

# An Analysis of Who Voted (and Who Didn't Vote) in the 2010 Election

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## Summary of Key Findings

In some ways, the 2010 election was a typical midterm: one third of those who voted in 2008 disappeared from the voting population, which makes non-voters the majority this year. And, accounting for growth in the population, there was no significant change in the relative size or racial composition of the 2010 national voting population compared to the last midterm election in 2006. In both of these elections, four in five voters were white, one in ten was black, and one in thirteen was Latino. Measured against turnout in the 2008 presidential election, where traditionally under-represented groups expanded their voting participation, drop-off in voting this year was higher for African Americans (a 43 percent decline), Latinos (40 percent), and youth (55 percent), than for whites (30 percent), and senior citizens (12 percent). But this, too, is normal in a midterm election absent a galvanizing national campaign at the top of the ticket to draw minority and first-time voters to the polls.

Beneath the normalcy of the aggregate numbers and the relatively stable trends in the size, growth, and racial composition of the electorate, however, important changes from what we would generally expect occurred. There are four distinct features of the 2010 election that most likely account for the dramatic political outcomes.

- Senior citizens turned out *in force*. The number of ballots cast by seniors increased by 16 percent compared to 2006, and seniors strongly shifted to the Republicans, increasing their support for national GOP House candidates to 59 percent from 49 percent in 2006. Youth (18 to 29 years old) remained strongly in the camp of the Democratic Party, casting a majority (55 percent) of their ballots for Democratic House candidates, but their turnout was anemic.
- Relative to the 2008 presidential election, minority and youth voters dropped out of the voting population at faster rates than whites, and the gains made in 2008 toward a more representative electorate disappeared.

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- Latinos defied national trends and increased their share of the voting population in several key states, saving at least three U.S. Senate seats for the Democrats.
- Women increased their share of the voting population and significantly shifted their support to the Republican Party.

Turnout in midterm elections is always lower than turnout in presidential years, and midterm voters on the whole are older. The 2010 midterm election is distinctive in the degree to which normal midterm voting trends in favor of an older electorate accelerated. Older voters whose turnout rates slipped in the 2008 presidential election to 70 percent from 71 percent in 2004, returned to the polls *in force* in 2010. As expected in a midterm contest, younger voters (age 18 to 29) melted away from their impressive 2008 presidential election performance, casting just five percent more ballots in 2010 than in 2006. Voters age 65 and older (senior citizens) were the stars of the show this year; they expanded their participation and cast 16 percent more ballots than four years ago. Senior citizens, who make up 13 percent of the U.S. population, and were 16 percent of the 2008 electorate, accounted for 21 percent of midterm voters. Seniors also swung heavily to the Republican Party, increasing their support for Republican House candidates to 59 percent, 10 percentage points higher than in 2006.

Moreover, the wealthiest voters, those with annual family incomes of at least \$200,000 (who are disproportionately older and white), continued a trend observed over the last three federal elections to significantly increase their share of the voting population from five percent in 2006 to eight percent this year. Wealthy voters also swung to the Republicans by more than 10 percentage points, from 53 percent in favor of GOP House candidates in 2006, to 64 percent in 2010.

At the national level, the 2010 electorate was less racially representative of the population at large than the 2008 presidential election voting population. But in several key states, Latinos defied national trends and increased their share of the voting population compared to four years ago. In California, Latinos were 22 percent of the voting population, compared to 19 percent in 2006; in Nevada, Latino voters surged, pushing their share of the voting population from 12 percent in 2006 to 15 percent in 2010. And in Colorado, where only 44 percent of Latinos are eligible to vote,<sup>1</sup> one in ten voters was Latino. In all three states, strong support for incumbent Democrats in tight U.S. Senate races likely accounted for the Party's upset victories.

Finally, women also increased their share of the midterm voting population over 2006 levels, and strongly shifted their support to the Republican Party. At the national level, women favored Republican Party House candidates by 49 percent, compared to 48 percent for Democratic challengers. This development has been somewhat obscured by the fact that the long-standing gender gap – the difference between women and men in partisan vote choice – continued in the 2010 election because men shifted to the Republicans even more. Ironically, women's support for the Republican Party helped reduce women's representation in the House of Representatives by two seats, the first time the number of women serving in Congress has dropped since 1979.<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

**What is distinctive about the 2010 voting population is the acceleration of the normal drift in off-year elections toward smaller voting populations that are older and less racially diverse than the population at-large.**

Much of the media coverage and commentary on the 2010 midterm election has focused on the electoral outcomes – i.e., the large number of seats lost by the majority party and the resulting shift in partisan control of the U.S. House of Representatives, the limited success of the Republican Party in U.S. Senate races, the outsized influence of the rightwing, libertarian Tea Party faction within the Republican Party coalition, and the significance for congressional redistricting of partisan shifts in control of governors' offices and state legislatures. This memo analyzes patterns in turnout and changes in the composition of the electorate that produced those outcomes. The analysis is based primarily on exit poll results from Edison Research and preliminary estimates from the United States Elections Project of total ballots cast for highest office at the national level and for selected states. We compare the 2010 election to the most recent midterm and presidential elections using estimated vote shares among different demographic groups (from exit poll reports), and evaluate shifts in the size and rates of growth or decline in the total number of ballots cast by those groups.<sup>3</sup>

The first thing that must be said about the 2010 election is that a third (33 percent) of those who cast ballots in 2008, or 43 million voters, stayed home. Added to the 38 percent of the eligible adult population that failed to vote in both elections, we find that non-voters were the majority in 2010. This fact is politically significant but also commonplace for a midterm election; it is significant because it throws cold water on any victor's claims for a mandate, and routine because national drop-off in presidential voting is a long-standing feature of midterm elections. In fact, relative to preceding presidential elections, turnout in midterm congressional elections has declined for 170 years.<sup>4</sup> Over the past three midterm election cycles, during a period when presidential voting rates have inched upward, turnout in midterm elections has decreased by an average 29.2 percent (see table A1).

In size and racial composition of the vote, turnout in 2010 was stable and not particularly noteworthy in any deviation from the norm. Compared to 2008, when total ballots cast exceeded ballots cast in the previous presidential election by about seven percent, growth in the voting population this year actually slowed to five percent (or 4.1 million ballots), about the same rate of growth as the overall voting eligible population.<sup>5</sup> The racial composition of the 2010 voting population mirrors the makeup of the last (2006) midterm electorate: in both elections, four out of five voters were white; one in ten voters was African American, Latinos comprised eight percent, and Asian Americans just two percent of all voters.

