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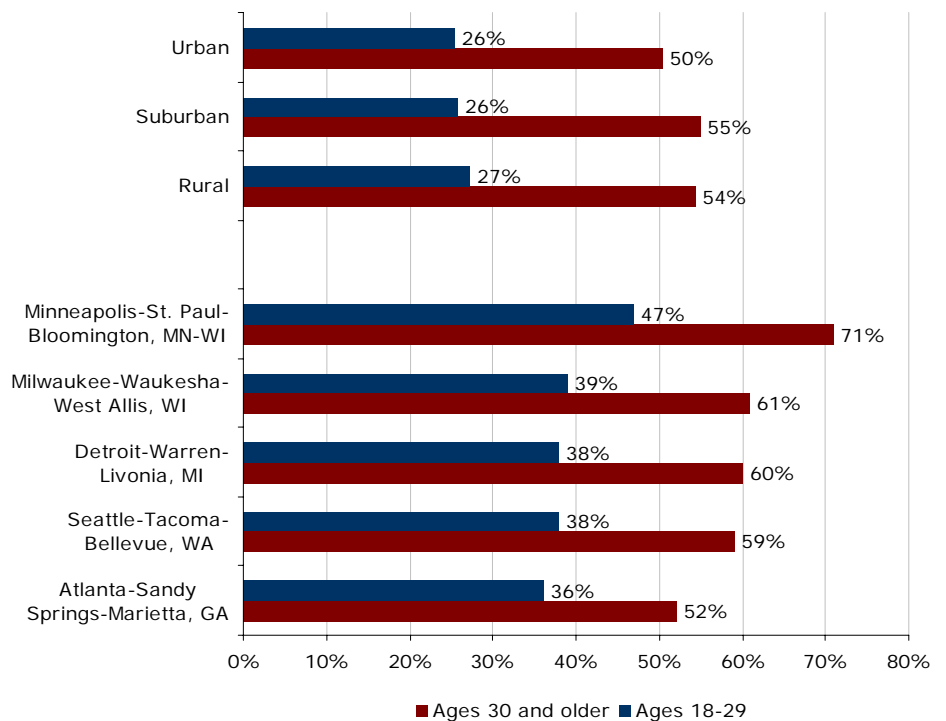
Young Urban Voters in the Midterm Election Year of 2006[1]

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The 2006 midterm election was the second major election in a row that saw an increase in the electoral participation of young people ages 18-29. Between 2002 and 2006, the percentage of eligible young people who voted increased by 3 percentage points to 25 percent, the single largest increase among all age groups nationally.[3]

This fact sheet presents voter turnout data for urban, suburban, and rural areas as well as information for select metropolitan areas.[4] I also present voter turnout rates for several subgroups living in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

≡ **Figure 1: Voter Turnout Among Citizens by Urban, Suburban, and Rural Areas, and Top 5 Metropolitan Areas, 2006**

Area	Ages 30 and older	Ages 18-29
Urban	50%	26%
Suburban	55%	26%
Rural	54%	27%
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	71%	47%
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	61%	39%
Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	60%	38%
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	59%	38%
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	52%	36%

■ Ages 30 and older ■ Ages 18-29

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, November (Voting) Supplement, 2006

In the 2006 elections, young rural voters had the highest turnout rate among urban, suburban, and rural groups (27 percent); Among the largest metropolitan areas in the U.S., the Twin Cities (Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington) led the way in youth voter turnout (47 percent).

Voter Turnout Among Citizen Subgroups by Urban, Suburban, and Rural Areas, 2006

Overall, there is little difference in the voter turnout rates of young people. For example, young people in rural areas had the highest voter turnout rate, 27 percent, compared to 26 percent for young people who live in suburban and urban areas.

However, for some subgroups of young people, there are observable differences in voter participation by area. For example, among black non-Hispanics, voter turnout rates were highest among those who resided in rural areas (30 percent). In contrast, the pattern of participation was reversed for Latinos. Young Latinos had the highest voter turnout rates in urban areas (22 percent) and lowest in rural areas (11 percent). College graduates in rural areas voted at a rate of 53 percent, the highest among any other subgroup in Table 1, but lowest for college graduates in urban areas (36 percent). See Table 1.

Table 1 – Voter Turnout Rates Among Young Citizens (ages 18-29) by Urban, Suburban, and Rural Areas, 2006

	Urban	Suburban	Rural	U.S.
Race/Ethnicity[5]				
White non-Hispanics	28%	28%	28%	28%
Black non-Hispanics	25%	23%	30%	24%
Latinos	22%	18%	11%	19%
Asian non-Hispanics	16%	17%	***	17%
Native American non-Hispanics	***	***	20%	11%
Gender				
Men	23%	24%	25%	24%
Women	28%	27%	29%	27%
Educational Attainment				
Less than high school	11%	12%	14%	11%
High school	19%	17%	21%	18%
Some college	28%	28%	34%	29%
BA or more	36%	43%	53%	41%
Marital Status				
Married	30%	30%	32%	30%
Single	25%	25%	26%	24%
Registered	51%	51%	53%	50%
All Youth	26%	26%	27%	25%

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, November (Voting) Supplement, 2006. '***' indicates a sample size is too small to produce a reliable estimate.

