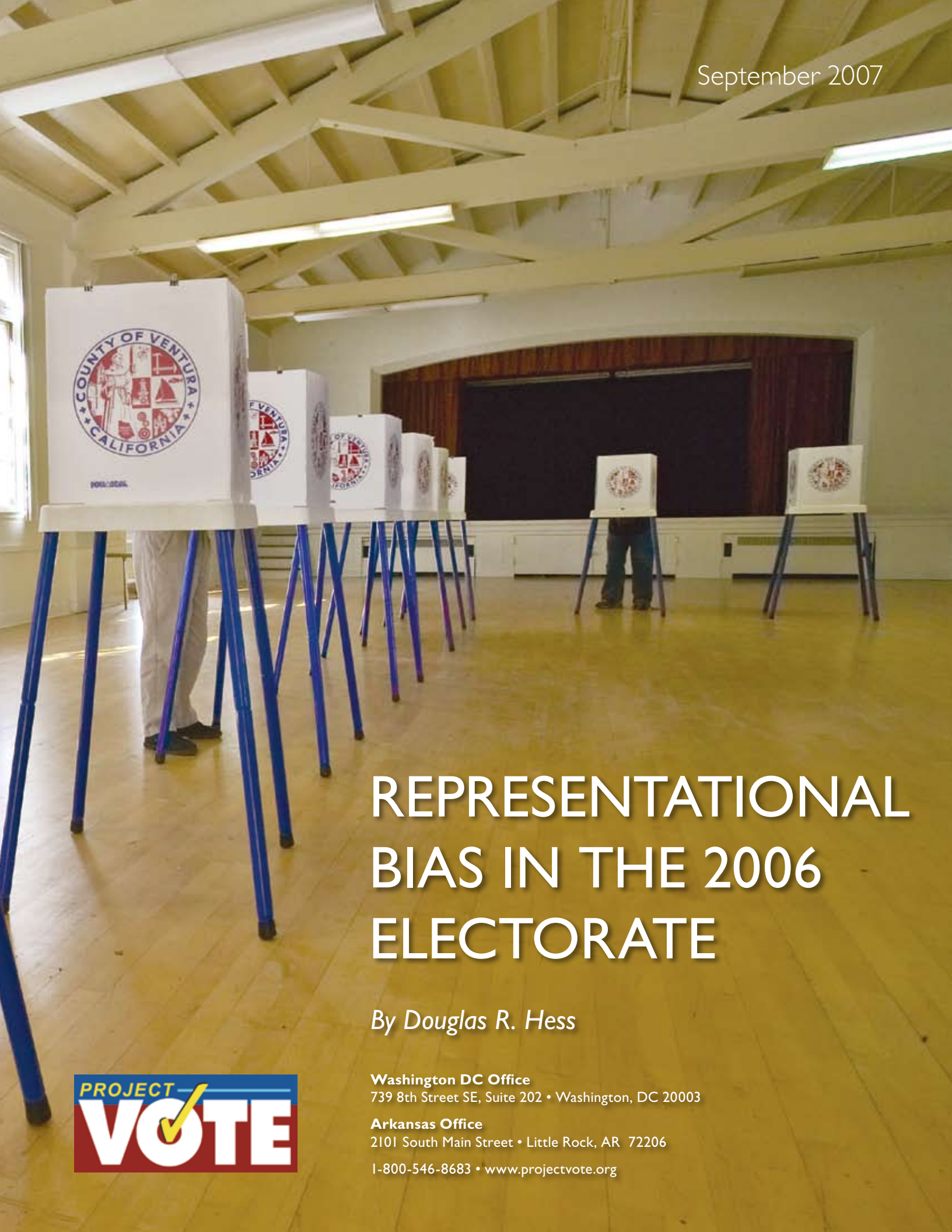


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# REPRESENTATIONAL BIAS IN THE 2006 ELECTORATE

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# Executive Summary

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“Representational Bias in the 2006 Electorate” provides a concise review of voter participation in the 2006 elections based on the US Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey (CPS). Key findings include:

- A significant majority of eligible Americans (52 percent) did not participate in the 2006 general election, either because they were not registered (32 percent) or because they were registered but did not vote (20 percent). Of those registered, however, the majority (71 percent) did vote.
- Among the states, the rates of registration and voting both ranged by approximately 30 percent age points in 2006.
- Electoral participation – both registration and voting – is stratified by social and economic factors, including age, income, education and race and ethnicity.
- Americans between 18 and 29 were approximately 20 percent of the eligible voter population but only 10 percent of the voting population in 2006.
- In registration, non-Hispanic Blacks lagged behind non-Hispanic Whites by 10 percentage points: 61 percent to 71 percent. Only 54 percent of Latinos and 49 percent of eligible Asian-Americans report being registered.
- In voting, non-Hispanic Blacks also lagged behind non-Hispanic Whites by 10 percentage points: 41 percent to 52 percent. Approximately 32 percent of eligible Latino and Asian-American citizens voted.
- Minority voter registration and turnout is lowest among young minority men. Only one in five Black men aged 18 to 29 voted in 2006 compared to more than one in four Black women in the same age group.
- If all eligible minorities had voted at the rate of non-Hispanic Whites, more than 7.5 million additional Americans would have participated in the 2006 elections.
- Americans with household income in the top 20 percent of the population (over \$100,000/ year) were 1.75 times more likely to vote than those with income in the lowest 20 percent (under \$25,000/year) in 2006.
- The residential mobility of Americans is extremely high. More than four in ten Americans reported having lived at their current address for less than five years. Residential mobility is even higher among lower-income and minority Americans, and mobility appears to contribute towards low registration and voting rates.



# Introduction

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The proportion of the U.S. population that registers to vote and that does vote is highly skewed towards Whites, the educated and the wealthy. Furthermore, young eligible Americans, particularly young minority males, and those who have recently moved, are disproportionately represented among those who do not participate in the U.S. electorate.

Research on who does and does not vote can come from either administrative data (i.e., election files kept by local or state officials) or from survey data. The largest survey asking about voting behavior is the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS, sponsored by the Departments of Labor and Commerce, is a monthly survey of over 60,000 households and is designed to be representative of the non-institutionalized population of the United States. Since 1972, in November of even-numbered years, the CPS has included a short battery of questions related to voter registration and voting.

This report provides an introductory review of frequency tables for responses to some of the questions in the November 2006 CPS as well as cross tabulations showing how the responses interact with race, gender and income. Data on voter registration and voter turnout for each state and the District of Columbia for 2002, 2004 and 2006 are also provided.

*“Those who are registered to vote are not representative of the U.S. population eligible to vote.”*

The report finds a continuing problem with the U.S. electorate: those who are registered and vote are not representative of the U.S. population eligible to vote.<sup>1</sup> The summary table on the following page presents a snapshot of that bias. As the rest of the report details, the problem of under-representation is particularly severe among young and minority voters, especially young minority males. Besides age and race, income, education and residential mobility are also strongly related to voter registration and turnout. Later in the report we show how these factors compound to place young minority males, in particular, in the lowest category for registration and turnout.

