.7	3.6	0.9
Female .....	19,491	47.7	14.1	5.2	5.8	6.8	6.2	5.4	4.8	2.8	1.2
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>											
White alone .....	31,646	49.3	14.0	6.0	5.9	6.2	4.9	4.8	4.7	3.4	0.8
White alone, non-Hispanic .....	26,718	51.4	14.1	4.8	5.5	6.3	4.5	5.1	4.5	3.5	0.3
Black alone .....	4,736	40.8	15.7	8.0	6.8	6.3	7.5	6.2	5.0	3.0	0.5
Asian alone .....	1,869	35.9	14.1	11.5	7.1	4.3	12.5	2.1	4.4	1.2	7.0
Hispanic (any race) .....	5,339	39.2	13.2	12.0	8.6	5.5	6.9	3.1	5.8	2.5	3.3
<b>Nativity Status</b>											
Native .....	35,449	49.2	14.2	5.4	6.0	6.3	5.3	5.0	4.7	3.4	0.4
Naturalized .....	4,149	33.7	14.3	16.2	6.7	4.5	8.0	2.6	5.9	1.4	6.7
<b>Age</b>											
18 to 24 years .....	9,069	44.1	18.6	6.8	8.8	4.9	7.9	1.7	5.0	1.8	0.4
25 to 44 years .....	15,957	47.9	16.0	7.0	5.3	5.8	5.7	2.5	5.9	3.2	0.8
45 to 64 years .....	10,395	50.9	10.7	6.8	6.0	6.5	4.4	5.2	3.6	4.3	1.6
65 years and older .....	4,177	45.9	6.7	3.3	3.5	9.2	3.5	19.0	3.0	3.7	2.2
<b>Marital Status</b>											
Married .....	16,814	49.8	13.9	5.5	5.4	7.4	5.6	2.6	4.7	3.5	1.7
Not married .....	22,784	46.0	14.4	7.2	6.6	5.2	5.6	6.4	4.9	3.0	0.6
<b>Educational Attainment</b>											
Less than high school graduate .....	9,217	47.2	10.2	8.9	6.1	5.0	5.7	8.8	2.9	3.1	2.1
High school graduate or GED .....	15,582	52.5	11.5	6.2	6.5	6.0	4.8	4.7	3.2	3.7	0.9
Some college or associate's degree .....	9,572	46.2	17.8	4.8	5.9	6.8	6.4	2.1	6.5	3.0	0.4
Bachelor's degree or more .....	5,227	36.4	23.0	6.1	5.1	7.3	6.4	2.6	9.8	2.3	0.9
<b>Duration of Residence</b>											
Less than 1 year .....	10,448	38.3	18.6	7.1	4.8	6.2	8.0	2.1	11.8	2.2	0.9
1 to 2 years .....	7,861	45.7	16.6	6.9	5.3	6.0	6.8	3.2	5.2	3.2	1.1
3 years or longer .....	20,525	53.7	11.5	6.0	6.0	6.2	4.0	6.6	1.1	3.8	1.2
Not reported .....	764	31.8	4.3	6.1	35.3	5.1	2.6	9.3	3.1	1.8	0.7
<b>Region</b>											
Northeast .....	7,322	51.3	12.6	5.6	7.0	5.6	4.9	5.0	3.6	3.4	1.2
Midwest .....	7,926	50.3	12.8	5.7	5.3	5.8	6.3	5.3	4.9	2.9	0.8
South .....	14,423	47.4	14.8	6.6	5.7	6.1	5.6	5.0	5.0	3.1	0.5
West .....	9,928	43.0	15.7	7.7	6.6	6.8	5.6	3.9	5.2	3.5	2.0
<b>Responses prior to recoding of other .....</b>	<b>39,599</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.1</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes only those respondents who answered "no" to the question "Were you registered in the election of November 2006?"  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006.



