



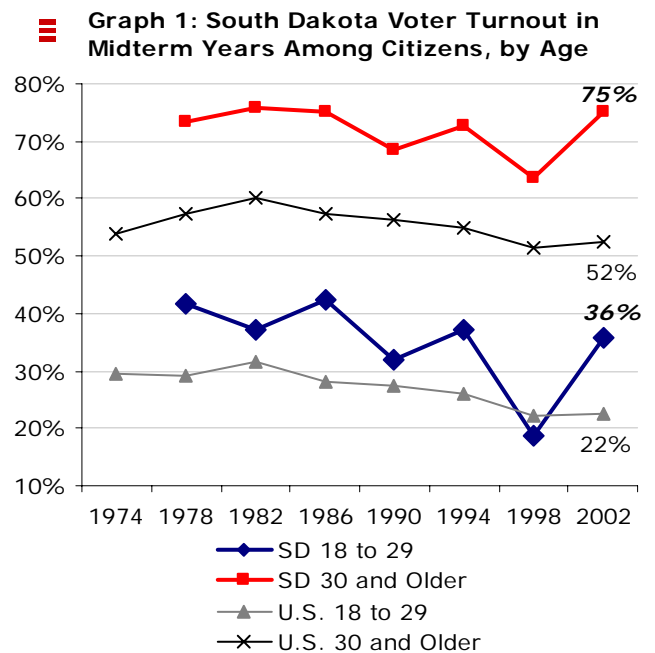
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Quick Facts about Young Voters in South Dakota: The Midterm Election Year 2006

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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 49 percent in South Dakota, up an impressive 18 percentage points over 2000. Compared to other states in 2004, the turnout rate among 18 to 29 year olds in South Dakota ranked 26th overall. However, despite high youth voter participation in South Dakota in 2004, whether this voter mobilization momentum continues into 2006 remains unpredictable. Furthermore, it would be a mistake to compare either state-level or national youth voter turnout in 2006 to 2004 since presidential elections generally draw more voters to the polls, and hence have higher voter turnout rates. Instead, the two appropriate comparisons are 2002, the last time midterm elections occurred, and 1994, the last time midterm elections followed a surge in youth voting in a presidential election (1992).



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

This fact sheet reports the characteristics of young voters for the state of South Dakota, 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), South Dakota's youth voter turnout rate in midterm election years has been declining, though marked with periodic spikes and dips. In 2002, however, the youth voter turnout rate in South Dakota shot upward, and was 14 percentage points above the national youth voter turnout rate. This year, South Dakota might not see a higher level of voter participation among all voters relative to 2002 because of a lack of highly contested races.

Estimates of Eligible Young Voters, 2006

In 2006, a midterm election year, there are an estimated 127,000 young people in South Dakota who are eligible to vote in U.S. elections. Table 1 shows voting statistics for the years 2002, the last midterm election year, and 1994, the last midterm election year that followed a surge in youth voting in a presidential election year (1992).²

Table 1 – South Dakota Voter Turnout Statistics, 2006, 2002, and 1994

	Young People 18 to 29	Adults 30 and Older
2006		
Number of Citizens	127 thousand	430 thousand
Eligible to Vote in 2006		
2002		
Number of Votes Cast	45 thousand	308 thousand
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	36 percent	75 percent
Share of all Voters	13 percent	87 percent
1994		
Number of Votes Cast	44 thousand	273 thousand
Citizen Voter Turnout Rate	37 percent	73 percent
Share of all Voters	14 percent	86 percent

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

Voter Turnout Rates in 2002 and 1994 Among Eligible Young Citizens, Ages 18-29

Table 2 displays voter turnout rates for various groups of young people ages 18 to 29 in 2002 and 1994 in South Dakota. In 2002, voter turnout among many youth groups in South Dakota was down slightly from 1994. However, for college graduates, the voter turnout rate was down 28 percentage points. Also in 1994 and 2002, relative to the nation as a whole, youth in South Dakota were more engaged electorally.

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

Voter Turnout Rate Among:	2002	1994
Gender		
Women	40 percent	36 percent
Men	31 percent	38 percent
Educational Attainment		
Less than High School	26 percent	13 percent
High School	33 percent	28 percent
Some College	41 percent	38 percent
BA or more	42 percent	70 percent
Marital Status		
Single Men	28 percent	38 percent
Single Women	36 percent	39 percent
Married Men	***	40 percent
Married Women	56 percent	40 percent
Registered Voter	67 percent	67 percent
All Youth, South Dakota		
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 South Dakota

Table 3 displays important Voter Registration and Election Day Laws for the state of South Dakota. For more information on elections in South Dakota, contact the Elections Division of South Dakota at 605-773-3537 or <http://www.sdsos.gov/>.

Table 3 – South Dakota Voter Registration and Election Day Laws, 2006

Registration Day Laws	
Registration Deadline for all Elections	15 days before an election
Unrestricted Absentee Voting	Yes
In Person Early Voting	No
Election Day Registration	No
Allows 17 Year Olds to Vote in Primaries	No
Election Day Laws	
Polls Open	7/8am to 7/8pm
Time off to Vote (Private Sector)	Yes
Mail Information on Poll Location	No
Mail Sample Ballots	No

Source: CIRCLE Fact Sheet "State Voter Registration and Election Day Laws", June 2004 and NAACP Voter Empowerment Guide "Value Our Vote" July 2006

Notes

¹ Research Director, Research Associate, and Research Assistant, respectively. We thank Peter Levine, Emily Kirby, Abby Kiesa, and Deborah Both for comments on previous drafts of this fact sheet.

² For a full discussion of the different ways voter turnout can be calculated please see "CIRCLE Working Paper 35: The Youth Voter 2004: With a Historical Look at Youth Voting Patterns 1972-2004." All voter turnout estimates presented in this fact sheet are calculated for U.S. citizens only, and according to the "Census Citizen Method" described in CIRCLE Working Paper 35.