Many non-demographic factors contribute to the skewed nature of electoral participation in the United States but are not explored in this report. However, the wide variety of state policies and election laws – ranging from the closing dates of voter registration, to the voting rights of formerly incarcerated persons, to changing identification requirements – all have an impact on the registration and turnout of various subpopulations.

Other writings by Project Vote, advocacy groups and academics detail research on institutional barriers such as the policies mentioned. This review of the survey data, however, strongly points to the need for civic organizations and government officials (at all levels of government) to continue to expand access to voter registration. For their part, governments should view bias in the electorate as a call to embrace voter registration as an affirmative responsibility through better implementation of laws relating to the registration of young, low-income and minority voters.

<sup>1</sup> Analysis in this report is based on the Voter Eligible Population: citizens aged 18 and older. There are 94,562 individual responses in the 2006 CPS that meet those criteria. The tables provide responses weighted so they are representative of the nation's non-institutionalized population.

## Summary Table: Percent of Population Eligible to Vote, Voting and Not Voting

Demographic Category	Voter Eligible	Voters	Non-Voters
<b>RACE</b>			
White	74%	80%	69%
Black	12%	10%	13%
Asian	3%	2%	5%
Latino	9%	6%	11%
Other	2%	1%	2%
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>			
Less than \$25,000	21%	15%	28%
More than \$100,000	19%	23%	14%
<b>EDUCATION</b>			
High School or Less	44%	34%	53%
Some College or More	56%	66%	47%
<b>AGE GROUP</b>			
Under 30	21%	11%	30%
30 to 64	62%	66%	58%
65 and Over	17%	23%	12%
<b>TIME AT PRESENT RESIDENCE</b>			
Less than 5 Years	43%	33%	55%
5 Years or More	57%	67%	45%

Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote



## State Participation Data

There was significant variation in registration and voting rates across states in 2006. Table 1a shows a difference of 25 to 30 percentage points between the states with the highest (North Dakota<sup>2</sup>, Maine and Minnesota) and lowest registration rates (Hawaii, Nevada and Utah). A 28-point range is also found in voting rates, with 65 percent of Minnesota's eligible population voting, but only 37 percent of Utah's eligible population voting. Finally, there is a 30-point range in the rate of voting among those registered. Montana's registered population led the nation with 85 percent casting ballots while only 55 of Louisiana's registered population reported having voted. (Even assuming the social dislocation brought on by Hurricane Katrina is partly responsible for this low rate, we note that three other states had turnouts of less than 60 percent of registered voters in 2006: North Carolina, Texas and West Virginia.)

**Table 1a** provides for each state the following: the estimates of the Voter Eligible Population (VEP), and self-reports for registration and voting. The table also provides the voter registration and turnout rates as a percentage of the eligible population, as well as the turnout rate for registered voting. Each state is ranked based on voter registration and turnout rates for 2006. The national registration rate of the voting eligible population is 68 percent, the turnout rate 48 percent and the rate of turnout for those registered is 71 percent.

**Table 1a: Voter Eligible Population, Registration and Voting, by State, 2006**

	VEP	Registered	Registered as % of VEP	Rank	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Rank	Voted as % of Registered
Alabama	3,353	2,480	74%	6	1,668	50%	23	67%
Alaska	452	333	74%	6	248	55%	11	75%
Arizona	3,829	2,378	62%	47	1,777	46%	32	75%
Arkansas	2,004	1,316	66%	33	911	45%	37	69%
California	21,250	13,239	62%	47	10,104	48%	27	76%
Colorado	3,187	2,275	71%	18	1,730	54%	14	76%
Connecticut	2,454	1,650	67%	31	1,220	50%	23	74%
Delaware	603	408	68%	30	275	46%	32	68%
District of Columbia	374	275	74%	6	187	50%	23	68%
Florida	12,098	7,855	65%	38	5,343	44%	40	68%
Georgia	6,086	3,950	65%	38	2,672	44%	40	68%
Hawaii	893	492	55%	51	388	43%	42	79%
Idaho	1,007	660	66%	33	523	52%	20	79%
Illinois	8,383	5,779	69%	27	3,968	47%	30	69%
Indiana	4,506	2,946	65%	38	2,053	46%	32	70%
Iowa	2,162	1,663	77%	5	1,180	55%	11	71%
Kansas	1,938	1,274	66%	33	901	46%	32	71%
Kentucky	3,052	2,240	73%	10	1,508	49%	26	67%
Louisiana	3,006	2,179	72%	13	1,202	40%	47	55%
Maine	1,023	811	79%	2	595	58%	6	73%

<sup>2</sup> North Dakota, however, has no voter registration system per se.

	VEP	Registered	Registered as % of VEP	Rank	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Rank	Voted as % of Registered
Maryland	3,806	2,720	71%	18	2,145	56%	10	79%
Massachusetts	4,395	3,180	72%	13	2,434	55%	11	77%
Michigan	7,163	5,256	73%	10	4,088	57%	8	78%
Minnesota	3,632	2,862	79%	2	2,375	65%	1	83%
Mississippi	2,054	1,437	70%	22	879	43%	42	61%
Missouri	4,276	3,170	74%	6	2,310	54%	14	73%
Montana	729	512	70%	22	435	60%	3	85%
Nebraska	1,239	852	69%	27	634	51%	22	74%
Nevada	1,611	905	56%	50	686	43%	42	76%
New Hampshire	985	687	70%	22	477	48%	27	70%
New Jersey	5,563	3,487	63%	45	2,406	43%	42	69%
New Mexico	1,346	951	71%	18	731	54%	14	77%
New York	12,701	8,143	64%	43	5,402	43%	42	66%
North Carolina	6,013	4,160	69%	27	2,422	40%	47	58%
North Dakota	475	397	84%	1	259	54%	14	65%
Ohio	8,319	5,919	71%	18	4,408	53%	18	75%
Oklahoma	2,539	1,776	70%	22	1,174	46%	32	66%
Oregon	2,680	1,924	72%	13	1,601	60%	3	83%
Pennsylvania	9,235	5,991	65%	38	4,394	48%	27	73%
Rhode Island	733	537	73%	10	431	59%	5	80%
South Carolina	3,044	1,986	65%	38	1,376	45%	37	69%
South Dakota	569	445	78%	4	358	63%	2	81%
Tennessee	4,414	2,828	64%	43	2,003	45%	37	71%
Texas	14,406	9,676	67%	31	5,526	38%	49	57%
Utah	1,641	932	57%	49	603	37%	50	65%
Vermont	479	345	72%	13	273	57%	8	79%
Virginia	5,123	3,402	66%	33	2,431	47%	30	72%
Washington	4,405	3,090	70%	22	2,346	53%	18	76%
West Virginia	1,389	873	63%	45	513	37%	50	59%
Wisconsin	4,071	2,948	72%	13	2,352	58%	6	80%
Wyoming	383	253	66%	33	199	52%	20	79%
<b>Total</b>	<b>201,073</b>	<b>135,847</b>	<b>68%</b>		<b>96,119</b>	<b>48%</b>		<b>71%</b>

Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote; numbers are in 1000s.