Table 6.  
**Reasons for Not Voting by Selected Characteristics: 2006**

(In thousands)

Characteristic	Total <sup>1</sup>	Percent distribution of reasons for not voting											
		Too busy, conflicting schedule	Illness or disability	Not interested	Out of town	Other reason	Did not like candidates or campaign issues	Don't know or refused	Forgot to vote	Registration problems	Inconvenient polling place	Transportation problems	Bad weather conditions
<b>Total</b> . . . . .	<b>39,728</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>0.6</b>
<b>Sex</b>													
Male . . . . .	18,307	28.1	8.3	11.9	13.3	8.7	7.6	8.5	5.5	3.8	2.7	1.3	0.3
Female . . . . .	21,421	26.7	15.8	11.2	8.5	9.5	7.1	6.0	5.8	3.9	2.3	2.6	0.7
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>													
White alone . . . . .	32,748	27.7	12.4	11.7	11.0	9.0	7.8	6.6	5.3	3.8	2.4	1.7	0.5
White alone, non-Hispanic . . . . .	29,340	27.2	12.5	11.7	11.5	9.1	8.1	6.8	4.6	3.9	2.4	1.6	0.6
Black alone . . . . .	4,828	24.4	13.1	11.2	7.6	9.7	5.6	9.9	7.5	3.6	2.7	4.1	0.7
Asian alone . . . . .	1,100	28.0	7.7	7.5	13.7	10.6	5.0	11.9	7.1	4.9	2.7	0.7	0.2
Hispanic (any race) . . . . .	3,708	31.1	11.3	11.8	7.4	8.7	4.8	6.0	11.0	2.8	3.1	2.0	–
<b>Nativity Status</b>													
Native . . . . .	37,272	27.2	12.2	11.7	10.6	9.2	7.4	7.2	5.7	3.8	2.5	2.1	0.6
Naturalized . . . . .	2,455	29.5	14.3	9.0	12.6	8.4	6.3	6.7	5.4	4.0	2.7	0.8	0.2
<b>Age</b>													
18 to 24 years . . . . .	6,030	29.5	2.7	11.7	13.9	7.9	4.3	13.6	6.3	5.3	3.1	1.3	0.3
25 to 44 years . . . . .	16,883	34.9	6.1	12.4	9.1	9.3	6.3	6.7	5.9	4.5	2.7	1.6	0.4
45 to 64 years . . . . .	11,446	25.3	12.4	11.3	12.4	9.4	9.9	6.3	5.4	2.7	2.5	1.6	0.7
65 years and older . . . . .	5,369	5.3	42.8	8.8	8.4	9.1	8.5	3.2	4.5	2.5	1.1	4.6	1.1
<b>Educational Attainment</b>													
Less than high school graduate . . . . .	4,895	16.3	25.7	12.6	6.0	9.1	7.2	5.1	7.7	3.2	2.1	4.4	0.6
High school graduate or GED . . . . .	13,870	25.5	13.8	13.6	8.5	9.4	8.0	7.7	5.6	2.9	2.2	2.3	0.6
Some college or associate's degree . . . . .	12,624	29.7	9.0	10.3	12.1	9.2	7.2	7.5	5.9	4.1	2.7	1.5	0.7
Bachelor's degree or more . . . . .	8,339	33.2	7.4	9.2	14.9	8.5	6.5	7.0	4.2	5.3	2.8	0.7	0.3
<b>Duration of Residence</b>													
Less than 1 year . . . . .	6,935	29.0	6.3	10.4	9.5	10.4	5.8	5.6	6.4	11.5	2.2	2.6	0.4
1 to 2 years . . . . .	6,576	30.3	8.4	11.9	9.6	11.1	6.7	5.6	5.6	5.2	3.2	2.2	0.3
3 years or longer . . . . .	25,719	26.3	15.1	11.7	11.3	8.1	8.0	7.6	5.5	1.5	2.4	1.8	0.7
Not reported . . . . .	497	17.0	9.4	12.2	8.2	14.4	2.7	26.4	6.0	1.6	0.3	1.7	–
<b>Region</b>													
Northeast . . . . .	7,198	27.4	12.9	13.0	11.4	9.8	8.1	8.0	3.8	2.0	2.2	1.4	0.2
Midwest . . . . .	8,626	27.9	11.9	12.7	11.2	8.3	8.9	7.1	4.2	3.3	2.1	2.1	0.3
South . . . . .	17,329	27.7	13.2	10.8	10.2	8.4	6.6	6.8	6.2	4.2	2.5	2.4	0.9
West . . . . .	6,575	25.6	10.1	10.1	10.6	11.4	6.3	7.4	8.0	5.7	3.3	1.3	0.3

– Represents or rounds to zero.

