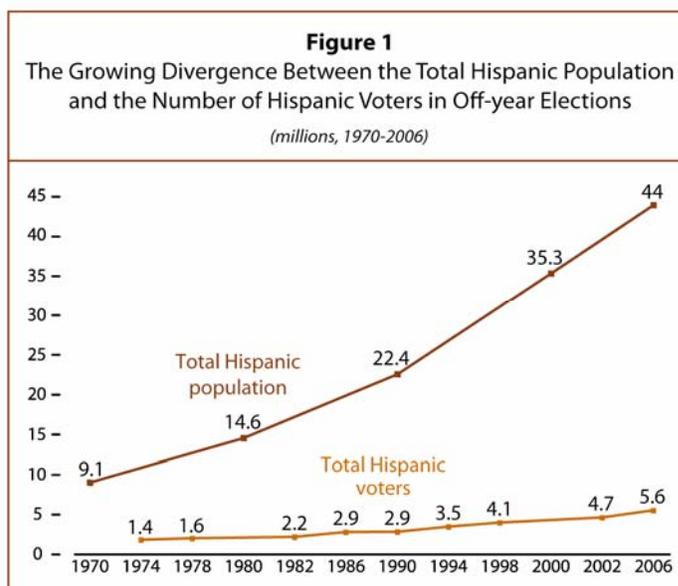


The Latino Electorate: An Analysis of the 2006 Election

Latinos¹ made up a slightly larger share of the total voter turnout in the mid-term election of 2006 than they had in the mid-term election of 2002, according to a Pew Hispanic Center analysis of new U.S. Census data.

However, during those same four years the growth of the Latino vote continued to lag well behind the growth of the Latino population. This widening gap is driven by two key demographic trends: a high percentage of the new Hispanics in the population are either too young to vote or ineligible because they are not citizens (Figure 1).²



¹ The terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably in this fact sheet. The terms “white” and “black” refer to non-Hispanics in those racial categories.

² For a full discussion, see Hispanics and the 2004 Election: Population, Electorate and Voters, Pew Hispanic Center, June 2005 (<http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=48>)

As a result, while Latinos represented nearly half the total population growth in the U.S. between 2002 and 2006, the Latino share among all new eligible voters was just 20%. By comparison, whites accounted for 24% of the population growth and 47% of all eligible new voters.

About 5.6 million Hispanics voted in the 2006 mid-term election, which historically draws far fewer voters than the quadrennial race for president. Latinos accounted for 5.8% of all votes cast, up from 5.3% in 2002. That increase was largely a function of demographic growth.

Latinos historically lag behind whites and blacks in registration (percent among all eligible voters) and voting (percent of registered voters who actually cast ballots). In 2006, the pro-immigration rallies held in many cities raised expectations that political participation among Latinos would also increase.

Census data shows a marginal increase in registration and participation rates among Latinos between 2002 and 2006. Whites, however, also experienced a slight gain, so Latinos did not close the considerable gap. About 54% of Latino eligible voters registered in 2006, up from 53% in 2002. About 60% of these registered voters said they actually voted in 2006, up from 58% in 2002.

About 54% of eligible Latino voters registered in 2006, up from 53% in 2002

By contrast, 71% of white eligible voters registered in 2006, two percentage points higher than in 2002. About 72% of these registered voters said they voted in last year's mid-term elections, one percentage point higher than in 2002.

The shares of blacks who registered and voted declined from 2002 to 2006. Registration rates decreased by two percentage points, to 61%, and voting by one percentage point, to 67%.

The combination of demographic factors and participation rates meant that 13% of the total Latino population voted in 2006, compared with 39% of all whites and 27% of all blacks. Among all Hispanics and whites, the 2006 turnout represented a slight increase over 2002 (1 and 2 percentage points, respectively) while it remained unchanged for blacks.

This fact sheet is based on data from a supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS) that is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau every November of an election year. The survey asks whether individuals were registered to vote and whether they actually voted but does not probe for party or candidate preferences.