The mobilization of new voters, a significant factor in determining the outcome of the 2008 presidential election, was weak. But this, too, is not atypical for recent midterm elections. Arguably, first-time voters handed Barack Obama his victory in the 2008 presidential election. Obama received 69 percent of the ballots cast by first-time voters, or approximately 9.9 million votes – a half million more votes than his margin of victory over John McCain. In 2010, minority and younger voters – who surged among first-time voters in 2008<sup>6</sup> – behaved in more predictable ways. With the important exception of Latinos in several Western states (discussed below), there was no wave of minority and youth voters into the electorate as in 2008. Rather, these groups voted at rates that returned them to about the same share of the voting population as in the previous midterm election: nationally they “dropped off” or out of the voting population relative to the preceding presidential election faster (at higher rates) than whites and older voters. This may seem surprising given the fact that there was no change in the

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racial composition of 2010 voters compared to the last midterm. But the return to normal patterns in the racial composition of the midterm voting population reflects the fact that, given their elevated levels of voting in the 2008 presidential election, minority and youth voters had farther to fall to return to their (2006) share of the electorate (tables 1 and 2).

Typically, midterm elections do not galvanize new voters, and 2010 was no different – nearly 97 percent of those who voted in this midterm turned out two years ago. The populations that vote in midterm elections typically are smaller, older, and usually whiter than those in presidential elections because congressional elections lack a unifying campaign at the top of the ticket that can draw out voters who are less interested or less informed about politics. Congressional races are rarely competitive, as most incumbents are re-elected, and the lack of competition can

Table 1  
*Percentage Drop-off in Total Ballots Cast  
From Presidential to Midterm Election  
By Race/Ethnicity in 2006, 2010 Midterm Elections*

	From 2004 to 2006	From 2008 to 2010
<b>All Voters</b>	-31	-33
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Whites	-30	-30
African Americans	-38	-43
Latinos	-31	-40

Table 2  
*Composition of the Electorate (%)  
By Race/Ethnicity, Age and Income Groups  
2004, 2006, 2008, 2010 Federal Elections*

	Presidential 2004	Presidential 2008	Midterm 2006	Midterm 2010
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
White	77	74	79	77
African American	11	13	10	11
Latino	8	9	8	8
<b>Age</b>				
18-29 Years	17	18	12	12
65 and Over	16	16	19	21
<b>Annual Income</b>				
Less Than \$30,000	23	18	19	17
\$30,000-\$50,000	22	19	21	19
\$100,000-\$200,000	15	20	18	19
\$200,000 and Over	3	6	5	8

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also depress turnout. Congressional incumbents see less value in trying to add new voters to what everyone knows will be a low turnout affair, and, as a result, on-the-ground voter mobilization efforts typically are weaker in midterm cycles.<sup>7</sup> Finally, the idiosyncrasies of what are in effect hundreds of local (not national) electoral contests also depress turnout overall and can result in turnout that is less representative of the demographic diversity of the nation as a whole.

Accordingly, forward progress toward a more representative electorate engaging new voters was not to be expected this year. Small changes in the turnout patterns of voters who voted before largely account for the outsized partisan shifts in electoral outcomes. Beneath the normalcy of the aggregate numbers and the relatively stable trends in the size, growth and racial composition of the electorate, however, important changes from what we would normally expect occurred. Thus, when we examine the trends in the surge and decline of different voter groups relative to their recent voting behavior in other federal elections, several distinct patterns that are likely responsible for the dramatic political consequences of this election begin to emerge.

**First, older white voters, whose turnout rates slipped in 2008, returned to the electorate in force in 2010; second, minority and youth voters dropped off at faster rates than they did in the previous midterm election; third, Latinos defied national trends and increased their share of the electorate in several key Western states; and fourth, women increased their share of the electorate and significantly shifted their support to the Republicans.**

With a few important exceptions in the states discussed below, most of the mobilization of voters this year happened among whites, and remarkably, among voters *65 years of age and over*. Gains made toward a more representative electorate by the historic efforts to mobilize first-time minority and youth voters in 2008, evaporated in the absence of a galvanizing national campaign and a deliberate effort to sustain their participation.

### Older, wealthier voters were energized; low-income and younger voters stayed home

Among men and women, and compared to all other race, age, education, and income groups, the oldest and wealthiest voters had the largest percentage increases in (estimated) total ballots cast compared to 2006. Whereas overall growth in the number of ballots cast in House races expanded by just five percent, total ballots cast by voters age 65 or older increased by 16 percent, three times the national rate, and by 68 percent among voters with annual incomes of \$200,000 a year or more. In 2010, elderly Americans (those 65 years old and over) are about 13 percent of the U.S. resident population;<sup>8</sup> they were 21 percent of the midterm voting population. Similarly, according to the Annual Social and Economic Supplement of the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, approximately five to six percent of adults live in families with annual incomes of \$200,000 or more – yet these wealthy individuals, whose share of the national electorate in the last four federal elections has been on the rise, were about eight percent of all voters in the 2010 midterm election.<sup>9</sup> It is fair to say that 2010 was the year of older, rich people (see table 2).<sup>10</sup> Voters earning \$100,000 to \$200,000 cast 11 percent more ballots than in 2006, whereas the number of ballots cast by the lowest income groups – those earning less than \$30,000 a year – actually declined by six percent, and there was a five percent decline among voters with family incomes of \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year (see table 3).

The media- and corporate-fueled Tea Party movement was the catalyst for the re-composition of the 2010 voting population, as some 41 percent of midterm voters said they supported or strongly supported the Tea Party movement. Project Vote's July 2010 poll of the 2008 electorate – the pool from which the 2010 midterm electorate was drawn – found that 29 percent of voters supported the Tea Party movement.<sup>11</sup> The over-representation of the

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Table 3  
*Percentage Change in Total Ballots Cast  
 By Age and Income Group  
 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010 Federal Elections*

	Presidential From 2004 to 2008	Midterm From 2006 to 2010
<b>All Voters</b>	+7	+5
<b>Age</b>		
18-29 Years	+14	+5
65 and Over	+7	+16
<b>Annual Income</b>		
Less Than \$30,000	-16	-6
\$30,000-\$50,000	-7	-5
\$100,000-\$200,000	+43	+11
\$200,000 and Over	+115	+68

Tea Party in the midterm voting population suggests a strong mobilization effect by the movement that pulled older voters to the polls. Numerous surveys have found that Tea Party supporters are disproportionately white, and wealthier and older than the average American.<sup>12</sup>

At the same time, the mobilization of older voters does not explain why younger voters under-performed in this election. (They were 12 percent of the voting population, compared to 18 percent in 2008.) Youth turnout is particularly volatile for two main reasons. First, young voters are not yet habituated to voting. They are more likely to vote for the first time in a presidential election. Project Vote's survey, for example, found that 52 percent of voters age 18 to 29 voted for the first time in 2008, compared to just nine percent of the electorate overall.<sup>13</sup>

Second, like most voters, young voters respond to electoral appeals that speak to their issues. The most significant feature of the youth vote in 2008 was not the impressive increase in the total number of ballots cast by young voters (2.3 million more than in 2004, another high-youth-voting election), but rather the strong partisan shift among the young to the Democrats, spurred by Barack Obama's high risk strategy of appealing directly to the young – to join his campaign, organize and vote for him, and carry his message of "hope and change." And while the Obama administration has delivered for youth, specifically in the important area of student loans, it has not ended U.S. involvement in military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, issues of particular concern to young people who so enthusiastically supported the President two years ago. When parties and candidates do not make good on important commitments to core voter groups, turnout flags as it did for younger voters this year. That said, among youth who did turnout, support for Democrats has remained relatively high (at 55 percent, compared to 76 percent in 2008).