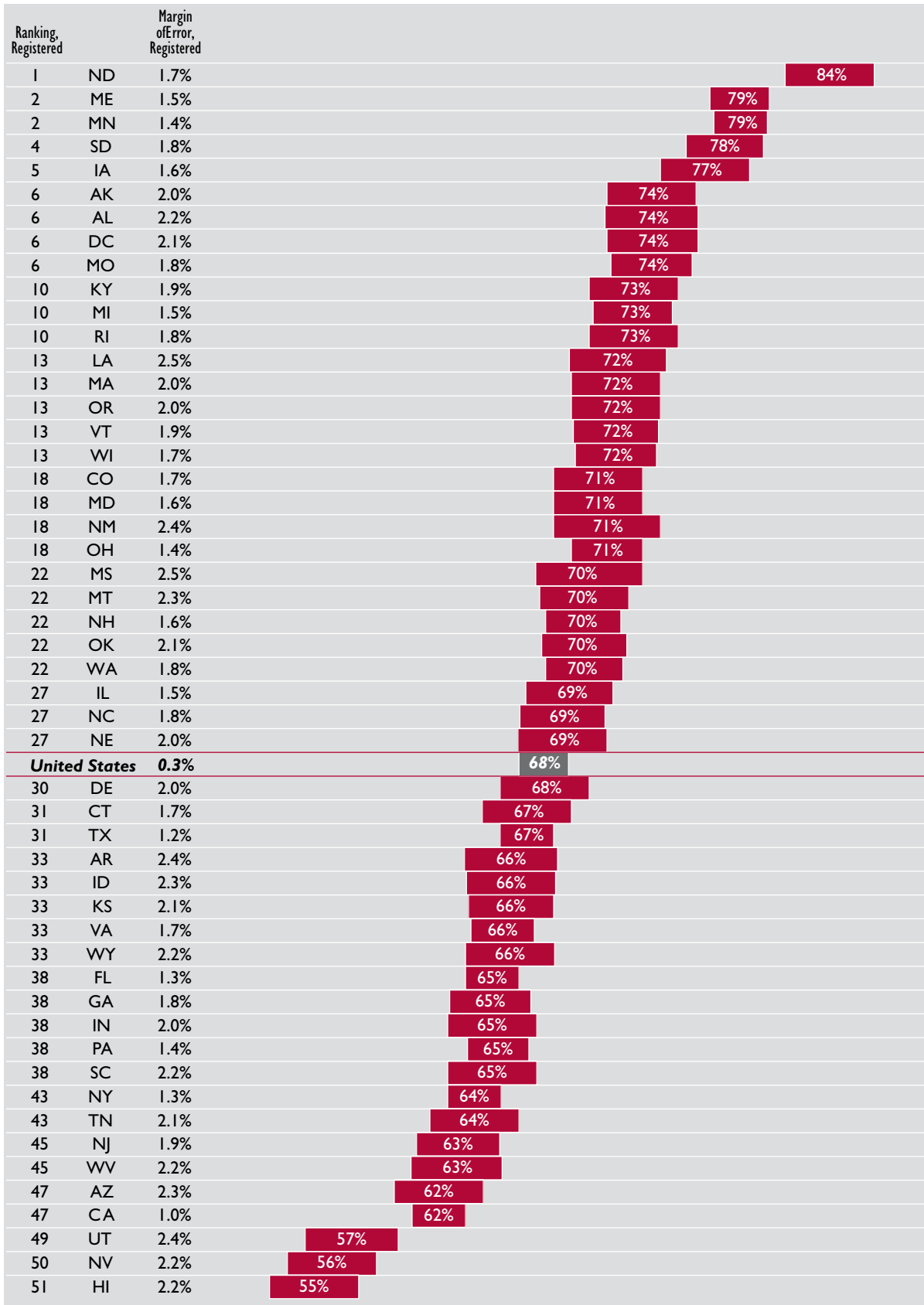
As previously discussed, there is an approximately 30-point range across the states in the percent of the eligible population who were registered to vote, percent of the eligible population who voted and percent of those registered who voted. The minimum, median and maximum for each of these three rates for the 50 states and the District of Columbia are:

	Registered	Voted	Vote/Registered
Minimum	55%	37%	55%
Median	70%	49%	73%
Maximum	84%	65%	85%

Figure 1 provides a graphic display of the voter registration rate with the margins of error in the estimate for each state. States in Figure 1 are sorted by their rank based on percent of the VEP registered.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Comparisons between states ranked closely together should be made with caution. To do so accurately, a separate calculation, not provided here, needs to be made: the margin of error of difference. Nonetheless, this report does provide margins of error for individual state estimates (margins are at a 90 percent confidence interval).

Figure 1: State Voter Registration as Percent of VEP, Ranked, 2006



Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote.

*Tables 1b and 1c* provide data over the past three election cycles for each state for registration and voting, respectively. Registration and turnout for 2006 and 2002 are comparable for the nation as a whole. Presidential-election years produce higher registration and turnout rates. In 2004, more than two-thirds of the VEP turned out to vote and nearly 90 percent of those registered voted.

More complex analysis will need to be done to show which states' changes are significant over time and how they relate to demographic, historical or institutional factors. For instance, might states with the most residential mobility have the greatest drop off in registration between presidential elections? Or do high-profile mid-term elections in some states temper the usual decline in registration and voting between presidential elections?

Several states with large increases in voter turnout between the 2002 and 2006 mid-term elections (New Mexico, Ohio, Rhode Island, Virginia and Wisconsin) experienced a great deal of voter registration and campaign activity in 2004. Louisiana, not surprisingly, saw the largest decline (10 percentage points) between the mid-term elections in voter turnout.