Counting the Vote

The vote totals in this fact sheet are based on a supplement of the Current Population Survey that is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau every November in an election year. The supplement, which includes voter registration and voting information, is an authoritative source of information on voter turnout (see Appendix).

The CPS count is based on self-reports by respondents. In mid-term elections, there is a difference between the CPS count and other published ballot counts. For example, the November 2006 CPS indicates that 96.1 million persons reported voting in the 2006 national election. Rhodes Cook, another authority on the count, reports the total as 83.8 million. That report is based on the “highest race” ballot tally for each state, or the ballot count from the highest office contested in the election.

The discrepancy between the Rhodes estimate and the CPS is 12.4 million votes, or about 15%. It reflects a combination of an understatement in the ballot count and an overestimate in the CPS (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).

Demographics

The Hispanic population grew by 5.7 million between November 2002 and November 2006, the time period that frames the two elections. Hispanics accounted for nearly half of the total population growth.

A majority of these new Latinos were not eligible to vote. More than a third were under 18 years of age and another third were adult non-citizens (Table 1). About 30% were eligible to vote.

	2006	2002	INCREASE 2002 TO 2006		
			Population	Share (%)	Rate (%)
Total	44,003,000	38,284,000	5,719,000	100	15
Not Eligible to Vote	26,688,000	22,683,000	4,005,000	70	18
Under 18	15,058,000	13,122,000	1,936,000	34	15
Non-citizens age 18 and above	11,631,000	9,561,000	2,070,000	36	22
Eligible Voters	17,315,000	15,601,000	1,713,000	30	11
Native born	12,923,000	11,734,000	1,189,000	21	10
Foreign born	4,392,000	3,868,000	524,000	9	14

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of 2002 and 2006 November Current Population Surveys.

Whites, by contrast, accounted for 24% of the population growth between 2002 and 2006 but 46% of the growth in the voting eligible population. Among whites, the number under 18 and the number who were not citizens also declined during this period. As a result, the increase in the number of white eligible voters (3.9 million) exceeded the growth in the white population (2.8 million).

Going to the Polls

Hispanics accounted for 5.8% of the votes cast in 2006, up from 5.3% vote in 2002. In absolute numbers, an additional 800,000 Hispanics cast ballots in the 2006 election compared with the 2002 election.

Whites accounted for 81% of the votes in 2006, unchanged from 2002. In absolute numbers, an additional 5.6 million whites cast ballots in the 2006 election compared with the 2002 election. Blacks accounted for 10% of the votes in 2006, down from about 11% in 2002. The black vote increased by 400,000 in 2006.

The 5.6 million votes cast by Hispanics in 2006 represented 13% of the total Hispanic population. The 9.9 million votes cast by black represented 27% of the black population and the 78 million votes cast by whites represented 39% of the white population (Table 2).

Table 2					
Voting Rates by Major Racial/Ethnic Group, 2002 and 2006					
	Hispanic	NON HISPANIC			Total US
		White	Black	Other	
2006					
Voters as a percent of...					
Eligible Voters	32	52	41	32	48
Total population	13	39	27	17	33
2002					
Voters as a percent of...					
Eligible Voters	30	49	43	31	46
Total population	12	37	27	16	31

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of 2002 and 2006 November Current Population Surveys.

The Latino electorate was a much smaller share of the Latino population than it was among whites and blacks. In November 2006, 39% of Hispanics were eligible to vote compared to 76% of whites and 65% of blacks (Table 3).

Table 3
Eligible Voters and Total Population for Major Racial/Ethnic Groups, 2006

	HISPANIC		NON-HISPANIC WHITE		NON-HISPANIC BLACK	
	Population	Percent	Population	Percent	Population	Percent
Total Population , regardless of age or citizenship status	44,003,000	100	197,648,000	100	37,177,000	100
Not Eligible to Vote -Total	26,688,000	61	46,538,000	24	13,061,000	35
Youth under 18 years of age	15,058,000	34	43,295,000	22	11,782,000	32
Adults without U.S. citizenship	11,631,000	26	3,243,000	2	1,279,000	3
Eligible Voters -U.S. citizens age 18 and above	17,315,000	39	151,110,000	76	24,115,000	65

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of 2006 November Current Population Survey.