Given strong turnout among the oldest and wealthiest voters, it is not surprising that these groups had the lowest percentage drop-off in ballots cast compared to 2008. The overall drop-off rate for all voters in 2010 was 33 percent, but only 11 percent for those with incomes of \$200,000 or more, and a 12 percent among those 65 years of age or older (drop-off among voters 18 to 29 years of age was 55 percent; see table 4). No other demographic groups came this close to sustaining their voter participation levels from presidential to midterm election. If drop-off among older voters had matched the national rate (33 percent), those voters would have cast 4.4 million fewer ballots, and electoral outcomes would have been different because older, wealthy voters also swung to the

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Republicans this year. Among the elderly, support for Republican House candidates increased by approximately 10 percentage points over 2006 levels, from 49 to 59 percent, and from 53 to 64 percent among the wealthy.

## White turnout expands, black turnout fades

Since we do not yet know the turnout rates (the rates at which adult citizens of any group vote), in order to gauge changes in the composition of the electorate we are using estimates of ballots cast by groups computed by group shares of the vote as reported in the exit polls. As noted above, the racial composition of the 2010 electorate hardly changed from 2006. But looking at the picture this way is a bit misleading because it obscures the gains in participation made by minorities and youth in 2008. African Americans, especially, but also Latinos and youth significantly increased their participation rates in that election, while white turnout rates slipped. The rate of growth in ballots cast by whites in 2008 (over 2004 levels) was less than half that of the electorate as a whole: whites cast just three percent more ballots in 2008 than in 2004, while ballots cast by all voters expanded by seven percent. At the same time, total ballots cast by blacks grew by four times the national rate (27 percent); by Latinos, three times as fast (21 percent), and by youth, twice as fast (14 percent) as the national rate (see table A2).

The expansion in total ballots cast in the 2008 presidential election among traditionally under-represented voters slowed in 2010. Total ballots cast by blacks increased by 15 percent since the last midterm election in 2006, but gains made by Latinos in the presidential election were not sustained this year; Latinos cast only five percent more ballots in 2010 than in 2006 (same as the national rate). Turnout among minorities and youth surged in 2008, and when normal patterns were restored in 2010, these groups dropped out of the electorate faster than whites and older voters. The different rates of erosion in voting from the 2008 presidential election to the 2010 midterm caused the re-composition of a smaller electorate in 2010, and the erosion in voting was steepest among minorities – total ballots cast by African Americans declined by 43 percent, and by 40 percent for Latinos, compared to only 30 percent for whites.

Table 4  
*Percentage Drop-off in Total Ballots Cast  
From Presidential to Midterm Election  
By Age and Income Groups  
2006, 2010 Midterm Elections*

	From 2004 to 2006	From 2008 to 2010
<b>All Voters</b>	-31	-33
<b>Age</b>		
18-29 Years	-52	-55
65 and Over	-19	-12
<b>Annual Income</b>		
Less Than \$30,000	-43	-37
\$30,000-\$50,000	-35	-33
\$100,000-\$200,000	-18	-36
\$200,000 and Over	+14	-11

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## Latino voters surge in key states

At the national level, Latinos did not expand their share of the voting population (see table 2). They were eight percent of all voters in 2006 and eight percent in 2010. However, in a number of states where they are concentrated, Latino voters surged into the electorate in politically significant ways (see tables A3 and A4 in the appendix, and the discussion of statewide results presented below).

A number of analysts and pundits have observed the “firewall” erected by strong and heavily Democratic turnout among Latinos in key Western states that preserved the Democrats’ majority in the U.S. Senate. According to the Latino Decisions exit poll, Latino voters contributed 9.8 percentage points to incumbent Senator Harry Reid’s five point victory over Republican Sharon Angle. In California, where Senator Barbara Boxer defeated her Republican challenger Carly Fiorina by nine points, Latino voters contributed 10.1 points to Boxer’s victory. And in Colorado, where Democratic Senator Michael Bennett defeated his Republican opponent Ken Buck by less than one percentage point, Latino voters likely put Bennett over the top; they contributed 6.2 percentage points to Bennett’s total, favoring him over Buck, by a wide margin (81 percent to 19 percent for Buck).<sup>14</sup>

## Women surge and shift their party support

Finally, although Project Vote has not focused its work on women and gender differences in the electorate – largely because relative to men, women are not nationally under-represented as voters – it is worth noting the significant surge in midterm voting among women. Compared to the last midterm election in 2006, women increased their ballots by seven percent, compared to a smaller increase of just three percent for men (see table A5). As a result, women increased their share of the voting population from 51 percent in 2006, to 52 percent in 2010.

The traditional gender gap in party support between men and women was sustained in this election: 48 percent of women voted for Democratic House candidates compared to 41 percent of men, and this seven point spread was close to the difference between men and women in 2006, when 55 percent of women voted for Democrats compared to 47 percent of men (for an eight point gap).

Since the gender gap was first measured in 1980, women largely have been immune to Republican Party appeals and have remained a strong part of the national Democratic Party’s base. This year was different, perhaps in response to relatively large number of high-profile Republican women running for state and national office. In 2006, women split their Democratic/Republican party vote 55 to 43 percent in support of Democratic House candidates; the Democrats’ party advantage disappeared in 2010, as women split their votes 48 to 49 percent in favor of the Republicans. While these earliest of assessments can not tell us much about the demographic composition of the female vote, the surge in voters over the age of 65 and the expansion of support for the Republicans among older Americans could account in large part for the significant shift in both size and partisanship of the women’s vote since women are disproportionately represented among the elderly.<sup>15</sup>

## Analysis of ballots cast in selected states

We take a look at voting patterns in two sets of states. First, we summarize the trends in California, Nevada, Texas, Arizona, and Florida. The significance of the Latino vote should not be under-estimated this year. As discussed above, Latinos defied national trends in their midterm voting patterns and increased their share of the voting population, particularly in these states. We also examine the voting in three major national battleground states where Project Vote has worked in the past to increase voter registration among the traditionally under-



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represented groups: Missouri, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. (See table A6 for a summary comparison of vote shares by selected demographic groups in these states.) In the absence of major new voter registration activities and strong, well-funded get-out-the-vote campaigns, the total number of ballots cast in these states actually declined over 2006 levels.

