



**CIRCLE**

**The Center for Information & Research  
on Civic Learning & Engagement**

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## **New Census Data Confirm Increase in Youth Voter Turnout In 2006 Midterm Elections**

**2006 Midterm Youth Voter Turnout Rate Rose to 25.5 percent  
1.9 Million More Young People Voted Than in 2002 Midterm**

**State-by-State Data Available at [http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS07\\_2006MidtermCPS.pdf](http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS07_2006MidtermCPS.pdf)  
Youth Voter Experts Available for Interviews, Call Contact**

Washington, DC – Nearly two million more young Americans under the age of 30 voted in the 2006 midterm elections as compared to the 2002 midterm elections, according to new Census data analyzed and released in a fact sheet by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). The data confirm early estimates by CIRCLE that 10.8 million young Americans voted in the 2006 midterm elections.

The youth turnout rate or percentage of young eligible voters who cast votes also jumped from 22.5 percent in 2002 to 25.5 percent, an increase of 3 percentage points. This was the greatest percentage point increase in turnout for any age group for the second election in a row. The turnout rate for all voters rose only 1.7 percentage points, while the rate for voters over the age of 45 rose one percentage point. Voters under the age of 30 accounted for 11.2 percent of all voters in 2006, which is an increase of one percentage point compared to the 2002 midterm elections.

“We have now seen two consecutive elections with substantial increases in youth turnout,” said CIRCLE Director Peter Levine. “The increase in 2006 is particularly striking because the turnout of the whole adult population hardly rose at all. It seems likely that the Millennial generation is more involved in politics than Generation X, or that deliberate efforts to mobilize young voters are effective--or both. Given this trend and the magnitude and attention around the 2008 elections we expect record numbers of youth voters.”

In the 2002 midterm election, 22.5 percent of young adults voted. However, the best comparison to the 2006 election may be the 1994 midterm, because it was the last midterm to follow a surge in youth voting in a presidential election year, comparable to the 11-point surge in 2004. In 1994, 26.1 percent of 18- to 29-year olds voted. CIRCLE has compiled data on the midterm cycles nationwide – and by state – since 1974.

### **MIDTERM ELECTION YOUTH VOTER TURNOUT**

Midterm election Year	National youth voter turnout rate	Number of youth voters (ages 18-29)	Youth Share of All Votes Cast
2006	25.5%	10.8 million	11.2%
2002	22.5%	8.9 million	10.2%
1994	26.1%	10.6 million	12.2%

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In 2006, the three states with the highest level of youth voter turnout were Minnesota (43 percent), Wisconsin (40 percent), and South Dakota (39 percent). In contrast, the three with the lowest youth turnout rates were West Virginia (16 percent), Texas (17 percent) and Utah (17 percent). These differences are most likely driven by high profile gubernatorial and Senate races as well as statewide ballot initiatives in the higher turnout states. A fact sheet can be found at [http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS07\\_2006MidtermCPS.pdf](http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS07_2006MidtermCPS.pdf)

CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) promotes research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. Since 2001, CIRCLE has conducted, collected, and funded research on the civic and political participation of young Americans. CIRCLE is based in the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy and is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, Carnegie Corporation of New York and others.