Participation Rates

Hispanics who are eligible to vote are less likely to register and less likely to cast a vote than either whites or blacks.

About 54% of Hispanics who were eligible to vote registered in November 2006. Among whites and blacks, the figure was 71% and 61%, respectively. (Table 4). Registration rates increased slightly among Hispanics and whites between the two elections but decreased among blacks.

Table 4
Registration and Voting Rates by Major Racial/Ethnic Groups, 2002 and 2006

	NON-HISPANIC				Total US
	Hispanic	White	Black	Other	
2006					
REGISTRATION (Registered voters as a percent of eligible voters)	54	71	61	50	68
VOTING (Voters as a percent of registered voters)	60	72	67	65	71
2002					
REGISTRATION	53	69	63	50	67
VOTING	58	71	68	62	69
Change 2002 to 2006					
REGISTRATION	1	2	-1	-1	1
VOTING	2	2	-1	2	1

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of 2002 and 2006 November Current Population Surveys.

Latinos who registered to vote were less likely to vote in November 2006 than whites and blacks who were registered. Among registered Latinos, 60% voted in November 2006 compared with 72% among white registered voters and 67% among black registered voters.

The turnout among Latinos increased slightly from 2002 to 2006, as it did among whites. Among blacks, however, the turnout decreased by one percentage point between the two elections (68% in 2002 and 67% in 2006).

Foreign-born Hispanics who were registered to vote in 2006 were more likely to report voting than their native-born counterparts (67% vs. 58%).

Characteristics of the Hispanic Population and Electorate

In November 2006, about four-in-ten Hispanics were eligible to vote. These eligible voters were distinct in many ways when compared with the entire Hispanic adult population (Table 5).

Table 5
Characteristics of the Hispanic Adult Population, by Voting Status, 2006
(in percent distribution)

	Eligible Voters	18 & Over, Non-citizen	All Hispanic Adults
Age			
18 to 29	29	33	31
30 to 40	21	32	25
40 to 49	20	19	20
50 to 64	19	11	16
over 64	11	4	8
Sex			
Male	48	56	51
Female	52	44	49
Generation			
Foreign born	25	100	55
Second generation	27	0	16
Third generation or higher	47	0	28
Spanish only spoken in household			
No	89	54	75
Yes	11	46	25
Family income ("refused" omitted)			
Under \$15,000	15	19	17
15,000 to 29,999	19	32	24
30,000 to 49,999	26	28	27
50,000 to 74,999	19	13	16
75,000 or more	21	8	16
Education			
Less than 9th grade	11	36	21
9th to 12th	15	21	17
HS grad and some college	60	36	50
Bachelors degree or more	14	7	11

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of 2006 November Current Population Survey.

By a significant majority (89%), Latinos who were eligible to vote were not in households where only Spanish is spoken. By comparison, among all Latino adults about one-in-four (25%) were in households where only Spanish is spoken.

The Hispanic electorate was also older and more female when compared with all Hispanic adults. In November 2006, 30% of Hispanics eligible to vote were age 50 or older compared with 24% among all Hispanic adults.

Almost three-quarters (74%) of Hispanics eligible to vote were born in the U.S. Among all Hispanic adults, 55% were immigrants.

74% of Latinos who were eligible to vote were born in the U.S.

The Latino electorate was also, on average, better educated when compared with all Latino adults. Almost three quarters (74%) of the Hispanic electorate had completed high school, compared to 61% of all Hispanic adults.

Characteristics of the Non-Hispanic White Population and Electorate

More than three-quarters (76%) of the total white population was eligible to vote in November 2006. Since relatively few white adults were non-citizens (2%), white adults who were eligible to vote were very similar to all white adults (Table 6). More than half of whites, who reported voting (56%) were age 50 or older, compared with 45% among all white adults.

