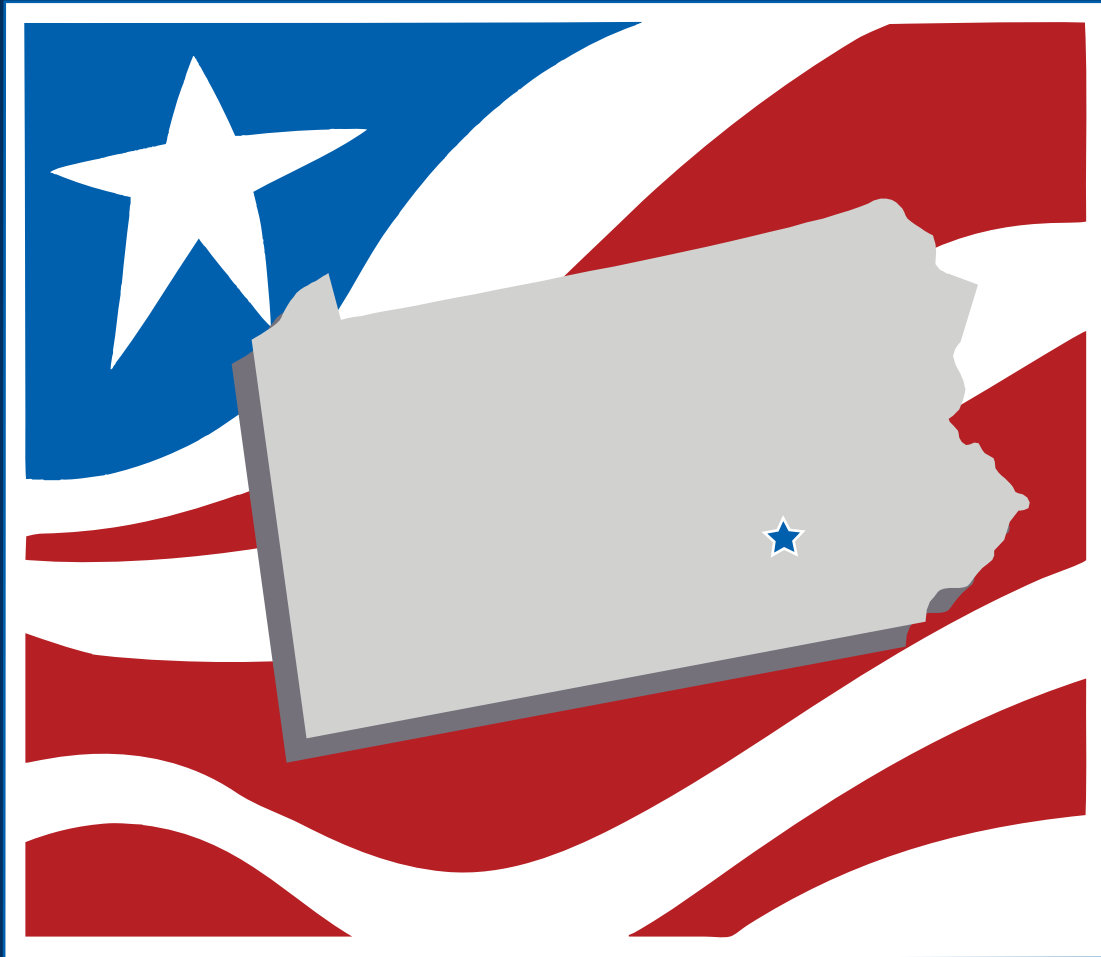


Pennsylvania Votes: Civic Engagement in the Keystone State, 2002–2006



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Executive Summary

Pennsylvania Votes: Civic Engagement in the Keystone State, 2002–2006 provides a concise introduction to the population and voter participation of various demographic groups in the November 2006 elections. The report is based mostly on the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS). Key findings include:

- Pennsylvania's electorate does not accurately reflect the voting-eligible population: the voting population is skewed toward White, affluent and older voters.
- Pennsylvania's non-White population is growing much faster than the state's White population.
- The segment of Pennsylvania's population that is eligible to vote experienced growth trends similar to that of the overall population — the non-White voting-eligible population grew by 10 percent; the White voting-eligible population did not grow.
- The Pennsylvania voting-eligible population trended younger between 2002 and 2006, so that young adults compose a larger portion of the state's overall voting-eligible population.
- Total registration rates increased between 1998 and 2006; Blacks' registration rate, however, declined.
- Lower-income persons are less likely to be registered to vote than their higher-income counterparts, skewing the electorate toward the wealthy.
- Younger Pennsylvanians were registered to vote at lower rates than their older counterparts; indeed, if Pennsylvanians age 30 and under were registered at the rate of persons age 65 years and older, nearly half a million more young people would have been registered to vote in 2006.