Voter Turnout Rates Among Citizens by Metropolitan Area[6], 2006

The Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI metropolitan area had the highest youth voter turnout rate among all metropolitan areas in 2006. Young citizens in the Twin Cities turned out at a rate of 47 percent, twenty-two points above the national average—just shy of twice the rate of the national average. Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC, rounded out the bottom of the rankings with a voter turnout rate of 11 percent among young citizens in the 2006 elections.

Table 2 — Voter Turnout Rates Among Citizens by Metropolitan Area, 2006

Rank	Metropolitan Area (Core-Based Statistical Area)	Ages 18-29	Ages 30 and older
1	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI (Twin Cities)	47%	71%
2	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	39%	61%
3	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	38%	60%
3	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	38%	59%
5	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	36%	52%
6	Providence-Fall River-Warwick, RI-MA	35%	64%
7	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	33%	61%
7	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	33%	49%
7	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	33%	59%
10	Denver-Aurora	32%	60%
11	San Francisco Bay Area, CA[7]	31%	56%
12	Los Angeles Metro Area, CA[8]	26%	52%
13	Orange County, CA	25%	51%
14	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA	24%	49%
15	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	23%	56%
15	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	23%	53%
17	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	22%	53%
17	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	22%	57%
17	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	22%	60%
20	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	21%	59%
20	Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX	21%	45%
22	Kansas City, MO-KS	20%	59%
22	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	20%	45%
24	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	19%	43%
25	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	18%	51%
26	Miami-Ft. Lauderdale-Miami Beach, FL	17%	47%
26	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	17%	44%
28	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	16%	49%
29	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	11%	40%
N/A	McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr, TX	***	29%
	United States	**25%**	**54%**

Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, November (Voting) Supplement, 2006. '***' means a sample size is too small to produce a reliable estimate.

Notes

[1] The Census Bureau defines four types of areas—"principal city", "balance", "non-metropolitan", and "not identified." I refer to these areas as "urban", "suburban", and "rural." "Not Identified" means that the household was not identified as being part of the principal city, balance, or non-metropolitan area. In this Fact Sheet, I analyze urban, suburban, and rural areas, and I omit those respondents in not identified areas. Thanks to Wayne Kei and Dennis Clark at the U.S. Census Bureau for clarifying definitions of principal city, balance, non-metropolitan and not identified.

[2] I thank Mark Hugo Lopez and Peter Levine for comments on previous drafts of this fact sheet. All errors in fact or interpretation are my own.

[3] See "Youth Voter Turnout Increases in 2006" by Mark Hugo Lopez, Karlo Barrios Marcelo, and Emily Hoban Kirby for a longer discussion of youth voter turnout trends in 2006. www.civicyouth.org

[4] Fact sheets describing youth voter turnout for the following metropolitan areas are available on the CIRCLE web page:

Table A – List of Fact Sheets on select Metropolitan Areas on the CIRCLE website (www.civicyouth.org)		
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	Los Angeles Metropolitan Area, CA	Orange County, CA
San Francisco Bay Area, CA	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA
Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	Denver-Aurora, CO
Miami-Ft. Lauderdale-Miami Beach, FL	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA
Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	Kansas City, MO-KS	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI (Twin Cities)
Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY
Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	Providence-Fall River-Warwick, RI-MA	Dallas-Ft. Worth-Arlington, TX
Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	

[5] I 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.

[6] There are more metropolitan areas (core based statistical areas) than shown in Table 2, however, only those metropolitan areas shown in Table 2 are represented in the Current Population Survey, November (Voting) Supplement, 2006. All metropolitan areas in Table 2 had a population of 500,000 or more in 2000. To view a complete list of metropolitan areas with a population of 500,000 or more in 2000, visit http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20041115_metrodefinitions.htm. Special thanks to Brooke DeRenzis at the The Brookings Institution, Metropolitan Policy Program, for information on metropolitan areas.

[7] The San Francisco Bay Area, CA, includes the counties of San Francisco, Alameda, Marin, Contra Costa, and San Mateo as well as the cities of San Jose, Sunnyvale, and Santa Clara.

[8] The Los Angeles Metropolitan Area includes the counties of Los Angeles, as well as the principle cities of Los Angeles, Long Beach, Glendale, Pomona, Torrance, Pasadena, Burbank, Oxnard, Thousand Oaks, Ventura, Riverside, and San Bernardino.