76% of the white population was eligible to vote in 2006

However, white voters were more affluent than those who did not vote. About two-thirds (62%) reported family incomes of \$50,000 or more, compared to more than half among all white adults (55%). White voters were also better educated than those who did not vote. Almost 4-in-10 (38%) had finished college, compared with 29% among all white adults.

Table 6
Characteristics of the Non-Hispanic White Adult Population, by Voting Status, 2006
(in percent distribution)

	Voter	Registered	Eligible voters	All white adults
Age				
18 to 29	10	14	19	19
30 to 40	13	15	16	16
40 to 49	21	20	20	20
50 to 64	32	28	26	26
Over 64	24	21	19	19
Sex				
Male	48	48	48	48
Female	52	52	52	52
Generation				
Foreign born	2	2	3	5
Second generation	7	7	6	6
Third generation or higher	91	91	91	89
Family income ("refused" omitted)				
Under \$15,000	6	7	9	9
15,000 to 29,999	13	13	14	15
30,000 to 49,999	20	20	21	21
50,000 to 74,999	22	22	21	21
75,000 or more	40	38	34	34
Education				
Less than 9th grade	1	2	3	3
9th to 12th	4	5	7	7
HS grad and some college	57	60	61	61
Bachelors degree or more	38	34	29	29

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of 2006 November Current Population Survey.

Characteristics of the Non-Hispanic Black Population and Electorate

About 65% of the total black population was eligible to vote in November 2006. About 1.3 million adult blacks were not eligible to vote because they were not U.S. citizens.

The black electorate in many ways reflects the characteristics of the wider adult black population (Table 7). But as was the case among whites, there were some differences between black voters and all black adults. In November 2006, black voters were more female, for example. About 40% of black voters reported a family income of \$50,000 or more, compared to 33% among all black adults. Black voters were also more likely to have finished college (26%) than all black adults (18%).

Table 7
 Characteristics of the Non-Hispanic Black Adult Population, by Voting Status, 2006
(in percent distribution)

	Voter	Registered	Eligible voters	All black adults
Age				
18 to 29	15	20	26	26
30 to 40	18	20	19	19
40 to 49	24	22	21	21
50 to 64	28	24	22	22
Over 64	15	14	12	12
Sex				
Male	41	41	44	45
Female	59	59	56	55
Generation				
Foreign born	4	4	5	10
Second generation	2	2	3	3
Third generation or higher	94	93	92	87
Family income ("refused" omitted)				
Under \$15,000	18	22	25	25
15,000 to 29,999	18	21	21	20
30,000 to 49,999	24	22	22	22
50,000 to 74,999	18	16	15	16
75,000 or more	22	19	17	17
Education				
Less than 9th grade	3	4	4	4
9th to 12th	9	11	14	14
HS grad and some college	62	64	64	63
Bachelors degree or more	26	21	18	18

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of 2006 November Current Population Survey.

Table 8
Voting Eligibility for Major Racial/Ethnic Groups
with Multiple Race Responses Allocated, (2002 and 2006)

	2002	2006	INCREASE, 2002 TO 2006	
			Amount	Percent
Hispanics				
Total	38,284,000	44,003,000	5,719,000	14.9
Voting eligible	15,601,000	17,315,000	1,713,000	11.0
White*				
Total	194,815,000	197,648,000	2,833,000	1.5
Voting eligible	147,171,000	151,110,000	3,939,000	2.7
Black*				
Total	34,828,000	37,177,000	2,349,000	6.7
Voting eligible	22,289,000	24,115,000	1,826,000	8.2
Other*				
Total	15,268,000	16,026,000	757,000	5.0
Voting eligible	7,594,000	8,533,000	939,000	12.4
Total				
Total	283,196,000	294,853,000	11,658,000	4.1
Voting eligible	192,656,000	201,073,000	8,417,000	4.4

Registration and Voting for Major Racial/Ethnic Groups
with Multiple Race Responses Allocated, (2002 and 2006)