### California

Strong turnout in California, especially among minorities, propelled the Democratic party into a highly contested U.S. Senate seat and an impressive sweep of top offices in the state. The trends in voting and partisanship are noteworthy because they are in the opposite direction of what we see nationally in this election. The tide was with liberal Democrats who prevailed over conservative and, in some cases, Tea Party-backed Republicans – often with substantial margins of victory. Senator Barbara Boxer's trouncing of Tea Party-backed Republican, Carly Fiorina is a case in point, but some of the most liberal U.S. House Representatives, such as Nancy Pelosi, Barbara Lee, Maxine Waters, and Xavier Becerra won their seats with 80 percent or more of the vote. If the preliminary vote totals reported by the U.S. Elections Project are accurate, the number of ballots cast for highest office in California increased by a whopping 19 percent over 2006 levels, with ballots cast by African Americans almost doubling to boost the African American share of the statewide electorate from four to nine percent. The total number of ballots cast by Latinos increased by nearly 40 percent, while the rate of growth in ballots cast by whites was below the statewide average at 10 percent. As we see at the national level, the biggest "gap" in turnout is not the gender but the age gap. The youth share of the electorate declined from 14 percent in 2008 to 12 percent in 2010, while those over the age of 65 increased their strength from 19 to 21 percent over the same cycle. The strong showing by minority groups may account for why those groups at the lower end of the income scale swelled while everyone else mostly held their ground: those earning \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year increased their share of the electorate from 15 to 19 percent, while those in the \$100,000 to \$200,000 bracket decreased from 24 to 21 percent (see table A7).

### Nevada

In the wake of pre-election polling that consistently showed the incumbent Democrat, Senator Harry Reid, trailing his Tea Party-backed opponent, Republican Sharron Angle, some see Reid's five point margin of victory over Angle as an upset. Political scientists Gary Segura and Matt Barreto of the Latino Decisions polling project, however, contend that much of that earlier polling failed to accurately represent likely Latino voters, and that methodological problems with the National Election Pool exit poll resulted in a gross misrepresentation of Latino vote choices on Election Day.<sup>16</sup> In this memo, we are most interested in the shifting shares of the electorate among different demographic groups. Even if we allow for their under-representation in the NEP exit poll in Nevada, Latinos still made remarkable gains in their share of the voting population, from 12 percent in 2006 to 15 percent in 2010. By this measure, the total number of ballots cast by Latinos increased by more than half. Overall, compared to the 2006 benchmark, the number of ballots counted in Nevada increased by 24 percent, or nearly five times the national rate.

Voting patterns in Nevada are distinctive for another reason. Both age groups under review here – youth voters between the ages of 18 and 29, and senior citizens – were energized by the competitive campaigning. Seniors surged, as they did elsewhere, increasing their share of the electorate from 17 to 22 percent. Youth did not so much surge but they did maintain their share of the electorate at 12 percent. This resulted in an increase in the number of ballots cast by younger voters of nearly a quarter (23 percent) over 2006 levels (see table A8).

### Texas

Texas is notable because, like California and Nevada, the total number of ballots cast increased at a higher rate than the national average (13 percent, compared to five percent in national House balloting), with impressive increases among minorities. The drop-off occurred in youth voting, but there was a weaker percentage increase in the number of ballots cast by older Texans in comparison to the national trends for this group. On the other hand, wealthier

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Texans, those with annual family incomes of \$200,000 a year or more, cast almost 70 percent more ballots this year than in 2006, while there was almost no change in the number of ballots cast by voters with family incomes under \$50,000 (see table A9).

### *Florida*

Total ballots counted in Florida also increased faster than the national average, or by 11 percent over 2006 levels. The Tea Party-backed Cuban American Marco Rubio ran a strong campaign to become one of several Latino candidates around the country elected to high office this year. As in California, Nevada, and Texas, Latinos defied national and long-standing trends in midterm voting behavior to increase their share of the statewide electorate from 11 percent in 2006 to 12 percent. This resulted in a 21 percent increase in total ballots cast by Latinos. In keeping with national trends, older, wealthier voters also surged; youth stayed home; women increased their share of the electorate from 52 percent in 2006 to 56 percent, and gave a plurality of their vote in the U.S. Senate race, 44 percent, to the Republican Rubio (splitting the rest of their vote in favor of former Republican, Charlie Crist, 31 to 23 percent for Democrat Kendrick Meek). What is puzzling about the turnout patterns in Florida is the apparent de-mobilization of black voters. The African American vote share of the 2010 electorate declined three percentage points over 2006 levels, from 14 to 11 percent, while a popular Democrat, African American congressman, Representative Kendrick Meek, vied for the U.S. Senate seat (see table A10).

### *Arizona*

Voting in Arizona closely mirrored the national trends discussed in this memo, with one important exception: as mentioned above, Latinos were propelled into the Arizona electorate this year, increasing their vote share from 11 percent in 2006, to 13 percent, and their total ballots by 23 percent. In other ways, voting patterns in Arizona closely track the national trends: the overall number of ballots cast increased at four percent, about the national rate; younger voters withdrew as senior citizens surged even faster than the national rate. Three out of every ten voters in Arizona this year is age 65 or older; in 2006, seniors comprised only 21 percent of the voting population. Women also increased their share from 51 percent in 2006 to 54 percent, and shifted their support for the Republican U.S. Senate candidate from 50 percent four years ago (re-electing Senator John Kyl) to 57 percent this year in favor of Senator John McCain. Notably, in gubernatorial voting, women, who split their party vote, casting 51 percent of their ballots for Republican incumbent Jan Brewer, were less supportive of the female candidate than they were four years ago, when 66 percent of women voted for the incumbent governor Democrat Janet Napolitano (see table A11).

### *Missouri*

Missouri presents a different picture than the one we see emerging in states with energized Latino voting populations. The story of the 2010 midterm election in Missouri appears to be one of general de-mobilization. This follows on the heels of midterm and presidential elections over the last six years in which African Americans increased their share of the electorate from eight to 13 percent, voted in larger numbers in the 2006 midterm than they did in the 2004 presidential election (while all other groups except the wealthy elderly declined), and expanded the number of ballots they cast in the 2008 presidential election by 78 percent over 2004 voting levels. African Americans maintained their 13 percent share of the electorate this year while the total number of ballots cast by blacks eroded by 35 percent, the statewide average. There was no firewall for Democrats in Missouri. Ballots decreased across the board. With only a few exceptions – voters over the age of 45, voters with a high school education or less, and voters in the middle class income bracket of \$75,000 to \$100,000 in annual family income a year – nearly all demographic groups voted less this year than four years ago (see table A12).

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## Ohio

In terms of total ballots cast, voting was basically flat in Ohio compared to four years ago. In both of the last two midterm elections (2006 and 2010), there were about four million ballots cast, compared to 5.6 to 5.7 million ballots cast in the last two presidential elections. At the same time, African American electoral participation has been growing in Ohio; African Americans increased their share of the presidential voting population in 2008, and expanded their share of the midterm electorate from 12 percent in 2006 to 15 percent, which resulted in a 23 percent increase in the total number of ballots cast by blacks this year. Changes in the size and composition of the electorate in Ohio differ from the national picture in other ways, as well. As with the national voting population, older Ohioans were over-represented in the state's electorate, with a 12 percent gain in ballots cast by voters over the age of 65 compared to 2006. In the 2008 presidential election, voters at both ends of the age scale (18 to 29 years old, and age 65 and over) each constituted an even 17 percent of the voting population; this year, older voters maintained their vote share at 17 percent of the midterm electorate, while younger voters dropped off enough to shrink their vote share to 12 percent (see table A13).