**Table 1b: Voter Eligible Population and Registration, by State, 2002-2006**

	2002			2004			2006		
	VEP	Registered	Registered as % of VEP	VEP	Registered	Registered as % of VEP	VEP	Registered	Registered as % of VEP
Alabama	3,215	2,347	73%	3,257	2,418	74%	3,353	2,480	74%
Alaska	418	303	72%	434	334	77%	452	333	74%
Arizona	3,293	1,930	59%	3,508	2,485	71%	3,829	2,378	62%
Arkansas	1,919	1,222	64%	1,942	1,328	68%	2,004	1,316	66%
California	19,642	12,025	61%	20,693	14,193	69%	21,250	13,239	62%
Colorado	2,959	1,976	67%	3,109	2,307	74%	3,187	2,275	71%
Connecticut	2,385	1,679	70%	2,409	1,695	70%	2,454	1,650	67%
Delaware	559	385	69%	579	415	72%	603	408	68%
District of Columbia	389	295	76%	390	293	75%	374	275	74%
Florida	11,043	7,290	66%	11,469	8,219	72%	12,098	7,855	65%
Georgia	5,749	3,737	65%	5,867	3,948	67%	6,086	3,950	65%
Hawaii	801	425	53%	852	497	58%	893	492	55%
Idaho	916	567	62%	949	663	70%	1,007	660	66%
Illinois	8,575	5,781	67%	8,640	6,437	75%	8,383	5,779	69%
Indiana	4,593	2,829	62%	4,435	3,031	68%	4,506	2,946	65%
Iowa	2,071	1,495	72%	2,136	1,674	78%	2,162	1,663	77%
Kansas	1,938	1,298	67%	1,851	1,338	72%	1,938	1,274	66%
Kentucky	2,984	2,017	68%	2,969	2,231	75%	3,052	2,240	73%
Louisiana	3,034	2,276	75%	3,218	2,413	75%	3,006	2,179	72%
Maine	1,028	831	81%	1,007	824	82%	1,023	811	79%
Maryland	3,583	2,378	66%	3,678	2,676	73%	3,806	2,720	71%
Massachusetts	4,459	3,198	72%	4,497	3,483	77%	4,395	3,180	72%
Michigan	7,323	5,291	72%	7,177	5,364	75%	7,163	5,256	73%
Minnesota	3,634	2,888	79%	3,645	3,080	84%	3,632	2,862	79%
Mississippi	1,982	1,401	71%	2,049	1,510	74%	2,054	1,437	70%
Missouri	4,058	2,981	73%	4,106	3,336	81%	4,276	3,170	74%
Montana	673	468	69%	687	519	75%	729	512	70%

	2002			2004			2006		
	VEP	Registered	Registered as % of VEP	VEP	Registered	Registered as % of VEP	VEP	Registered	Registered as % of VEP
Nebraska	1,185	838	71%	1,215	918	76%	1,239	852	69%
Nevada	1,371	775	57%	1,477	965	65%	1,611	905	56%
New Hampshire	952	629	66%	948	716	76%	985	687	70%
New Jersey	5,853	3,802	65%	5,592	4,085	73%	5,563	3,487	63%
New Mexico	1,232	727	59%	1,301	936	72%	1,346	951	71%
New York	12,417	8,262	67%	12,779	8,624	67%	12,701	8,143	64%
North Carolina	5,676	3,662	65%	5,923	4,292	72%	6,013	4,160	69%
North Dakota	484	405	84%	462	412	89%	475	397	84%
Ohio	8,382	5,488	65%	8,305	6,003	72%	8,319	5,919	71%
Oklahoma	2,452	1,656	68%	2,476	1,781	72%	2,539	1,776	70%
Oregon	2,451	1,718	70%	2,600	2,049	79%	2,680	1,924	72%
Pennsylvania	9,093	5,762	63%	9,055	6,481	72%	9,235	5,991	65%
Rhode Island	735	495	67%	732	522	71%	733	537	73%
South Carolina	2,900	1,973	68%	3,002	2,238	75%	3,044	1,986	65%
South Dakota	567	428	76%	554	425	77%	569	445	78%
Tennessee	4,078	2,587	63%	4,250	2,739	64%	4,414	2,828	64%
Texas	12,976	8,591	66%	13,925	9,681	70%	14,406	9,676	67%
Utah	1,442	928	64%	1,508	1,141	76%	1,641	932	57%
Vermont	483	341	71%	469	354	76%	479	345	72%
Virginia	4,858	3,063	63%	4,971	3,441	69%	5,123	3,402	66%
Washington	4,134	2,901	70%	4,220	3,133	74%	4,405	3,090	70%
West Virginia	1,372	827	60%	1,394	935	67%	1,389	873	63%
Wisconsin	3,975	2,744	69%	3,928	3,225	82%	4,071	2,948	72%
Wyoming	368	240	65%	370	265	72%	383	253	66%
<b>Total</b>	<b>192,656</b>	<b>128,154</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>197,005</b>	<b>142,070</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>201,073</b>	<b>135,847</b>	<b>68%</b>

Source: November 2002, 2004, 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote; numbers are in 1000s.

**Table 1c: Voter Turnout, by State, 2002-2006**

	2002			2004			2006		
	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered
Alabama	1,585	49%	68%	2,060	63%	85%	1,668	50%	67%
Alaska	230	55%	76%	293	68%	88%	248	55%	75%
Arizona	1,398	42%	72%	2,239	64%	90%	1,777	46%	75%
Arkansas	888	46%	73%	1,140	59%	86%	911	45%	69%
California	8,355	43%	70%	12,807	62%	90%	10,104	48%	76%
Colorado	1,483	50%	75%	2,097	67%	91%	1,730	54%	76%
Connecticut	1,134	48%	68%	1,524	63%	90%	1,220	50%	74%
Delaware	253	45%	66%	385	66%	93%	275	46%	68%
District of Columbia	207	53%	70%	270	69%	92%	187	50%	68%
Florida	5,334	48%	73%	7,373	64%	90%	5,343	44%	68%
Georgia	2,431	42%	65%	3,332	57%	84%	2,672	44%	68%
Hawaii	364	45%	85%	433	51%	87%	388	43%	79%

	2002			2004			2006		
	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered
Idaho	425	46%	75%	585	62%	88%	523	52%	79%
Illinois	4,014	47%	69%	5,672	66%	88%	3,968	47%	69%
Indiana	1,856	40%	66%	2,598	59%	86%	2,053	46%	70%
Iowa	1,053	51%	71%	1,522	71%	91%	1,180	55%	71%
Kansas	944	49%	73%	1,188	64%	89%	901	46%	71%
Kentucky	1,367	46%	68%	1,930	65%	87%	1,508	49%	67%
Louisiana	1,527	50%	67%	2,067	64%	86%	1,202	40%	55%
Maine	594	58%	72%	736	73%	89%	595	58%	73%
Maryland	1,826	51%	77%	2,413	66%	90%	2,145	56%	79%
Massachusetts	2,340	52%	73%	3,085	69%	89%	2,434	55%	77%
Michigan	3,684	50%	70%	4,818	67%	90%	4,088	57%	78%
Minnesota	2,450	67%	85%	2,887	79%	94%	2,375	65%	83%
Mississippi	855	43%	61%	1,263	62%	84%	879	43%	61%
Missouri	2,134	53%	72%	2,815	69%	84%	2,310	54%	73%
Montana	363	54%	78%	482	70%	93%	435	60%	85%
Nebraska	546	46%	65%	793	65%	86%	634	51%	74%
Nevada	585	43%	75%	871	59%	90%	686	43%	76%
New Hampshire	485	51%	77%	677	71%	95%	477	48%	70%
New Jersey	2,504	43%	66%	3,693	66%	90%	2,406	43%	69%
New Mexico	547	44%	75%	837	64%	89%	731	54%	77%
New York	5,417	44%	66%	7,698	60%	89%	5,402	43%	66%
North Carolina	2,537	45%	69%	3,639	61%	85%	2,422	40%	58%
North Dakota	279	58%	69%	330	71%	80%	259	54%	65%
Ohio	3,652	44%	67%	5,485	66%	91%	4,408	53%	75%
Oklahoma	1,201	49%	73%	1,541	62%	87%	1,174	46%	66%
Oregon	1,359	55%	79%	1,924	74%	94%	1,601	60%	83%
Pennsylvania	3,925	43%	68%	5,845	65%	90%	4,394	48%	73%
Rhode Island	372	51%	75%	467	64%	89%	431	59%	80%
South Carolina	1,353	47%	69%	1,899	63%	85%	1,376	45%	69%
South Dakota	375	66%	87%	378	68%	89%	358	63%	81%
Tennessee	1,897	47%	73%	2,319	55%	85%	2,003	45%	71%
Texas	5,283	41%	62%	7,950	57%	89%	5,526	38%	57%
Utah	632	44%	68%	1,023	68%	82%	603	37%	65%
Vermont	256	53%	75%	316	67%	91%	273	57%	79%
Virginia	1,808	37%	59%	3,134	63%	90%	2,431	47%	72%
Washington	2,097	51%	72%	2,851	68%	89%	2,346	53%	76%
West Virginia	507	37%	61%	798	57%	93%	513	37%	59%
Wisconsin	1,999	50%	73%	3,010	77%	91%	2,352	58%	80%
Wyoming	198	54%	83%	247	67%	93%	199	52%	79%
<b>Total</b>	<b>88,903</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>125,736</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>96,119</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>71%</b>