Introduction

Pennsylvania Votes: Civic Engagement in the Keystone State, 2002–2006 examines Pennsylvania's population and rates of electoral participation between 2002 and 2006, and compares them to the United States as a whole. The report's major focal points include rates of eligibility, registration and voter turnout by race or ethnicity, age and income.

The largest survey of voting behavior is the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS and Population Estimates Program are the primary sources of data for this report, which presents frequency tables generated from responses to the November 2006 CPS. Some cross-tabulations are provided to show how those responses interact with race, income and age.

This report is organized in three major sections: population, registration and voting. In the first section, we describe the size and demographic composition of Pennsylvania's overall population and voting-eligible population. Next, we examine the racial (and ethnic), age and income characteristics of the state's registered population. We conclude by describing some of the disparities in the composition of the registered and voting populations.

The data show that Pennsylvanians who are White, those who are older and those who are more affluent are more likely to register to vote and turn out at the polls.

Summary Table: Percent of Pennsylvania Population Eligible to Vote, Voting, and Not Voting, by Demographic Characteristics, 2006

Demographic Category	Voter Eligible	Registered	Voters	Non-Voters
RACE				
White	87%	90%	90%	84%
Non-White	13%	10%	10%	17%
Black	9%	7%	7%	11%
HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
Less than \$25,000	22%	18%	15%	29%
\$25,000 - \$74,999	51%	50%	51%	51%
More than \$75,000	27%	32%	34%	20%
AGE GROUP				
Under 30	20%	15%	10%	29%
30 to 64	60%	63%	66%	55%
65 and Over	20%	22%	24%	16%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006

Population

Pennsylvania's population reached 12.4 million people in 2006, having grown by 119,000 since 2002. Pennsylvania's growth rate paled in comparison to the United States — 1 percent compared to 4 percent between 2002 and 2006.

Table 1 shows Pennsylvania's growth.

Table 1. Pennsylvania and U.S. Population Change, 2002 to 2006

	2002	2006	Change	Percentage Change
Pennsylvania	12,322	12,441	119	1%
United States	288,126	299,398	11,272	4%

Numbers in the thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Estimates of the Population by Selected Groups for the United States and States, 2002 and 2006

Non-White racial and ethnic groups were the segment of Pennsylvania's population that grew the fastest from 2002 to 2006, adding some 200,000 people — a growth rate of 10 percent. During the same period, Pennsylvania's White population declined by 79,000 people — a negative 1 percent growth rate.

Overall, non-Whites accounted for a larger percentage of Pennsylvania's population in 2006 than in 2002. Table 2 shows racial and ethnic diversity in Pennsylvania's population.

Table 2: Pennsylvania Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2002 and 2006

	2002		2006		Percent Population Change
	Total	Percent Total	Total	Percent Total	
White	10,295	84%	10,216	82%	-1%
Non-White	2,027	17%	2,225	18%	10%
Black	1,234	10%	1,279	10%	4%
Latino	432	4%	527	4%	22%
Asian	288	2%	288	2%	0%
Total	12,322		12,441		1%

Numbers in thousands

Source: US Census Bureau, Estimates of the Population by Selected Groups for the United States and States, 2002 and 2006

Pennsylvania's voting-eligible population shows growth trends similar to the general population — non-White groups represent nearly all of the positive growth in the state. Growth in the White voting-eligible population was less than 1 percent.

The growth rate of the Black voting-eligible population (5 percent) topped that of the group's overall population (4 percent), showing signs of increased electorate potential, along with other racial and ethnic minorities.

Table 3 shows estimates of Pennsylvania's voting-eligible population by race for 2002 and 2006.