Interestingly, the relatively strong showing of older voters did not swell the participation of the wealthiest voters in Ohio – total ballots cast by voters with annual family incomes of \$200,000 a year or more actually shrank by 41 percent, dropping this group's vote share from five to three percent of the voting population. Ballots cast by whites also decreased by six percent, and the proportion of whites among all voters dipped from 84 to 80 percent.

## Pennsylvania

With all the bad news about youth turnout, Pennsylvania provides a bright spot. Compared to 2006, the total number of ballots cast by 18 to 29 year olds increased in Pennsylvania by 14 percent, from 451,000 to 512,000, boosting the youth vote share from 11 to 13 percent. These increases occurred as the number of ballots cast statewide slipped by four percent (see table A14). Nonetheless, in keeping with expected patterns, the youth drop-off rate remained high at 53 percent of ballots cast in 2008.

African Americans also increased their total ballots cast as ballots cast by whites and statewide declined (the total number of ballots cast by whites slipped from 3.6 million in 2006 to 3.4 million in 2010). The gains made by blacks were modest at eight percent over 2006 levels, increasing black vote share from eight to nine percent of the state's electorate, but again, the drop-off from presidential voting by blacks (in 2008), was much steeper than the decline in total ballots cast by whites. Black voters cast only 45 percent of the number of ballots they cast in 2008, compared to 70 percent for whites.

## Conclusion

The 2010 midterm elections tell many different stories. The revival of fortunes for the Republican Party is a story of comeback from a near-death experience. The story of the Tea Party movement has yet to be fully told, but what's clear at this early moment is the power of movement politics to shape electoral outcomes. Our memo tells another story about the changing contour of a shifting electorate and the ways the type of election shapes who votes and therefore who wins. The 2010 midterm election was indeed a "wave" election, but as Harold Meyerson so aptly put it, it was a wave of the past and not the future.<sup>17</sup> On important issues of concern to all Americans, and especially on the role of government in tempering an increasingly predatory economy, the demographic group at the heart of the wave – older, wealthier conservative Americans who look backward for inspiration – faces a rising and more diverse electorate that does not share their views or politics.

## Appendix

### A Note on Methodology

Two weeks out from an election, the data available for an analysis of turnout are limited. A number of states have not yet finished counting paper ballots or certified their results. Our findings, therefore, must be treated with caution. Exit polls give us a sense of who voted but they are imperfect and at best they contain normal sampling error (however small) that we cannot yet account for. The total ballots cast (for highest office) numbers used in our study will be revised over the coming weeks and this, too, could affect our findings (i.e., at this writing, the Alaska Senate race, which includes a large number of write-in ballots and involves hand counts, has yet to be decided). Another problem is the marginal mismatch between the exit polls and preliminary vote counts for highest office. Exit polls survey voters after they have cast their ballots, and therefore include voters whose ballots may not be counted for one reason or another; our measure of turnout, preliminary vote counts for highest office, excludes votes from people whose ballots are not counted. The largest errors in our analysis are likely to occur where we know from the exit polls that the proportions of demographic groups are small. Because we base our analysis of group shifts within the electorate on computations that involve multiplication and percentages, where groups are estimated to be small, multiplication magnifies the error. For this reason, we do not perform computations where the group is estimated to be less than three percent of the whole.

Another problem we cannot yet account for is the different rates of growth in the total voting eligible population among the different race, age, socio-economic and gender groups of interest over the four-year and two-year comparative study periods. We have made much of the surge in voting among those age 65 and older, but it is also true that this group represents the cresting of the Baby Boom generation which promises to swell the ranks of the elderly over the next decade.

It is not our intent with this report, therefore, to provide a compendium of precisely accurate turnout numbers for different demographic groups. Rather, because we are interested in electoral inequality, our method is to estimate group vote shares, examine the changing proportions of the total voting population represented by different groups in the electorate, and to broadly assess important shifts in the re-constitution of the voting population since the last midterm and presidential elections. For this reason, we urge caution in interpreting the numbers we report for total ballots cast by different demographic groups.

Unless otherwise noted, the sources for all tables are Edison Research National Election Pool Exit Polls for 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010; and the U.S. Elections Project at George Mason University.<sup>18</sup>

# An Analysis of Who Voted (and Who Didn't Vote) in the 2010 Election

Table A1  
*Midterm Election Turnout and Drop-off Rates  
 1998, 2002, 2006 Federal Elections*

	1998	2002	2006	1998-2006 Average
Turnout as a Percentage of Voting-Eligible Population	37.4	39.0	40.5	39.0
Drop-off as a Percentage of Presidential Vote	27.2	27.8	32.5	29.2

Source: Data for this table is derived from the following sources: *Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Election of November 5, 1996*, Compiled by Robin H. Carle, Clerk of the House of Representatives (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1997); *Statistics of the Congressional Election of November 3, 1998*, Compiled by Jeff Trandahl, Clerk of the House of Representatives (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1999); *Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Election of November 7, 2000*, Compiled by Jeff Trandahl, Clerk of the House of Representatives (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2001); *Statistics of the Congressional Election of November 5, 2002*, Compiled by Jeff Trandahl, Clerk of the House of Representatives (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2003); *Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Election of November 2, 2004*, Compiled by Jeff Trandahl, Clerk of the House of Representatives (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2005); *Statistics of the Congressional Election of November 7, 2006*, Compiled by Jeff Trandahl, Clerk of the House of Representatives (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2007); *Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Election of November 4, 2008*, Compiled by Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House of Representatives (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2009); see also, McDonald, *U.S. Elections Project*, available online [http://elections.gmu.edu/voter\\_turnout.htm](http://elections.gmu.edu/voter_turnout.htm); accessed November 15, 2010.

Table A2  
*Percentage Change in Total Ballots Cast  
 Race/Ethnicity and Age Groups  
 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010 Federal Elections*

	Presidential From 2004 to 2008	Midterm From 2006 to 2010
<b>All Voters</b>	+7	+5
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
White	+3	+2
African American	+27	+15
Latino	+21	+5
<b>Age</b>		
18 to 29 Years	+14	+5
65 and Over	+7	+16

## An Analysis of Who Voted (and Who Didn't Vote) in the 2010 Election

Table A3

*Composition of the Electorate (%) Percentage of Latino Voters  
2004, 2006, 2008, 2010 Federal Elections*

	Presidential		Midterm	
	2004	2008	2006	2010
<b>Latino Voters in U.S.</b>	8	9	8	8
<b>Latinos in Key States<sup>19</sup></b>				
Arizona	12	16	11	13
California	21	18	19	22
Florida	15	14	11	12
Nevada	10	15	12	15
Texas	20	20	15	17

Table A4

*Percentage Change in Total Ballots Cast by Latino Voters  
U.S. and Key States  
2004, 2006, 2008, 2010 Federal Elections*