Source: November 2002, 2004, 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote; numbers are in 1000s.

## Gender, Race, Age and the Electorate

The gender gap in registration and turnout is well known, as are the disparities among racial and ethnic categories. However, both can be better understood when the interactions between race, gender and age are taken into consideration. In short, as demonstrated below, the disappearance of young minority males from the electorate appears to drive these disparities.

Tables 2, 3 and 4 provide, respectively, national data on gender, race and race by gender. Compared to men, women were registered at a higher rate (69 to 66 percent, see Table 2) and voted at a slightly higher rate (49 percent to 47 percent).

**Table 2: Gender and Voting Behavior, 2006**

	VEP	Column %	Registered	Registered as % of VEP	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered
Men	96,144	48%	63,425	66%	45,118	47%	71%
Women	104,929	52%	72,422	69%	51,001	49%	70%
<b>Total</b>	<b>201,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>135,847</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>96,119</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>71%</b>

Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote; numbers are in 1000s.

Table 3 shows that the disparity in 2006 registration rates between non-Hispanic Whites and non-Hispanic Blacks is about ten percentage points. The disparity, between White and minority Americans registration rates, increases to 17 percentage points for Latinos and reaches 22 percentage points with Asian/Pacific Islanders. The differences in registration among race and ethnic groups is larger than the difference in turnout when measured as a percentage of those who are registered (as shown in the final column of Table 3). Nonetheless, the eleven point difference between non-Hispanic Whites and minorities in voter turnout as a percent of the eligible population is apparently driven both by lower turnout of registered minorities in 2006 and by the disparities in registration. If all eligible minorities had voted at the rate of non-Hispanic Whites, more than 7.5 million additional people would have participated in the 2006 elections.

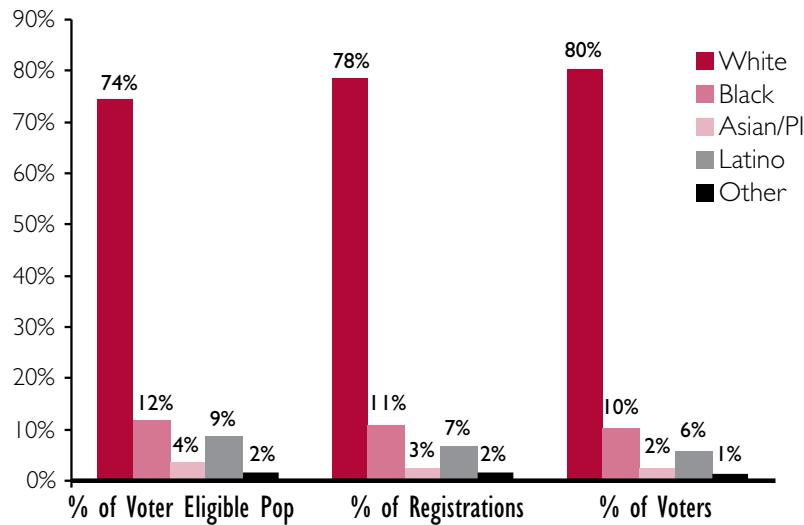
**Table 3: Race/Ethnicity and Voting Behavior, 2006**

	VEP	Column %	Registered	Registered as % of VEP	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered
White	149,761	75%	106,620	71%	77,280	52%	73%
Black	23,643	12%	14,483	61%	9,761	41%	67%
Asian/PI	7,040	4%	3,444	49%	2,270	32%	66%
Latino	17,150	9%	9,194	54%	5,522	32%	60%
Other	3,479	2%	2,107	61%	1,285	37%	61%
<b>Total</b>	<b>201,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>135,847</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>96,119</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>71%</b>

Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote; numbers are in 1000s.

Figure 2 shows how these demographic differences created an electorate in 2006 that did not represent the voting eligible population. While non-Hispanic Whites made up 74 percent of the eligible population in 2006, they made up 78 percent of all registrations and 80 percent of all voters. Every other race/ethnic group in the analysis shows a decline in representation as they move across the categories of eligible, registered, and voted.

Figure 2: Racial/Ethnic Composition of 2006 Voter Eligible Population and Electorate



“While non-Hispanic Whites made up 74% of the eligible population in 2006, they made up 78% of all registrations and 80% of all voters.”

Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote.

Table 4 presents election data by age and gender. For simplicity, three basic age categories are used: “Under 30”, “30 to 64” and “65 and Over.” Women in the first two age groups are more likely to be registered than men. Among youth, a slightly higher percentage of women who are registered turnout to vote than men who are registered, but among the 30 to 64 age group the genders are close on this measure. Among those 65 and older, fewer women are registered than men and less likely to vote even if registered. More research needs to be conducted as to why elderly women are less likely to register and vote when registered than elderly men.