<sup>1</sup> Only individuals who reported being registered and also reported not voting were asked the question about reason for not voting.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006.

## Multivariate Analysis

A multivariate analysis was performed to ascertain the independent effects of certain characteristics on the likelihood of registering and of voting. Factors in the models included duration of residence, region of residence, sex, age, race and Hispanic origin, educational attainment, and family income.<sup>29</sup> The overall results were similar for both models and correspond with the descriptive statistics presented earlier in this report.

## Registration

Table 7 displays results from logistic regression analyses predicting voter registration by these characteristics. Results are displayed as odds ratios, which are related to the probability of registering to vote after allowing for the influence of other variables in the model. Values above 1 indicate that, compared with the reference group, people have higher odds of registering to vote. Values below 1 indicate that they have lower odds of registering than people in the reference group.

In Table 7, 18-to-24-year-old citizens are the reference category. The odds ratio for 25-to-44-year-old citizens is 2.0, indicating that when they are equal in terms of other factors in the model (e.g., duration of residence, region of residence, sex, race and Hispanic origin, educational attainment, and family income), people in the older group have twice the odds of registering to vote. With this same reference category in mind, the odds of 45-to-64-year-old citizens registering were about four times as high, while the odds for citizens 65 and older were over six times as high.

<sup>29</sup> Data on duration of residence were obtained from responses to the question, "How long has (this person) lived at this address?"

Table 7.  
**Odds Ratios of Registering and Voting From Multivariate Regression Models: 2006**

Characteristic	Among voting-age citizens	
	Registration odds ratio	Voting odds ratio
<b>Sex</b>		
Male .....	(R)	(R)
Female .....	1.1***	1.2***
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>		
White non-Hispanic and other non-Hispanic .....	(R)	(R)
Black non-Hispanic .....	1.3***	1.2***
Hispanic (any race) .....	0.7***	0.8***
<b>Age</b>		
18 to 24 years .....	(R)	(R)
25 to 44 years .....	2.0***	1.9***
45 to 64 years .....	3.9***	3.0***
65 years and older .....	6.6***	5.1***
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		
Less than a high school diploma .....	(R)	(R)
High school graduate or GED .....	2.0***	2.1***
Some college or associate's degree .....	3.4***	3.9***
Bachelor's degree or higher .....	5.8***	5.9***
<b>Family Income<sup>1</sup></b>		
Less than \$25,000 .....	(R)	(R)
Between \$25,000 and \$75,000 .....	1.5***	1.4***
More than \$75,000 .....	1.8***	1.7***
<b>Duration of Residence</b>		
Less than 1 year .....	(R)	(R)
1 to 4 years .....	1.8***	1.7***
5 years or longer .....	2.9***	2.8***
<b>Region</b>		
South .....	(R)	(R)
Northeast .....	1.0	0.8***
West .....	1.2***	0.7***
Midwest .....	1.5***	1.1***
Unweighted N. ....	94,095	

\*\*\* Significant at .001 level.  
(R) Reference group.

<sup>1</sup> People with missing data on family income or duration of residence were included in the multivariate model, with dummy variables to account for their influence (although the odds ratios for these variables are not included in this table).

Note: Due to the complex sampling design of the CPS, analyses were weighted using a normalized person weight, and a design effect of 1.38 was used to adjust standard errors.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006.

Education was also an important predictor of voter registration. Compared with those without a high school diploma, the odds of registering were twice as high for respondents with a high school diploma. In comparison with those without a high school diploma, the odds of registering were over three times as high for respondents with at least some college, while the odds were about six times as high for people with at least a bachelor's degree.