	Presidential	Midterm
	From 2004 to 2008	From 2006 to 2010
<b>Latino Voters in U.S.</b>	+21	+5
<b>Latinos in Key States</b>		
Arizona	+52	+23
California	-6	+38
Florida	+3	+21
Nevada	+75	+54
Texas	+9	+28

Table A5

*Percentage Change in Total Ballots Cast  
By Gender  
2004, 2006, 2008, 2010 Federal Elections*

	Presidential	Midterm
	From 2004 to 2008	From 2006 to 2010
<b>All Voters</b>	+7	+5
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	+10	+3
Female	+5	+7

## An Analysis of Who Voted (and Who Didn't Vote) in the 2010 Election

Table A6  
*Composition of the Voting Population (%)*  
*By Race/Ethnicity, Age Groups and Gender*  
*U.S. and Selected States*  
*2010 Midterm Election*

	<b>U.S.</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>NV</b>	<b>TX</b>	<b>FL</b>	<b>AZ</b>	<b>MO</b>	<b>OH</b>	<b>PA</b>
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>									
White	77	62	72	67	74	80	81	80	86
African American	11	9	6	13	11	3	13	15	9
Latino	8	22	15	17	12	13	3	3	3
<b>Age</b>									
18-29	12	12	12	9	8	9	13	12	13
65 and older	21	21	21	20	35	31	18	17	23
<b>Gender</b>									
Male	47	49	50	50	44	46	49	48	49
Female	53	51	50	50	56	54	51	52	51

# An Analysis of Who Voted (and Who Didn't Vote) in the 2010 Election

Table A7

## California

Composition of the Voting Population (%) and Percentage Change in Total Ballots Cast 2006 and 2010 Midterm Elections

Ballots Cast for Highest Office	2006		2010		Change 2006-2010	
	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Percent Change
		<b>8,679,416</b>		<b>10,326,908</b>	<b>1,647,492</b>	<b>(19%)</b>
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
White	67	5,815	62	6,403	588	+10
African American	4	347	9	929	582	+168
Latino	19	1,649	22	2,272	623	+38
<b>Age</b>						
18-29	14	1,215	12	1,239	24	+2
30-44	22	1,909	22	2,272	363	+19
45 and older	64	5,555	66	6,816	1,261	+23
65 and older	19	1,649	21	2,169	520	+32
<b>Education</b>						
No High School	4	347	4	413	66	+19
H.S. Graduate	13	1,128	14	1,446	318	+28
Some College	32	2,777	31	3,201	424	+15
College Graduate	30	2,604	32	3,305	701	+27
Postgraduate	21	1,823	19	1,962	139	+8
<b>Income</b>						
Under \$30,000	17	1,476	16	1,652	176	+12
\$30,000-\$50,000	15	1,302	19	1,962	660	+51
\$50,000-\$75,000	20	1,736	20	2,065	329	+19
\$75,000-\$100,000	17	1,476	17	1,756	280	+19
\$100,000-\$200,000	24	2,083	21	2,169	86	+4
\$200,000 or more	8	694	8	826	132	+19
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	49	4,253	49	5,060	807	+19
Female	51	4,427	51	5,267	840	+19



# An Analysis of Who Voted (and Who Didn't Vote) in the 2010 Election

Table A8

## Nevada

*Composition of the Voting Population (%) and Percentage Change in Total Ballots Cast 2006 and 2010 Midterm Elections*

Ballots Cast for Highest Office	2006		2010		Change 2006-2010	
	582,572		719,835		137,263	(24%)
	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Percent Change
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
White	77	449	72	518	69	+15
African American	6	35	6	43	8	+23
Latino	12	70	15	108	38	+54
<b>Age</b>						
18-29	12	70	12	86	16	+23
30-44	27	157	21	151	-6	-4
45 and older	34	198	45	324	126	+64
65 and older	17	99	22	158	59	+60
<b>Education</b>						
No High School	3	17	3	22	5	+29
H.S. Graduate	16	93	20	144	51	+55
Some College	40	233	35	252	19	+8
College Graduate	23	134	26	187	53	+40
Postgraduate	18	105	15	108	3	+3
<b>Income</b>						
Under \$30,000	17	99	19	137	38	+38
\$30,000-\$50,000	16	93	18	130	37	+40
\$50,000-\$75,000	24	140	20	144	4	+3
\$75,000-\$100,000	17	99	17	122	23	+23
\$100,000-\$200,000	20	117	22	158	41	+35
\$200,000 or more	7	41	5	36	-5	-12
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	50	291	50	360	69	+24
Female	50	291	50	360	69	+24

# An Analysis of Who Voted (and Who Didn't Vote) in the 2010 Election

Table A9

## Texas

Composition of the Voting Population and Percentage Change in Total Ballots Cast 2006 and 2010 Midterm Elections

Ballots Cast for Highest Office	2006		2010		Change 2006-2010	
	4,399,068		4,964,922		565,854	(13%)
	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Percent Change
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
White	75	3,299	67	3,326	27	+1
African American	8	352	13	645	293	+83
Latino	15	660	17	844	184	+28
<b>Age</b>						
18-29	12	528	9	447	-81	-15
30-44	23	1,012	23	1,142	130	+13
45 and older	35	1,540	48	2,383	843	+55
65 and older	19	836	20	993	157	+19
<b>Education</b>						
No High School	3	132	3	149	17	+13
H.S. Graduate	17	748	18	894	146	+20
Some College	34	1,496	31	1,539	43	+3
College Graduate	29	1,276	32	1,589	313	+25
Postgraduate	18	792	16	794	2	0
<b>Income</b>						
Under \$30,000	17	748	15	745	-3	0
\$30,000-\$50,000	19	836	17	844	8	+1
\$50,000-\$75,000	23	1,012	23	1,142	130	+13
\$75,000-\$100,000	14	616	17	844	228	+37
\$100,000-\$200,000	20	880	20	993	113	+13
\$200,000 or more	6	264	9	447	183	+69
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	49	2,156	50	2,482	326	+15
Female	51	2,244	50	2,482	238	+11

# An Analysis of Who Voted (and Who Didn't Vote) in the 2010 Election

Table A10

## Florida

Composition of the Voting Population (%) and Percentage Change in Total Ballots Cast 2006 and 2010 Midterm Elections

Ballots Cast for Highest Office	2006		2010		Change 2006-2010	
	4,829,270		5,351,652		522,382	(11%)
	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Percent Change
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
White	72	3,477	74	3,960	483	+14
African American	14	676	11	589	-87	-13
Latino	11	531	12	642	111	+21
<b>Age</b>						
18-29	10	483	8	428	-55	-11
30-44	23	1,111	18	963	-148	-13
45 and older	33	1,594	39	2,087	493	+31
65 and older	24	1,159	35	1,873	714	+62
<b>Education</b>						
No High School	4	193	2	107	-86	-45
H.S. Graduate	20	966	20	1,070	104	+11
Some College	29	1,400	31	1,659	259	+19
College Graduate	30	1,449	32	1,713	264	+18
Postgraduate	17	821	14	749	-72	-9
<b>Income</b>						
Under \$30,000	18	869	23	1,231	362	+42
\$30,000-\$50,000	20	966	23	1,231	265	+27
\$50,000-\$75,000	22	1,062	22	1,177	115	+11
\$75,000-\$100,000	16	773	13	696	-77	-10
\$100,000-\$200,000	18	869	13	696	-173	-20
\$200,000 or more	6	290	7	375	85	+29
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	48	2,318	44	2,355	37	+2
Female	52	2,511	56	2,997	486	+19