Table 4: Gender and Age and Voting Behavior, 2006

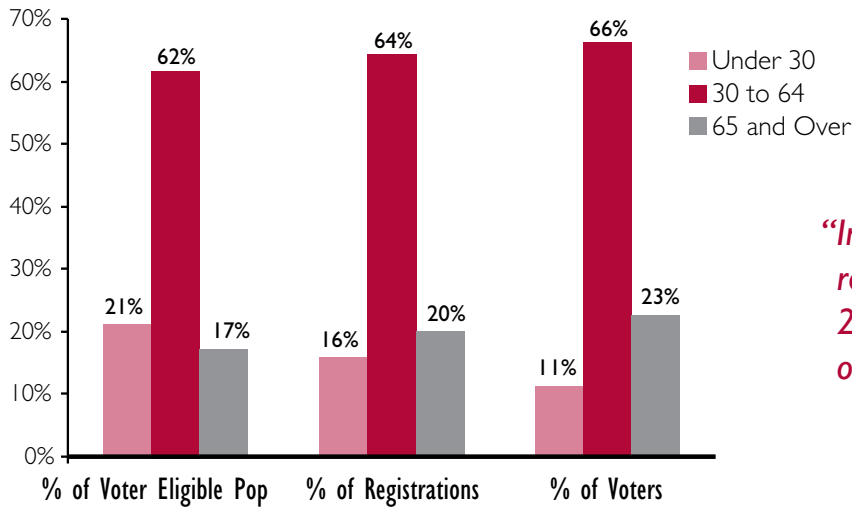
	Gender	VEP	Registered	Registered as % of VEP	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered
UNDER 30	Men	20,998	10,184	48%	5,021	24%	49%
	Women	21,244	11,268	53%	5,747	27%	51%
	Total	42,242	21,452	51%	10,768	25%	50%
30 TO 64	Men	60,318	41,422	69%	30,224	50%	73%
	Women	63,884	45,950	72%	33,473	52%	73%
	Total	124,203	87,372	70%	63,697	51%	73%
65 AND OVER	Men	14,828	11,820	80%	9,873	67%	84%
	Women	19,800	15,203	77%	11,781	60%	78%
	Total	34,628	27,023	78%	21,654	63%	80%
		201,073	135,847	68%	96,119	48%	71%

Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote; numbers are in 1000s.



**Figure 3** presents the age bias of the electorate. Young voters make up approximately one-fifth of the population eligible to vote, but make up only one-tenth of the population that votes. In short, young voters' representation in the 2006 electorate was only one-half its potential. If young voters had participated at similar rates to middle-aged voters, there would have been an additional 8 million voters.

**Figure 3: Age Composition of 2006 Voter Eligible Population and Electorate**



*“In short, young voters’ representation in the 2006 electorate was only one-half its potential.”*

Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote.

**Tables 5a and 5b** interact the categories discussed so far (gender, race and age) to elaborate on previously noted differences in voter registration and turnout. Table 5a presents registration data and Table 5b (See page 14) presents voter turnout data. The tables reveal a much larger gender disparity among non-Whites than Whites in registration.

There is an 8-point disparity in registration rates between Black women and Black men. The disparity is 5 percentage points among Latinos, while for each of the remaining three populations the gender difference is 2 to 3 points.

Contrary to the trend among other race and ethnic categories, in which women lose their lead over men in registration as they age, Black women 65 and over maintain a slight registration lead over Black men in that age group.

*“Young minority men are strikingly absent from the US electorate.”*

**Table 5b** shows that differences in turnout of those registered (the last column) between men and women under the age of 65 favor minority women over minority men; meanwhile there are no such differences between White men and women under the age of 65. However, among elderly registered citizens, men are much more likely than women to turnout regardless of race or ethnic category.

Young minority men report the lowest performances in registration and voting if registered (which means that they also have the lowest performance in voting as a percentage of those eligible). If young Black men voted at the rate of young Black women in 2006, for instance, it would have added almost two hundred thousand voters to the election.

**Table 5a: Gender, Age and Race and Voter Registration, 2006**

		MEN			WOMEN			Difference*
		VEP	Registered	Registered as % of VEP	VEP	Registered	Registered as % of VEP	Registered as % of VEP
<b>WHITE</b>	Under 30	14,328	7,431	52%	14,147	7,965	56%	4%
	30 to 64	45,764	33,086	72%	47,006	35,204	75%	3%
	65 & Over	12,320	10,153	82%	16,196	12,780	79%	-3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72,412</b>	<b>50,671</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>77,349</b>	<b>55,949</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>BLACK</b>	Under 30	2,845	1,201	42%	3,292	1,636	50%	8%
	30 to 64	6,527	3,999	61%	8,088	5,634	70%	9%
	65 & Over	1,107	755	68%	1,785	1,259	71%	3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10,479</b>	<b>5,954</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>13,164</b>	<b>8,529</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>ASIAN/PI</b>	Under 30	776	283	36%	743	304	41%	5%
	30 to 64	2,109	1,048	50%	2,474	1,283	52%	2%
	65 & Over	423	242	57%	514	284	55%	-2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,308</b>	<b>1,573</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>3,731</b>	<b>1,871</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>LATINO</b>	Under 30	2,517	1,024	41%	2,525	1,119	44%	3%
	30 to 64	4,942	2,682	54%	5,275	3,133	59%	5%
	65 & Over	806	533	66%	1,085	703	65%	-1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8,265</b>	<b>4,239</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>8,885</b>	<b>4,955</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>OTHER</b>	Under 30	532	245	46%	536	245	46%	0%
	30 to 64	977	607	62%	1,042	697	67%	5%
	65 & Over	171	137	80%	220	177	80%	0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,680</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>1,799</b>	<b>1,118</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>96,144</b>	<b>63,425</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>104,929</b>	<b>72,422</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>3%</b>	

**Table 5b: Gender, Age and Race and Voter Turnout, 2006**

		MEN			WOMEN			Difference*
		Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registration	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registration	Voted as % of VEP
<b>WHITE</b>	Under 30	3,807	27%	51%	4,100	29%	52%	2%
	30 to 64	24,611	54%	74%	26,141	56%	74%	2%
	65 & Over	8,574	70%	84%	10,047	62%	79%	-8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>36,992</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>40,288</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>BLACK</b>	Under 30	576	20%	48%	898	27%	55%	7%
	30 to 64	2,794	43%	70%	3,984	49%	71%	6%
	65 & Over	585	53%	78%	926	52%	74%	-1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,954</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>5,807</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>ASIAN/PI</b>	Under 30	104	13%	37%	151	20%	50%	7%
	30 to 64	694	33%	66%	901	36%	70%	3%
	65 & Over	202	48%	84%	218	42%	77%	-6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>1,270</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>LATINO</b>	Under 30	443	18%	43%	494	20%	44%	2%
	30 to 64	1,717	35%	64%	1,993	38%	64%	3%
	65 & Over	398	49%	75%	479	44%	68%	-5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,558</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>2,965</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>OTHER</b>	Under 30	92	17%	38%	105	20%	43%	3%
	30 to 64	408	42%	67%	455	44%	65%	2%
	65 & Over	114	67%	83%	112	51%	63%	-16%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45,118</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>51,001</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>2%</b>	

\* Women minus men.

Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote; numbers are in 1000s.