Table 3: Pennsylvania Voting Eligible Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2002-2006

Race/Ethnicity	2002	2006	Numeric Change	Percent Change
White	7,974	8,007	33	0%
Non-White	1,119	1,227	108	10%
Black	774	810	36	5%
Total	9,093	9,234	141	2%

Numbers in thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006

Fewer older persons lived in Pennsylvania in 2006 than in 2002. Middle and younger age groups grew by approximately the same rate, each adding 3 percent to their 2002 population by 2006.

Table 4 displays these estimates of Pennsylvania's voting-eligible population by age from 2002 to 2006.

Table 4: Pennsylvania Voting Eligible Population by Age, 2002-2006

	2002	2006	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Under 30	1,797	1,846	49	3%
30 to 64	5,395	5,548	153	3%
65 & over	1,901	1,841	-60	-3%
Total	9,093	9,235	142	2%

Numbers in thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2002 and 2006

Voter Registration

Pennsylvania had 6 million registered voters in 2006, up from 5.8 million in 2002. The increase in registration was not shared consistently across demographic groups, however.

Voting-eligible Blacks in Pennsylvania were as likely as Whites to be registered to vote in 1998, and more likely in 2000. However, that trend changed in 2002, when Whites gained a four-point registration advantage over Blacks. The disparity between Whites' and non-Whites' registration rates worsened through 2004 and 2006.

During a time of strong population growth, registration among the (increasing) non-White population declined: fewer non-White Pennsylvanians were registered to vote in 2006 than in 2002. Table 5 shows that Pennsylvania's voting-eligible population was evenly represented in 1998 but that Black registration rates declined severely between 1998 and 2006 while overall registration rates increased.

Table 5: Pennsylvania Registration as a Percent of Voting Eligible Population by Race, 1998 to 2006

	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006
White	63%	67%	64%	73%	67%
Black	63%	71%	60%	64%	50%
Total	63%	67%	63%	72%	65%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Supplements

The likelihood that voting-eligible Pennsylvanians are registered to vote increases with greater income. Persons earning less than \$25,000 annually composed 22 percent of Pennsylvania's voting-eligible population but only 18 percent of all registered voters in 2006.

Table 6 shows how the variation in registration rates distorts the electorate toward higher-income voters and leaves lower-income groups severely underrepresented.

Table 6: Pennsylvania Registration by Income, 2006

	VEP	Registered	Registered as % of VEP
Less than \$25,000	1,544	866	56%
\$25,000 – 39,999	1,421	922	65%
\$40,000 – 59,999	1,369	917	67%
\$60,000 – 99,999	1,696	1,346	79%
\$100,000 & over	1,023	831	81%
Reporting Total	7,053	4,882	

Numbers in thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006

With less than half of all eligible Pennsylvanians under 30 registered in 2006, young people were severely underrepresented among those who are registered to vote.

In fact, if under-30 Pennsylvanians were registered at the rate that persons 65 years and older were registered, nearly half a million more young people would have been registered to vote in 2006.

Table 7 shows how underrepresented young people are in terms of registered voters as a percentage of voting-eligible population.

Table 7: Pennsylvania Registration as a Percent of Voting Eligible Population by Age, 2002-2006

	2002	2006
Under 30	45%	49%
30 to 64	67%	68%
65 & over	71%	70%
	63%	65%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2002 and 2006

Voter Turnout

Pennsylvania’s voter turnout improved substantially from 2002 to 2006. Improvement, however, was not experienced equally across demographic lines, particularly with respect to race.

For non-Whites, more people voted in 2006 than in 2002. As a percent of the registered population, non-Whites bettered their 2002 number in 2006 (72 percent up from 68 percent); as a percent of overall voting-eligible population, non-Whites experienced a drop in the turnout rate (from 37 percent to 35 percent).

This gives credence to the claim that registration is, in itself, a key component in engaging traditionally underrepresented groups. In fact, the turnout rate for registered Blacks exceeded that of Whites in 2002.

Table 8 shows voter turnout in Pennsylvania’s 2002 and 2006 elections by race.

Table 8: Pennsylvania Voter Turnout by Race, 2002-2006

	2002		2006	
	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP
White	68%	44%	74%	50%
Non-White	68%	37%	72%	35%
Black	72%	43%	70%	35%
Total	68%	43%	73%	48%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Supplements

Table 9 shows that Pennsylvania’s racial groups are somewhat less likely to turn out to vote than the same groups nationally, despite an overall turnout rate equal that of the U.S.

