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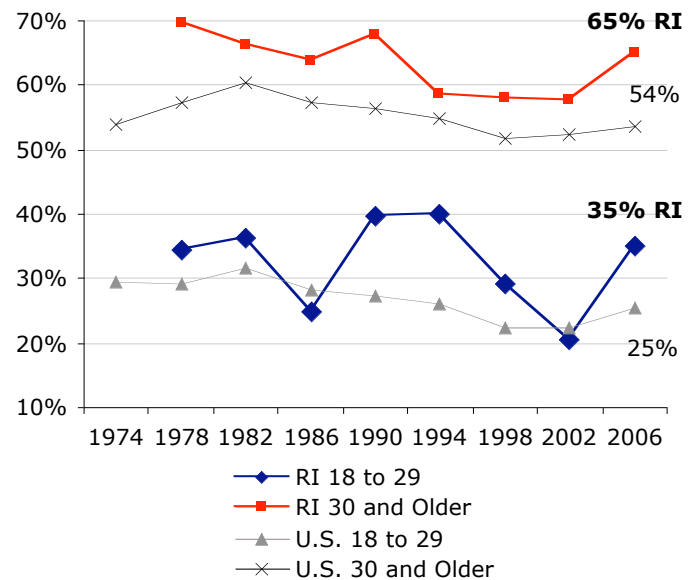
The Center for Information & Research on
Civic Learning & Engagement

Quick Facts about Young Voters in Rhode Island: The Midterm Election Year 2006

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Updated June 2007

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.² Similarly, while youth electoral participation improved between 2002 and 2006 nationally, in Rhode Island, the youth voter turnout rate rose 15 percentage points from 20 percent in 2002 to 35 percent in 2006. Overall, Rhode Island ranked 6th among all states and the District of Columbia in 2006, up from 39th in 2002, and was ten percentage points higher than the nation as a whole.

Graph 1: Rhode Island Voter Turnout in Midterm Years Among Citizens, by Age



Source: Current Population Survey, November Supplements, 1974-2006.

This fact sheet reports the characteristics of young voters for the state of Rhode Island, including estimates of the number of young voters, and voter turnout rates in 2006 and 2002 for various sub-groups of young people.

Youth Turnout Estimates, 2006

In 2006, a midterm election year, an estimated 162,000 young people in Rhode Island were eligible to vote in U.S. elections. Table 1 shows voting statistics for the years 2006 and 2002.

Voter Turnout Rates in 2006 and 2002 Among Eligible Young Citizens, Ages 18-29

Table 2 displays voter turnout rates for various groups of young people ages 18 to 29 in 2006 and 2002 in Rhode Island. In 2006, voter turnout among many youth groups in Rhode Island was up significantly from 2002.

Partisanship Among Young Voters in 2006

According to analysis of Election Pool, Exit Poll data, the majority of young voters identified as Democrat (53 percent), regardless of how they voted, in the 2006 elections.

Table 1 – Rhode Island Voter Turnout Statistics, 2006 and 2002

	Young People 18 to 29	Adults 30 and Older
2006		
Number of Votes Cast	49 thousand	381 thousand
Voter Turnout Rate	35 percent	65 percent
Share of all Voters	11 percent	89 percent
2002		
Number of Votes Cast	26 thousand	316 thousand
Voter Turnout Rate	20 percent	57 percent
Share of all Voters	8 percent	92 percent

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

Table 2 – Rhode Island Voter Turnout Rates Among Young Citizens ages 18 to 29, 2006 and 2002

Voter Turnout Rate Among:	2006	2002
Gender		
Women	35 percent	18 percent
Men	35 percent	23 percent
Educational Attainment		
Less than High School	***	10 percent
High School	26 percent	8 percent
Some College	36 percent	23 percent
BA or more	52 percent	38 percent
Marital Status		
Single Men	35 percent	20 percent
Single Women	33 percent	14 percent
Married Men	***	35 percent
Married Women	***	31 percent
Registered Voter	60 percent	44 percent
All Youth, Rhode Island	35 percent	20 percent
All Youth, National	25 percent	22 percent

Source: Authors' Tabulations from the 2006 and 2002 November Supplements of the Current Population Survey. '***' indicates a sample size is too small to produce a reliable estimate.

Notes

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

² 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.