# Income, Education and the Electorate

Table 6 presents the rate of registration, voting and voting among those registered in five income categories.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 6: Household Income and Voting Behavior, 2006**

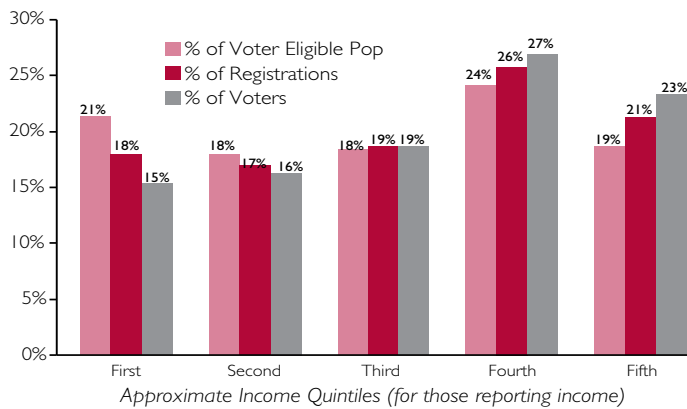
Approximate Household Income Quintiles	VEP	Column %	Registered	Registered as % of VEP	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered
First (less than \$25,000/year)	34,195	21%	20,492	60%	12,386	36%	60%
Second (\$25,000 to \$39,999)	28,627	18%	19,349	68%	13,186	46%	68%
Third (\$40,000 to \$59,999)	29,394	18%	21,340	73%	15,071	51%	71%
Fourth (\$60,000 to \$99,999)	38,518	24%	29,582	77%	21,747	56%	74%
Fifth (\$100,000 and over)	29,839	19%	24,307	81%	18,846	63%	78%
<b>Total of those reporting income*</b>	<b>160,572</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>115,070</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>81,238</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>71%</b>

Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote; numbers are in 1000s.

\*Approximately 20% of all respondents do not provide household income.

Figure 4 shows the bias in the electorate resulting from the differences in reported registration and turnout between income categories. While citizens in households with incomes in the middle of the range report voting in roughly the same proportion to their numbers in the population, those above and below this level report registering and voting in disproportionate numbers (favoring the wealthy). In 2006, those in wealthier households (more than \$ 60,000 per year) were 20 percent more likely to report having voted than in those low-income households (less than \$40,000 per year).

**Figure 4: Income Composition of 2006 Voter Eligible Population and Electorate**



Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote.

<sup>4</sup> The income data available in the Election Supplement of the CPS has several weaknesses. Most notably: about one fifth of those surveyed do not provide income data and the income data that is provided is categorical (i.e., households are reported as falling within a range of incomes as opposed to continuous data giving the exact figure for a household's income). For space considerations instead of reporting for all sixteen income categories, we divide households with income data into approximate quintiles.

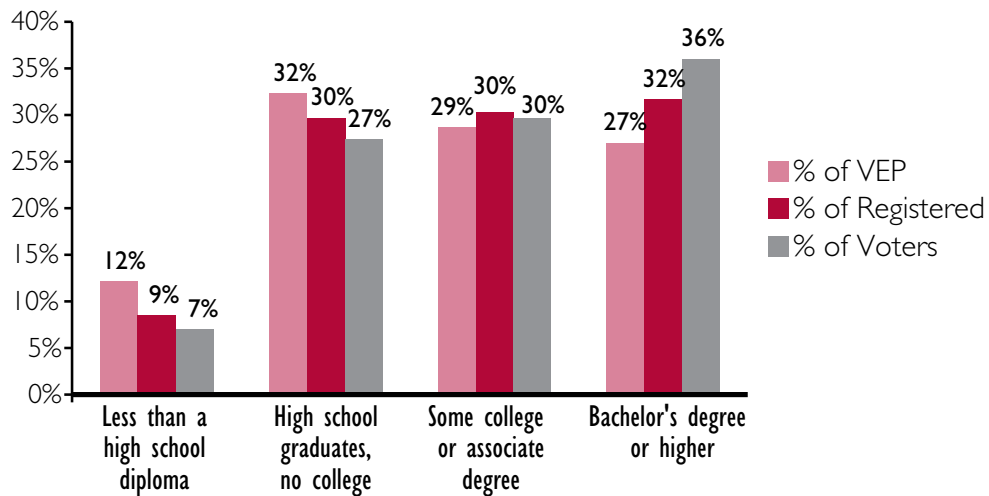
**Table 7** provides data on education and voting behavior. Considering the close connection between education and income, the education bias in the electorate is not surprising (see Figure 5). Citizens with less than a high school diploma are severely under-represented in the electorate. This group votes at nearly one-half their potential. Meanwhile, registered citizens with at least a four-year college degree voted at a rate 10 points higher than the overall average (last column of Table 7).

**Table 7: Education and Voting Behavior, 2006**

	VEP	Column %	Registered	Registered as % of VEP	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered
Less than a high school diploma	24,349	12%	11,573	48%	6,678	27%	58%
High school graduates, no college	64,949	32%	40,205	62%	26,335	41%	66%
Some college or associate degree	57,603	29%	41,096	71%	28,472	49%	69%
Bachelor's degree or higher	54,173	27%	42,973	79%	34,634	64%	81%
<b>Total</b>	<b>201,073</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>135,847</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>96,119</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>71%</b>

Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote; numbers are in 1000s.

**Figure 5: Educational Composition of 2006 Voter Eligible Population and Electorate**



Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote.

## Residency, Mobility and Participation

**Table 8a** gives the respondents' answers when asked about their length of residency. The results show that the U.S. population is highly residentially mobile.<sup>5</sup> Over two-thirds of the population reported having resided at their current address for less than 5 years. Nearly one-in-six reported durations at their current address of less than 1 year. This mobility is strongly related to both registration and turnout: only 55 percent of those residing for less than 1 year at their current address report being registered, and only half of those voted. For individuals with 5 years or more of continuous residency, registration rates surpassed 80 percent, and turnout of those registered was nearly 1.5 times that of the group who were registered but had lived less than 1 year at their current residence.

**Table 8a: Residency Length and Voting Behavior, 2006**

Length of Time at Current Address	VEP	Column %	Registered	Registered as % of VEP	Voted	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered
Less than 1 year	26,589	15%	14,517	55%	7,582	28%	52%
1 to 4 years	51,055	28%	36,007	71%	23,619	46%	66%
5 years or longer	102,118	57%	83,839	82%	63,930	63%	76%
<b>Total Reporting</b>	<b>179,762</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>134,362</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>95,132</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>71%</b>

Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote; numbers are in 1000s.

Length of residency is closely related to other factors that predict low registration and voting such as youth and low-income. **Table 8b** shows that race is also closely related to residential mobility. Unlike members of other race and ethnic categories, less than 50 percent of Blacks and Latinos are likely to have resided at the same home for 5 years or more. Nearly one in five Latinos and Blacks resided at the same address for less than one year. More research will be needed to determine the influence these factors have on participation when controlling for other factors.