Another important influence on registration was length of residence. In comparison with those who had resided at their residence for less than 1 year, the odds of registering were three times as high for residents who lived at their home for 5 years or longer.

In 2006, Midwestern residents had about 50 percent higher odds of registering than Southern residents. The odds of registering also increased with income, as

residents from families earning at least \$75,000 had approximately 80 percent higher odds than those earning less than \$25,000. After controlling for other factors, the odds of registering were 10 percent higher for women than for men and 30 percent lower for Hispanics than for the reference category of Whites and other non-Hispanics.

When registration is examined without controls for other factors, the registration rate for Blacks is approximately 9 percentage points lower than for Whites and other non-Hispanics. In the regression model of Table 7, where the impact of other variables was accounted for in the model, Blacks had about 30 percent greater odds of registering than Whites and other non-Hispanics.

### Voting

Table 7 also displays results from logistic regression analyses predicting voting. Results are similar to those produced by the model predicting registration. While controlling for the same set of factors, the odds of voting were twice as high for 25-to-44-year-old citizens as for 18-to-24-year-old citizens. The odds of 45-to-64-year-old citizens voting were three times as high, while the odds were five times as high for citizens 65 and older.

Education was also an important predictor of voting. In comparison with those without a high school diploma, the odds of voting were twice as high for respondents with a high school diploma. The odds of voting were about four times as high for respondents with at least some college and about six times as high for people with at least a bachelor's degree.

Another important influence on voting was length of residence.

Compared with those who had resided at their residence for less than 1 year, the odds of voting were nearly three times as high for residents who lived at their home for 5 years or longer.

In 2006, Midwestern residents had about 10 percent higher odds of voting than Southern residents. The odds of voting also increased with income, as residents from families earning at least \$75,000 had approximately 70 percent higher odds of voting than those earning less than \$25,000. After controlling for other factors, the odds of voting were 20 percent higher for women than for men and 20 percent lower for Hispanics than for the reference category of Whites and other non-Hispanics.

When voting is examined without controls for other factors, the voting rate for Blacks is approximately 9 percentage points lower than for Whites and other non-Hispanics. In the regression model of Table 7, Blacks had about 20 percent greater odds of voting than Whites and other non-Hispanics.

### HISTORICAL TRENDS IN THE VOTING-AGE POPULATION

This section of the report profiles trends in the voting rate of all voting-age residents in the United States, regardless of citizenship status. The voting-age population, or the 18-and-older population, is a population base often used in presenting voting statistics, and the Census Bureau has historically estimated voting and registration rates using this population. While the CPS has collected voting and registration data since 1964, the Census Bureau has measured citizenship status in a consistent way only since 1994. Although data previously discussed in this report are based on the voting-age citizen

population, using the voting-age population in this section allows historical comparisons with elections before 1994.

### Turnout for the November 2006 Election: Voting-Age Population

In the 2006 congressional election, 44 percent of the voting-age population voted, a slight increase over the 42 percent that turned out in 2002 (Figure 7). This was the highest voter turnout rate in a congressional election year since 1994, when 45 percent of voting-age residents voted. Since 1966, when the Census Bureau officially started collecting voting data, the highest turnouts for congressional elections came in that year, when 55 percent of voting-age residents went to the polls.<sup>30</sup> Since 1974, changes in voting and registration rates have been fairly small, both from year to year and over the long run. From 1974 to 2006, the overall voting rate for the 18-and-older population fell by a single percentage point, compared with the 10 percentage-point drop that occurred from 1970 to 1974.