Table 9: Pennsylvania and U.S. Voter Turnout, 2006

	US Percent Eligible Voting	Pennsylvania Percent Eligible Voting
White	52%	50%
Non-White	37%	35%
Black	41%	35%
Total	48%	48%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006

Pennsylvania’s variation in voter turnout by income mirrors the inequality observed with registration: that Pennsylvania’s electorate is heavily skewed toward higher-income persons.

The range in turnout rates is higher in the “voted as a percent of registered” column than in the “voted as a percent of VEP” column. Table 10 shows Pennsylvania’s turnout rate disparity by income level.

Table 10: Pennsylvania Voter Turnout by Income, 2006

	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP
Less than \$25,000	61%	34%
\$25,000 – 39,999	75%	49%
\$40,000 – 59,999	73%	49%
\$60,000 – 99,999	79%	62%
\$100,000 & over	77%	62%
Reporting Total	73%	51%

Numbers in thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006

Voter turnout improved for all age groups, including under 30, from 2002 to 2006. Young people experienced the greatest improvement, though they are still underrepresented at the polls. Table II shows the turnout rates of Pennsylvania's age groups in 2002 and 2006.

Table 11: Pennsylvania Voter Turnout by Age, 2002 and 2006

	2002		2006	
	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP
Under 30	46%	21%	50%	25%
30 to 64	69%	46%	76%	52%
65 & over	80%	57%	82%	58%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2002 and 2006

Conclusion

Pennsylvania Votes: Civic Participation in the Keystone State, 2002–2006 shows that Pennsylvania's electorate does not accurately reflect the state's voting-eligible population. Those who are registered to vote and those who voted were skewed toward White, affluent and older voters.

Non-Whites are underrepresented in the Pennsylvania electorate, composing only 10 percent of registered voters despite being 13 percent of the voting-eligible population.

Pennsylvanians in the middle of the income spectrum generally report registration and voting in proportion to their share of the voting-eligible population. Pennsylvanians at the lowest end of the economic spectrum report registration and voting rates lower than the statewide average, while higher-income Pennsylvanians report much higher participation rates than the statewide average.

Of all underrepresented demographic groups, young people are least represented in the electorate relative to their voting-eligible population. Pennsylvania's under-30 group contributes 20 percent of the voting-eligible population but contributes only 10 percent of the voting population.

Figure 1: Pennsylvania Income Composition of Voter Eligible Population and Electorate, 2006

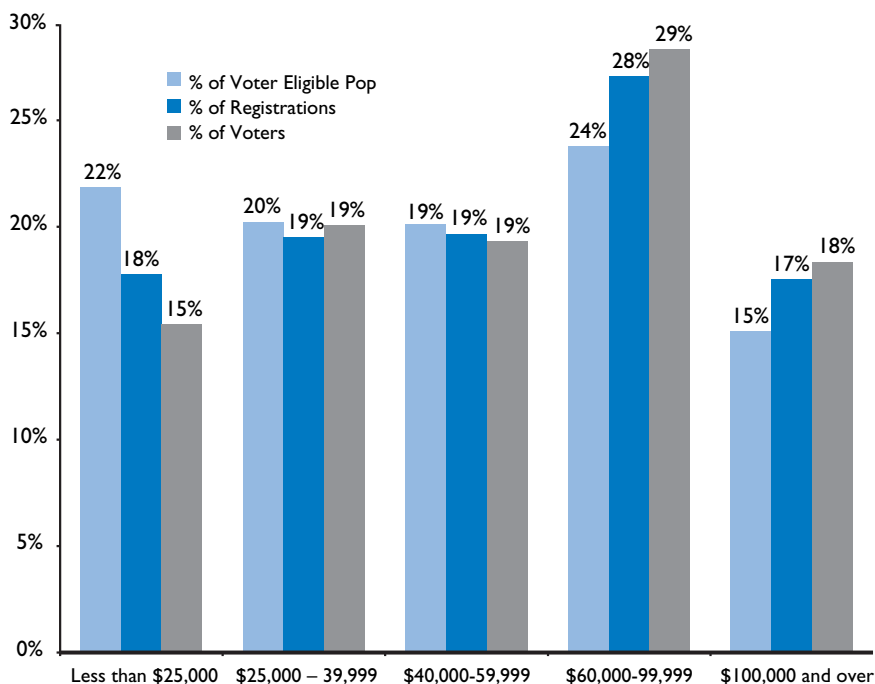


Figure 2: Pennsylvania Age Composition Voter Eligible Population, Registered Voters, and Voters, 2006