**“Less than 50% of Blacks and Latinos are likely to have resided at the same home for 5 years or more.”**

**Table 8b: Residency Length and Race/Ethnicity, 2006**

Length of Time at Current Address	White	Column %	Black	Column %	Asian/PI	Column %	Latino	Column %	Other	Column %
Less than 1 year	18,369	14%	3,933	20%	814	14%	2,853	19%	620	20%
1 to 4 years	36,469	27%	6,389	32%	1,995	35%	5,247	35%	955	30%
5 years or longer	81,092	60%	9,432	48%	2,914	51%	7,069	47%	1,611	51%
<b>Total Reporting</b>	<b>135,930</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,755</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,723</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15,168</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,186</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote; numbers are in 1000s.

<sup>5</sup> Approximately 20 percent of respondents do not answer this question.

# Conclusion

The demographic categories shaping the U.S. electorate are fairly well known. This report has analyzed self-reported data from the Current Population Survey to present the size of the differences in participation between some of those categories in the 2006 election. The final table, below, interacts the category with the lowest turnout from each demographic factor with race and ethnicity. As **Table 9** makes clear, any negative influences that income, education, age and residential mobility have on registration and turnout accrue to minorities far more often than to Whites.

**Table 9: Percent of Race/Ethnicity in Demographic Groups with Low Electoral Participation**

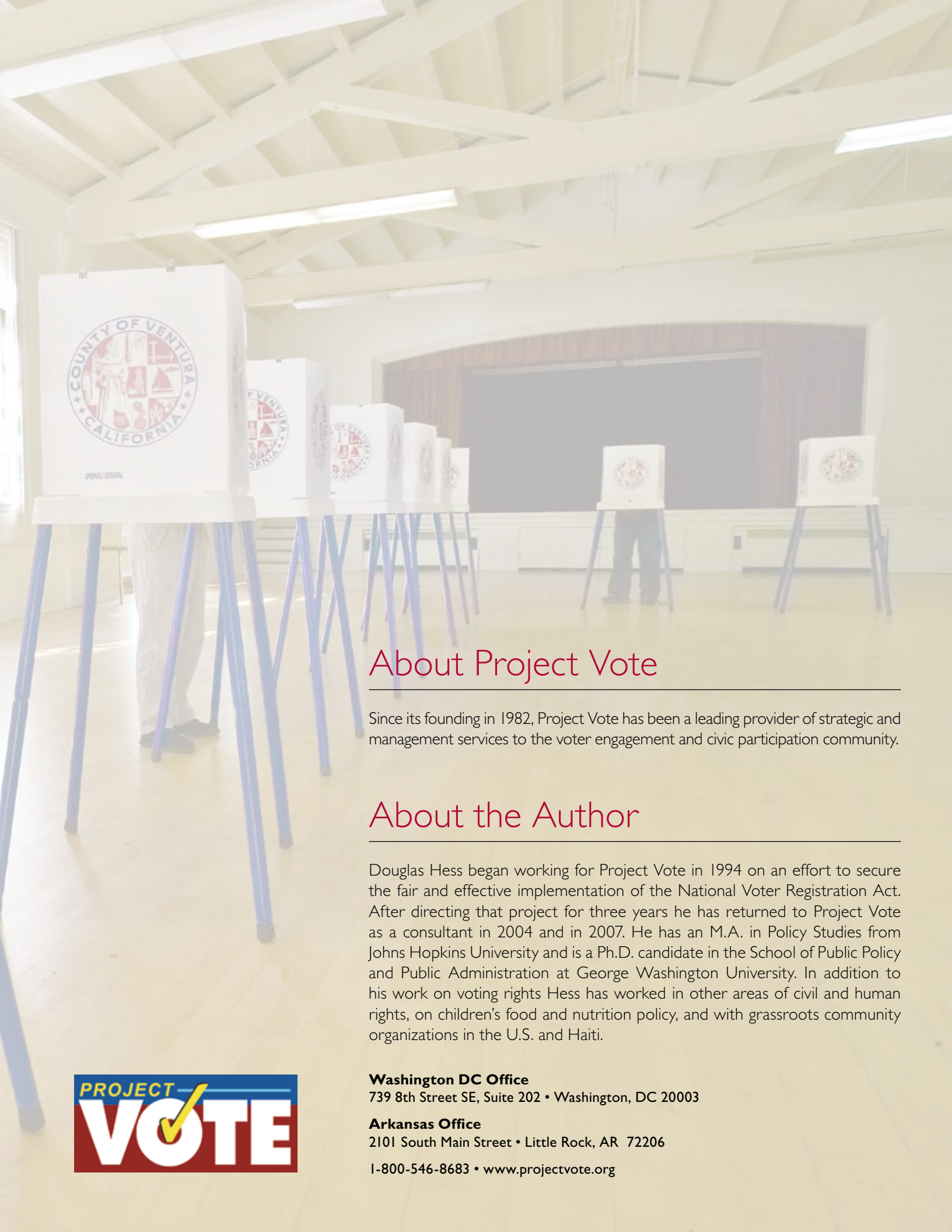
Race/Ethnicity	Income: Bottom Quintile	Highest Educational Attainment: High School or Less	Age Group: 18 to 29 Years Old	Residency: Less than 5 Years at Current Address
White	18%	42%	19%	40%
Black	39%	55%	26%	52%
Asian/PI	14%	31%	22%	49%
Latino	28%	59%	29%	53%
Other	31%	48%	31%	49%

Source: November 2006 CPS; analysis by Project Vote.

A more detailed analysis of 2006 data to see how these factors, and others, interact to predict registration and turnout rates awaits future research. Moreover, institutional and political factors which vary by state – and sometimes by locality – have additional impacts on registration and turnout and may precede demographic factors causally. Examples of policies that possibly hinder equal participation in elections are voter registration procedures or opportunities in states that facilitate access to registration for some populations and not others, or political boundaries that are drawn to increase the likelihood that the votes of some will not matter in specific elections. An example of the former would be registration deadlines which, if too early, make it less likely that residentially mobile populations, which tend to be young, minority and low-income, can participate in elections.

Project Vote calls on civic organizations and officials at all levels of government and throughout the political process to expand opportunities for participation in U.S. elections. Specifically, Project Vote continues to press officials to ensure that the Voting Rights Act, National Voter Registration Act and Help America Vote Act are implemented fully and fairly to reduce the bias that is so evident from this report.





## About Project Vote

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Since its founding in 1982, Project Vote has been a leading provider of strategic and management services to the voter engagement and civic participation community.

## About the Author

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Douglas Hess began working for Project Vote in 1994 on an effort to secure the fair and effective implementation of the National Voter Registration Act. After directing that project for three years he has returned to Project Vote as a consultant in 2004 and in 2007. He has an M.A. in Policy Studies from Johns Hopkins University and is a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Public Policy and Public Administration at George Washington University. In addition to his work on voting rights Hess has worked in other areas of civil and human rights, on children's food and nutrition policy, and with grassroots community organizations in the U.S. and Haiti.



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