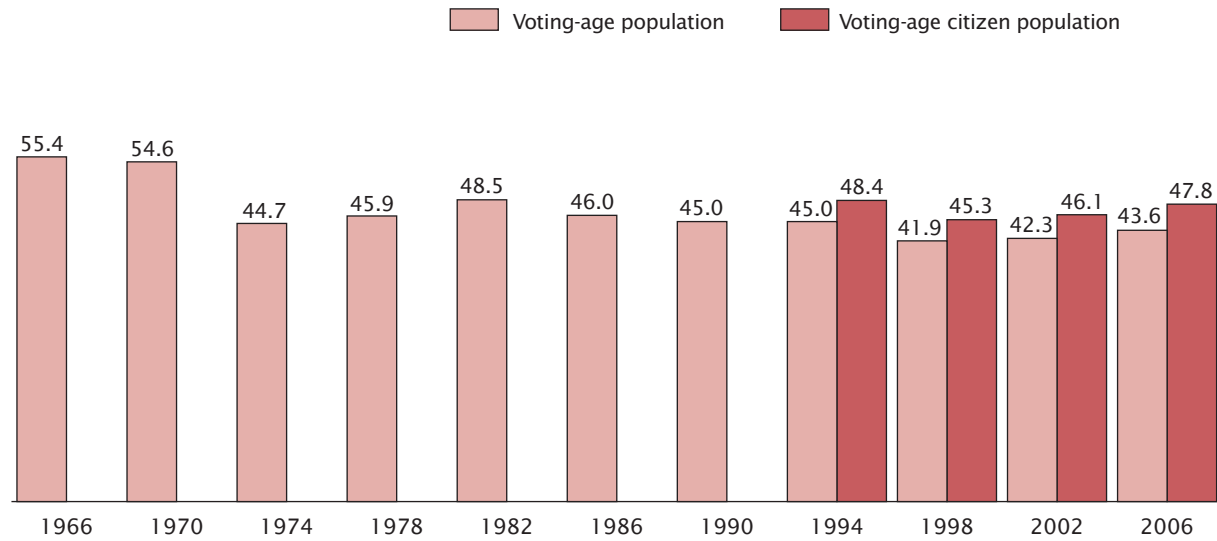
Sixty-two percent of voting-age residents registered to vote in 2006, a slight increase over the 61 percent who registered in 2002 (Figure 8). This registration rate was slightly lower than in 1998, when about 62 percent of voting-age residents registered.<sup>31</sup> Between 1966 and 2006, the highest registration rate for a congressional election came in 1966, when 70 percent of voting-age residents registered to vote.

<sup>30</sup> The official count of votes cast can be found on the Web page for the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives at <<http://clerk.house.gov>>.

<sup>31</sup> Although estimates regarding registration rates in 2006 and 1998 both round to 62 percent, these estimates were statistically different from one another.

Figure 7.  
**Voting in Congressional Elections: 1966 to 2006**

(Population 18 years and older, in percent)