	2002	2006	INCREASE, 2002 TO 2006	
			Amount	Percent
Hispanics				
Registered	8,196,000	9,304,000	1,108,000	13.5
Voted	4,747,000	5,595,000	848,000	17.9
White*				
Registered	102,154,000	107,528,000	5,374,000	5.3
Voted	72,259,000	77,851,000	5,592,000	7.7
Black*				
Registered	13,976,000	14,779,000	802,000	5.7
Voted	9,522,000	9,938,000	417,000	4.4
Other*				
Registered	3,828,000	4,237,000	409,000	10.7
Voted	2,375,000	2,734,000	359,000	15.1
Total				
Registered	128,154,000	135,847,000	7,693,000	6.0
Voted	88,903,000	96,119,000	7,216,000	8.1

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of 2002 and 2006 November Current Population Surveys.
*Non-Hispanic

Table 9
Racial/Ethnic Composition of Voting Groups, 2006 *(in percent)*

	Hispanic	NON HISPANIC			Total US
		White	Black	Other	
Total population	14.9	67.0	12.6	5.4	100.0
Eligible voters	8.6	75.2	12.0	4.2	100.0
Voters	5.8	81.0	10.3	2.8	100.0

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of 2006 November Current Population Survey.

Appendix: Data Source and Race Group Definitions

The tabulations reported derive from the November Current Population Survey (CPS), the only nationally-representative source of data on the proportion of the population and sub-populations that reported registering to vote and voting. The universe for the CPS is the non-institutionalized civilian population and the November 2006 CPS is based on 153,255 unweighted respondents.

The estimates reported in this fact sheet for the November 2002 election match those reported by the U.S. Census Bureau in their report *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2002*, authored by Jennifer Cheeseman Day and Kelly Holder, July 2004, Washington, DC, U.S. Census Bureau.

Beginning in January 2003 the CPS gave respondents the option of reporting more than one race. Since Hispanic identity is not a racial category in the CPS, the new CPS racial classification does not affect the comparability of the Hispanic estimates in the November 2002 and November 2006 CPS. It does, however, affect the comparability of the non-Hispanic racial groups. The November 2006 CPS separately identifies 21 racial identities, including the three largest racial identities: “white alone,” “black alone,” and “Asian alone.”

The first row of Appendix Table 1 reports the unallocated November 2006 racial/ethnic counts for the total population where individuals reporting multiple racial identities are not assigned to a single race classification. The non-Hispanic white alone population and non-Hispanic black alone population are not comparable to the November 2002 non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic black populations because they do not include individuals that previously had to choose a single race. To compare changes in registration and voting behavior from 2002 to 2006, this fact sheet tabulated the 2006 non-Hispanic racial groups by re-allocating the respondents reporting multiple racial identities.

Specifically, the 2006 non-Hispanic white population includes non-Hispanics reporting “white alone” and “white and American Indian.” The 2006 non-Hispanic black population includes non-Hispanics reporting “black alone” and any other multiple race classification that includes “black.” The second row of Appendix Table 1 reports the size of the non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic black populations utilizing this reallocation of the persons identifying multiple races. These reallocated non-Hispanic populations are the basis for all the 2006 estimates reported herein.

Appendix Table 1
U.S. Racial/Ethnic Populations under Alternative Classification Methods: November 2006 CPS

	HISPANIC	NON-HISPANIC				TOTAL
All Ages						
16 Multiracial categories unallocated		White alone	Black alone	Asian alone	Other	
	44,003,000	195,760,000	35,815,000	12,584,000	6,687,000	294,849,000
Multiracial individuals allocated to single race		White	Black	Asian	Other	
	44,003,000	197,650,000	37,177,000	14,386,000	1,640,000	294,855,000
Difference from unallocated:						
Amount	(x)	1,890,000	1,362,000	1,801,000	-5,047,000	(x)
Percent	(x)	1.0	3.8	14.3	-75.5	(x)

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of 2006 November Current Population Survey.