# An Analysis of Who Voted (and Who Didn't Vote) in the 2010 Election

Table A11

## Arizona

Composition of the Voting Population (%) and Percentage Change in Total Ballots Cast 2006 and 2010 Midterm Elections

Ballots Cast for Highest Office	2006		2010		Change 2006-2010	
	1,526,782		1,586,344		59,562	(4%)
	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Percent Change
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
White	80	1,221	80	1,269	48	+4
African American	4	61	3	48	-13	-21
Latino	11	168	13	206	38	+23
<b>Age</b>						
18-29	11	168	9	143	-25	-15
30-44	23	351	19	301	-50	-14
45 and older	34	519	40	635	116	+22
65 and older	21	321	31	492	171	+53
<b>Education</b>						
No High School	3	46	2	32	-14	-30
H.S. Graduate	16	244	13	206	-38	-16
Some College	36	550	35	555	5	+1
College Graduate	28	427	31	492	65	+15
Postgraduate	19	290	19	301	11	+4
<b>Income</b>						
Under \$30,000	21	321	17	270	-51	-16
\$30,000-\$50,000	18	275	21	333	58	+21
\$50,000-\$75,000	21	321	21	333	12	+4
\$75,000-\$100,000	14	214	18	286	72	+34
\$100,000-\$200,000	21	321	18	286	-35	-11
\$200,000 or more	5	76	5	79	3	+4
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	49	748	46	730	-18	-2
Female	51	779	54	857	78	+10

# An Analysis of Who Voted (and Who Didn't Vote) in the 2010 Election

Table A12

## Missouri

Composition of the Voting Population (%) and Percentage Change in Total Ballots Cast 2006 and 2010 Midterm Elections

Ballots Cast for Highest Office	2006		2010		Change 2006-2010	
	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Percent Change
		2,128,459		1,936,924	-191,535	(-9%)
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
White	83	1,767	81	1,569	-198	-11
African American	13	277	13	252	-25	-9
Latino	2	*	3	58	*	*
<b>Age</b>						
18-29	15	319	13	252	-67	-21
30-44	26	553	23	445	-108	-20
45 and older	32	681	64	1,240	559	+82
65 and older	17	362	18	349	-13	-4
<b>Education</b>						
No High School	4	85	5	97	12	+14
H.S. Graduate	20	426	25	484	58	+14
Some College	33	702	32	620	-82	-12
College Graduate	25	532	24	465	-67	-13
Postgraduate	18	383	14	271	-112	-29
<b>Income</b>						
Under \$30,000	23	490	22	426	-64	-13
\$30,000-\$50,000	22	468	22	426	-42	-9
\$50,000-\$75,000	24	511	24	465	-46	-9
\$75,000-\$100,000	14	298	16	310	12	+4
\$100,000-\$200,000	14	298	12	232	-66	-22
\$200,000 or more	3	64	3	58	-6	-9
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	45	958	49	949	-192	-1
Female	55	1,171	51	988	-183	-16

# An Analysis of Who Voted (and Who Didn't Vote) in the 2010 Election

Table A13

## Ohio

Composition of the Voting Population (%) and Percentage Change in Total Ballots Cast 2006 and 2010 Midterm Elections

Ballots Cast for Highest Office	2006		2010		Change 2006-2010	
	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Percent Change
		<b>4,022,754</b>		<b>3,973,273</b>	<b>-49,481</b>	<b>(-1%)</b>
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
White	84	3,379	80	3,179	-200	-6
African American	12	483	15	596	113	+23
Latino	2	*	3	119	*	*
<b>Age</b>						
18-29	13	523	12	477	-46	-9
30-44	27	1,086	23	914	-172	-16
45 and older	34	1,368	64	2,543	1,175	+86
65 and older	15	603	17	675	72	+12
<b>Education</b>						
No High School	4	161	3	119	-42	-26
H.S. Graduate	23	925	25	993	68	+7
Some College	32	1,287	32	1,271	-16	-1
College Graduate	23	925	24	954	29	+3
Postgraduate	18	724	15	596	-128	-18
<b>Income</b>						
Under \$30,000	22	885	20	795	-90	-10
\$30,000-\$50,000	23	925	25	993	68	+7
\$50,000-\$75,000	24	965	22	874	-91	-9
\$75,000-\$100,000	14	563	16	636	73	+13
\$100,000-\$200,000	12	483	14	556	73	+15
\$200,000 or more	5	201	3	119	-82	-41
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	48	1,931	48	1,907	-24	-1
Female	52	2,092	52	2,066	-26	-1

# An Analysis of Who Voted (and Who Didn't Vote) in the 2010 Election

Table A14

## Pennsylvania

Composition of the Voting Population (%) and Percentage Change in Total Ballots Cast 2006 and 2010 Midterm Elections

Ballots Cast for Highest Office	2006		2010		Change 2006-2010	
	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Exit Poll (%)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Estimated Total Ballots (1,000's)	Percent Change
		<b>4,096,077</b>		<b>3,935,509</b>	<b>-160,568</b>	<b>(-4%)</b>
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
White	88	3,605	86	3,385	-220	-6
African American	8	328	9	354	26	+8
Latino	1	*	3	118	*	*
<b>Age</b>						
18-29	11	451	13	512	61	+14
30-44	24	983	21	826	-157	-16
45 and older	37	1,516	67	2,637	1,121	+74
65 and older	20	819	23	905	86	+11
<b>Education</b>						
No High School	2	*	3	118	*	*
H.S. Graduate	22	901	25	984	83	+9
Some College	26	1,065	26	1,023	-42	-4
College Graduate	27	1,106	25	984	-122	-11
Postgraduate	23	942	21	826	-116	-12
<b>Income</b>						
Under \$30,000	18	737	19	748	11	+1
\$30,000-\$50,000	20	819	20	787	-32	-4
\$50,000-\$75,000	21	860	20	787	-73	-8
\$75,000-\$100,000	15	614	18	708	94	+15
\$100,000-\$200,000	20	819	17	669	-150	-18
\$200,000 or more	6	246	6	236	-10	-4
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	49	2,007	49	1,928	-79	-4
Female	51	2,089	51	2,007	-82	-4