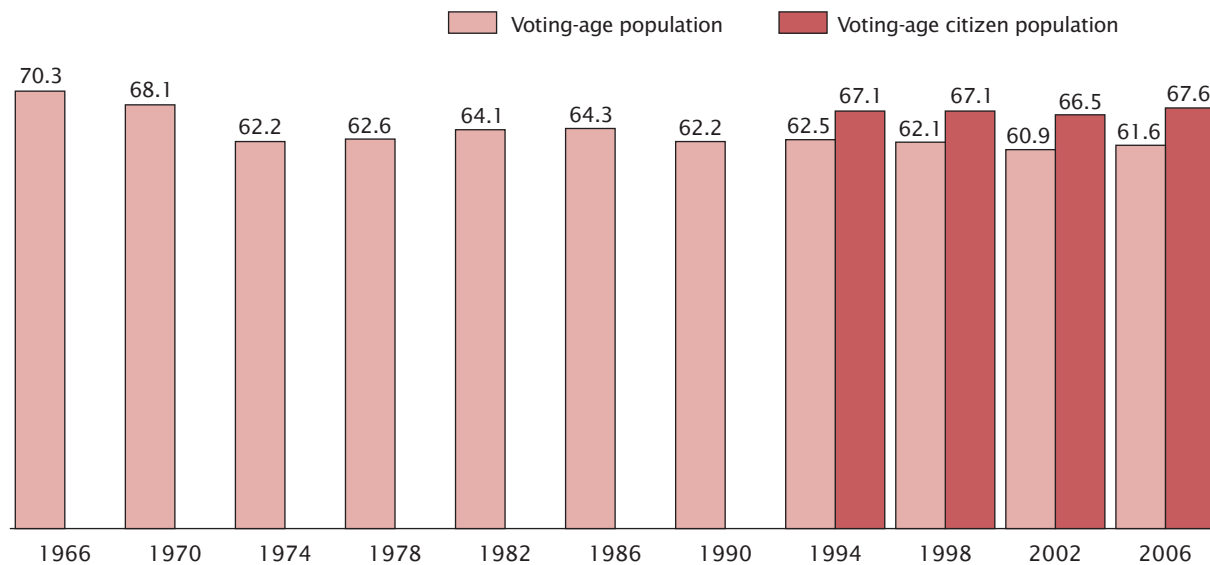


Note: Prior to 1972, data are for people 21 and older except for those 18 and older in Georgia and Kentucky, 19 and older in Alaska, and 20 and older in Hawaii.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 1966 to 2006.

Figure 8.  
**Registration in Congressional Elections: 1966 to 2006**

(Population 18 years and older, in percent)



Note: Prior to 1972, data are for people 21 and older except for those 18 and older in Georgia and Kentucky, 19 and older in Alaska, and 20 and older in Hawaii.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 1966 to 2006.

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## Age

In 2006, 18- to 24-year-olds voted at a higher rate (20 percent) than in either 1998 or 2002 (17 percent each) but at a rate less than or not statistically different from every congressional election between 1966 and 1994.<sup>32</sup>

## Race

With the exceptions of 1998 and 2002, in 2006, Whites voted at a rate that was lower than their rate in every congressional election since 1966. Meanwhile, Black residents voted at a rate less than or not statistically different from their rate in every congressional election since 1966, with the exception of 1974.

## Sex

Among the voting-age population, 45 percent of women and 42 percent of men voted in the 2006 congressional election. This voting-rate difference between women and men is consistent with the pattern for congressional elections since 1990, when women have generally voted in slightly higher percentages than their male counterparts.

## MEASURING VOTING IN THE CURRENT POPULATION SURVEY

The Current Population Survey (CPS) Voting and Registration Supplement is a nationally representative sample survey that collects information on voting shortly after an election in November. The CPS supplement estimates the number of people who registered to vote and who voted based on direct interviews with household respondents. The CPS estimates are an important analytic tool in election studies because they identify the

<sup>32</sup> Please see the "Historical Time Series Tables" for more historical voting comparisons, available on the Census Bureau's Web site at <[www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting.html)>.

demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of people who report that they do, or do not, vote.

Each state's board of elections tabulates the vote counts, while the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives reports the official results. These tallies show the number of votes counted for specific offices. In a congressional election, the official count of comparison is the national total number of votes cast for the office of U.S. Representative.

Discrepancies occur each election between the CPS estimates and the official counts. In the November 2006 CPS, an estimated 96 million of the 221 million people of voting age in the civilian noninstitutionalized population reported that they voted in the November congressional election. Official counts showed 81 million votes cast, a difference of roughly 15 million votes (19 percent) between the two sources.<sup>33</sup> In previous years, the disparity in the estimates in congressional elections has varied between 9 percent and 25 percent of the total number of votes shown as cast in the official tallies.

Differences between the official counts and the CPS may be a combination of an understatement of the official numbers and an overstatement in the CPS estimates as described below.

### Understatement of Total Votes Cast

Ballots are sometimes invalidated and thrown out during the counting process and therefore do not appear in the official counts. Official vote counts also frequently

<sup>33</sup> For more detailed explanations of the differences between official counts and survey counts, see U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Studies in the Measurement of Voter Turnout*, Current Population Reports, Series P23, No. 168, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1990.

do not include mismarked, unreadable, and blank ballots. Additionally, when the total number of votes cast for U.S. Representative represents the official count, voters who do not vote for this office are not included in the reported tally.