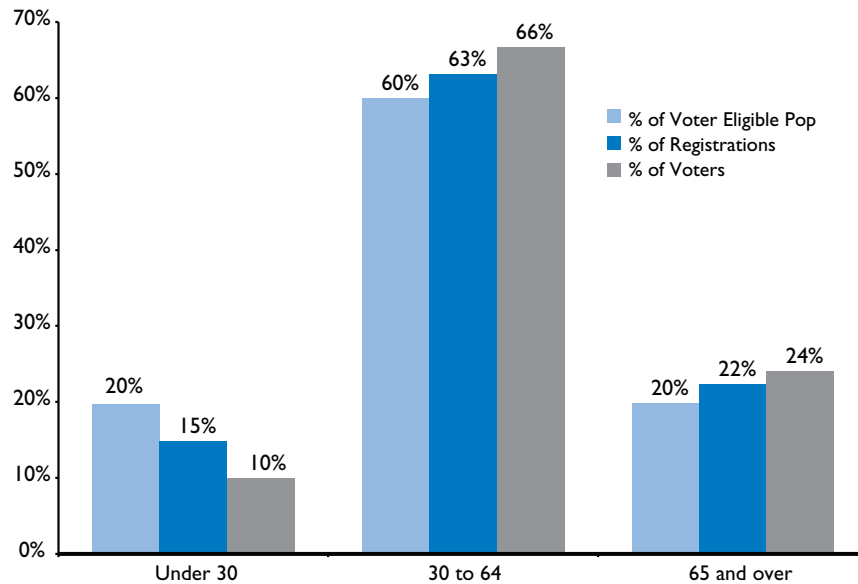
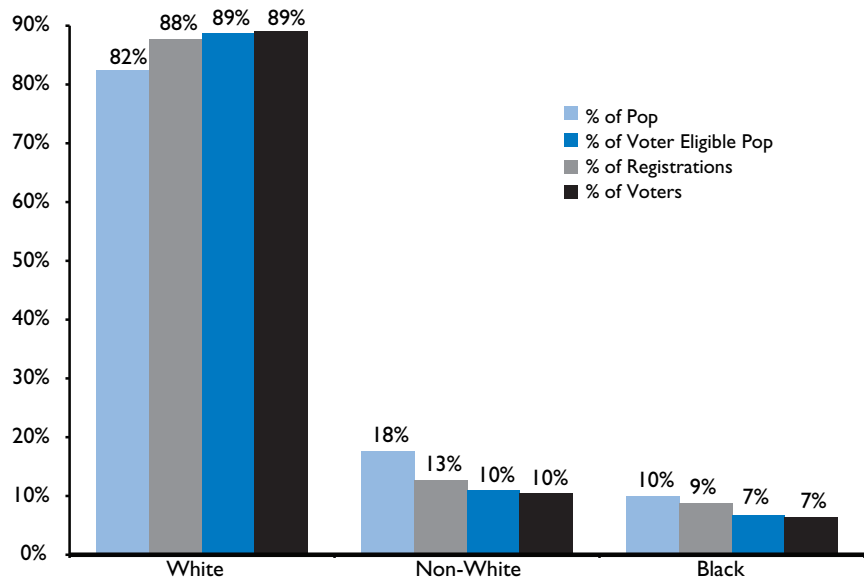


Figure 3: Pennsylvania Racial/Ethnic Composition of Voter Eligible Population, Registered Voters, and Voters, 2006



About Project Vote

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

Ben Spears has been a research assistant with Project Vote since September 2006. He graduated in 2005 from the George Washington University in Washington, DC, where he was active on hunger and homelessness issues. While in the nation's capital, Ben interned with Congressman John Lewis (GA-5) and participated in dialogues with other student leaders as part of the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness. Before joining Project Vote, Ben served as researcher and project assistant at multiple international humanitarian organizations in Atlanta, Georgia, including CARE USA.



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