# An Analysis of Who Voted (and Who Didn't Vote) in the 2010 Election

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> “Latinos in the 2010 Elections: Colorado,” Factsheet, Pew Hispanic Center, October 15, 2010, available online <http://pewhispanic.org/files/factsheets/vote2010/CO-eligible-voter-factsheet.pdf>; accessed November 19, 2010.
- <sup>2</sup> “Republican Women Follow National Winning Pattern: Newcomers Take Many House Races, But Only One New Senate Seat, Three New Governors; Many Democratic House Incumbents Fall,” Press Release, Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute, Rutgers University, November 3, 2010 (revised November 19, 2010), available online [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/press\\_room/news/documents/PressRelease\\_11-19-10.pdf](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/press_room/news/documents/PressRelease_11-19-10.pdf); accessed November 19, 2010.
- <sup>3</sup> For Edison Research National Election Pool exit poll results, see: CNN.com (for 2004, see: <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.0.html>); for 2006, see: <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2006/pages/results/states/US/H/00/epolls.0.html>; for 2008, see: <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/results/polls.main/>; and for 2010, see: <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2010/results/polls.main/>); accessed November 19, 2010. For preliminary ballot counts, see Michael P. McDonald, “2010 General Election Turnout Rates,” *United States Elections Project*; available online [http://elections.gmu.edu/voter\\_turnout.htm](http://elections.gmu.edu/voter_turnout.htm); accessed November 19, 2010.
- <sup>4</sup> Jerrold G. Rusk, *A Statistical History of the American Electorate* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2001, 46-7, and table 3.6, p. 55.
- <sup>5</sup> According to the U.S. Elections Project, the voting-eligible population was 207,643,594 in 2006, and 218,054,301 in 2010 – a five percent increase. See McDonald, *U.S. Elections Project*, available online [http://elections.gmu.edu/voter\\_turnout.htm](http://elections.gmu.edu/voter_turnout.htm); accessed November 15, 2010.
- <sup>6</sup> See Lorraine C. Minnite, “What Happened to Hope and Change? A Poll of 2008 Voters,” Project Vote, September 2010, 22-23; available online <http://www.projectvote.org/voter-poll-results.html>.
- <sup>7</sup> The amount of money raised and spent in this midterm election was unprecedented. Media reports suggest most of it was spent on advertising.
- <sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2010* (129th Edition) Washington, D.C., 2009, Population Table 8 (“Resident Population Projections by Sex and Age: 2010 to 2050”), available online <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/population.html>; accessed November 15, 2010.
- <sup>9</sup> Carmen DeNavas-Walt, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Jessica C. Smith, U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P60-238, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2009*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2010; author’s calculations from table FINC01, available online [http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032010/faminc/new01\\_001.htm](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032010/faminc/new01_001.htm); accessed November 15, 2010.
- <sup>10</sup> A larger proportion of elderly Americans are white relative the adult population as a whole. Four out of five Americans (80.1 percent) age 65 or older are (non-Hispanic) white, compared to two-thirds (67.8 percent) of the U.S. adult, resident population. See, U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2010* (129th Edition) Washington, D.C., 2009, Population Table 11 (“Resident Population Projections by Race, Hispanic Origin Status and Age: 2010 and 2015”), available online <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/population.html>; accessed November 15, 2010.
- <sup>11</sup> Lorraine C. Minnite, “What Happened to Hope and Change? A Poll of 2008 Voters: Final Topline Results,” Project Vote, September 2010, 25-26; available online <http://www.projectvote.org/voter-poll-results.html>.
- <sup>12</sup> See, “Tea Party Could Hurt GOP In Congressional Races, Quinnipiac University National Poll Finds; Dems Trail 2-Way Races, But Win If Tea Party Runs,” Press Release, Quinnipiac University, March 24, 2010, available online <http://www.quinnipiac.edu/x1295.xml?ReleaseID=1436>; Kate Zernike and Megan Thee-Brenen, “Poll Finds Tea Party Backers Wealthier and More Educated,” *New York Times*, April 14, 2010; available online <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/15/us/politics/15poll.html>; and Minnite, “What Happened to Hope and Change,” 25-26. Not all polls have found Tea Partiers to be older and whiter than the population at-large. See, for example, Lydia Saad, “Tea Partiers Are Fairly Mainstream in Their Demographics,” Gallup, April 5, 2010; available online [http://www.gallup.com/poll/127181/Tea-Partiers-Fairly-Mainstream-Demographics.aspx?utm\\_source=alert&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=syndication&utm\\_content=morelink&utm\\_term=Politics](http://www.gallup.com/poll/127181/Tea-Partiers-Fairly-Mainstream-Demographics.aspx?utm_source=alert&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=syndication&utm_content=morelink&utm_term=Politics); accessed November 15, 2010.
- <sup>13</sup> Minnite, “What Happened to Hope and Change? A Poll of 2008 Voters: Final Topline Results.”
- <sup>14</sup> See Latino Decisions website for selected state exit poll results; available online <http://latinodecisions.wordpress.com/2010/11/02/latino-election-eve-poll-results-november-2-2010/>; accessed November 15, 2010; see also, Kirk Johnson, “In Looking Beyond the Midterms, Even Opposites Can Sound Alike,” *New York Times*, November 14, 2010, 24.
- <sup>15</sup> Women are 51 percent of the total adult population in the U.S., but 57 percent of those aged 65 or over. See U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2010*, Population Table 8.



## An Analysis of Who Voted (and Who Didn't Vote) in the 2010 Election

- <sup>16</sup> See Gary Segura and Matt Barreto, “How the National Exit Poll Badly Missed the Latino Vote in 2010,” Latino Decisions blog, November 4, 2010, available online <http://latinodecisions.wordpress.com/2010/11/04/how-the-national-exit-poll-badly-missed-the-latino-vote-in-2010/>; accessed November 15, 2010; and Matt Barreto, “Proving the Exit Polls Wrong – Harry Reid Did Win Over 90% of the Latino Vote,” Latino Decision blog, November 15, 2010, available online <http://latinodecisions.wordpress.com/2010/11/15/proving-the-exit-polls-wrong-harry-reid-did-win-over-90-of-the-latino-vote/>; accessed November 15, 2010.
- <sup>17</sup> Harold Meyerson, “A Post-election Numbers Game,” *Washington Post*, November 5, 2010, available online <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/04/AR2010110406639.html>; accessed November 15, 2010.
- <sup>18</sup> Edison Research National Election Pool exit polls, see CNN.com; for 2004: <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.0.html>; for 2006, see, <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2006/pages/results/states/US/H/00/epolls.0.html>; for 2008, see <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/results/polls.main/>; for 2010, see: <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2010/results/polls.main/>. For ballots cast, see Michael P. McDonald, “2004 General Election Turnout Rates,” “2006 General Election Turnout Rates,” “2008 General Election Turnout Rates,” “2010 General Election Turnout Rates,” U.S. Elections Project, available online <http://elections.gmu.edu/index.html>; accessed November 15, 2010.
- <sup>19</sup> Another important Western state with a large Latino population is New Mexico, but exit polls were not conducted by Edison Research in New Mexico in 2006 or 2010.

Project Vote is a national nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that promotes voting in historically underrepresented communities. Project Vote takes a leadership role in nationwide voting rights and election administration issues, working through research, litigation, and advocacy to ensure that our constituencies can register, vote, and cast ballots that count.

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