### Reports of Voting in the CPS

Some of the error in estimating turnout in the CPS is the result of population controls and survey coverage. Respondent misreporting is also a source of error in the CPS estimates. Previous analyses based on reinterviews showed that respondents and proxy respondents are consistent in their reported answers, and thus, misunderstanding the questions does not fully account for the difference between the official counts and the CPS. However, other studies that matched survey responses with voting records indicate that part of the discrepancy between survey estimates and official counts is the result of respondent misreporting.

As stated above, the definition of "official count" can provide another source of disparity. The CPS gathers information on whether respondents voted in the November election, not whether they voted for a specific office. The CPS estimates include respondents who voted in only state or local elections, but these individuals would not be included in official vote tallies based on ballots cast for a U.S. Representative.

### Voting Not Captured in the CPS

Although the official counts in 2006 were generally lower than those shown in the CPS, they tallied votes from a broader population universe. The CPS covers only the civilian noninstitutionalized population residing in the United States, while the official counts list all votes cast by this universe

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plus citizens residing in the United States who were in the military or living in institutions and citizens residing outside the United States, both civilian and military, who cast absentee ballots.<sup>34</sup>

## **SOURCE OF THE DATA**

The population represented (the population universe) in the Voting and Registration Supplement to the November 2006 CPS is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States. The excluded institutionalized population is composed primarily of individuals in correctional institutions and nursing homes (91 percent of the 4.1 million institutionalized people in Census 2000).

Most estimates in this report come from data obtained in November 2006 from the Current Population Survey (CPS), although earlier CPS reports provide some of the estimates discussed. The Census Bureau conducts this survey every month, although this report uses only November data for its estimates.

The November CPS supplement, which asks questions on voting and registration participation, provides the basis for the estimates in this report. The first question in the 2006 supplement asked if respondents voted in the election held on Tuesday, November 2, 2006. If respondents did not respond to the question or answered “no” or “do

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<sup>34</sup> Demographic information for Armed Forces members (enumerated in off-base housing or on base with their families) is included on the CPS data files. No labor force information is collected of Armed Forces members in any month. In March, supplemental data on income are included for Armed Forces members. This is the only month that nondemographic information is included for Armed Forces members.

not know,” they were then asked if they were registered to vote in this election. Non-responses and responses of “no” or “do not know” to either question were included in the respective categories of “not registered” or “did not vote.”

## **ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES**

Statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling error and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level. This means the 90-percent confidence interval for the difference between comparative estimates does not include zero. Nonsampling error in surveys is attributable to a variety of sources, such as survey design, respondent question interpretation, respondent willingness and ability to provide correct and accurate answers, and post-survey practices like question coding and response classification. To minimize these errors, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures in sample selection, the wording of questions, interviewing, coding, data processing, and data analysis.

The CPS weighting procedure uses ratio estimation to adjust sample estimates to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin.

This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but biases may still be present when people are missed by the survey who differ from those interviewed in ways other than age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. We do not precisely know the effect of this weighting procedure on other

variables in the survey. All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

Further information on the source of the data and accuracy of the estimates, including standard errors and confidence intervals, can be found at <[www.census.gov/apsd/techdoc/cps/cpsnov06.pdf](http://www.census.gov/apsd/techdoc/cps/cpsnov06.pdf)> or by contacting Rebecca A. Hoop of the Demographic Statistical Methods Division via e-mail at <[dsmd.source.and.accuracy@census.gov](mailto:dsmd.source.and.accuracy@census.gov)>.

## **MORE INFORMATION**

Detailed tabulations are available that provide demographic characteristics of the population on voting and registration. The electronic versions of these tables are available on the Internet at the Census Bureau’s Web site <[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)>. Once on the site, in the “Subjects A to Z” area, click on “V” and then on “Voting and Registration Data.”

## **CONTACT**

For additional information on these topics, please call 1-866-758-1060 (toll-free) or visit <[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)>.

## **USER COMMENTS**

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of data and report users. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write to:

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