MISSING VOTERS PROJECT:
United States 2016

Elizabeth Pathak PhD, Janelle Menard PhD, Beverly G. Ward PhD, and Ellie Margolis JD

86.5 MILLION USA CITIZENS
did not vote on November 8, 2016

DESCRIPTION OF MISSING VOTERS

REMARKS

Missing voters were last seen in all 50 states and the District of Columbia on the morning of November 8, 2016. These civilian, non-military, non-institutionalized adults were aged 18 years or older at the time of the election.

DETAILS

The Women's Institute for Independent Social Enquiry (WiiSE), a nonpartisan think tank, is issuing this report to alert the public to the millions of voters missing from the November 2016 elections. Concerned individuals with an interest in locating these USA citizens and aiding their future participation in American elections are urged to share this alert widely.

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Publication Information

About the Authors

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Janelle Menard, PhD is the Vice-President of WiiSE. She is an applied anthropologist with expertise in mixed research methods and community-based participatory research strategies in social science and community health research. Dr. Menard advocates for a progressive, socio-ecological research approach to understanding and addressing issues that disproportionately affect disenfranchised groups.

Beverly G. Ward, PhD is a member of the Board of Directors of WiiSE. She is the Field Secretary for Earthcare for the Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Throughout her career, Dr. Ward has conducted research and provided technical assistance to communities and local, state, and federal agencies on social justice, environmental, housing, and transportation issues. She is deeply involved with the Alternatives to Violence Project as a facilitator and helps to provide community and prison workshops.

Ellie Margolis, JD is Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of WiiSE. She is Professor of Law at Temple University. Throughout her career, Professor Margolis has worked to advance the rights of women and those underrepresented in the legal system. Her scholarly work considers the impact of technological advances on legal persuasion in a variety of written forms, and is widely cited in legal writing textbooks, law review articles, and appellate briefs.

About WiiSE

The Women's Institute for Independent Social Enquiry (WiiSE) is a nonpartisan, progressive think tank whose mission is to foster a just society through independent social science, humanities, arts, and public policy research. We believe that rigorous evidence-based research, when effectively translated for a broad spectrum of audiences, can be a catalyst for transformational social change. We champion the ideas of women by cultivating and supporting women scholars and leaders.

Connect with us!

We welcome your feedback and comments on the Missing Voters Project, as well as on other timely issues relevant to our mission. Please reach out to us online at https://www.wiise-usa.org/connect.

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Who are America's Missing Voters?

Missing voters are voting age citizens who did not vote in November 2016. Missing voters reflect the diversity of the United States as a whole. They are of all ages and races, of all educational backgrounds, and they live in every state across our nation. Yet, voting participation rates vary considerably across specific population groups. The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed description of the social and demographic characteristics of America's missing voters, to inform the widespread grassroots efforts to increase voter participation in the 2018 mid-term elections and the 2020 presidential election.

What is the Missing Voters Project?

We believe that civic disengagement represents a fundamental threat to the separation of powers in our government, and to American democracy itself. Unfortunately, low rates of voter participation have persisted in the United States for many years, and a culture of complacency has ossified around this political reality. We chose the design motif of an FBI Missing Persons poster for the Missing Voters Project with the goal of eliciting feelings of unease and alarm to fracture this culture of complacency.

The purpose of the Missing Voters Project (MVP) is to present rigorous, impartial data about the demographic characteristics of missing voters in a format that can be easily accessed and used by a wide range of educational, community-based, faith-based, and worker-friendly organizations in their efforts to increase civic engagement.

The MVP voting data are from a special supplement to the Current Population Survey, administered in November 2016 immediately following the election. Population counts and percentages in this report are statistically-weighted estimates derived by the Bureau of the Census from a national sample of over 90,000 respondents in 54,000 households. Full technical details for the Missing Voters Project, links to the original census data, and other valuable resources are available at www.wiise-usa.org/mvp.

Photo by Courtney Hedger on Unsplash

We recognize that there are important voting justice issues that can not be addressed directly through the data analyzed in our report. These issues include voter suppression and intimidation, purging of voter registration rolls, partisan gerrymandering, and other direct and indirect tactics that result in citizen disenfranchisement. Readers are encouraged to consult the Resources at the end of this report (pages 16-17) for links to organizations working directly on these issues.

How to Use This Report

Each page of this report has been designed with a dual purpose: as an integrated part of the whole report, and as a stand-alone "Fact Sheet." Organizations working to increase voter registration can pull out individual pages to reproduce and share. On our website (https://www.wiise-usa.org/mvp), readers can download the whole report, or choose to download single page fact sheets on their topics of interest.

MISSING VOTERS PROJECT: United States 2016

Figure 1: Voting in the United States
Citizens 18+ years old in 2016
Total = 224 million

**Voted in 2016
137.5 million
61.4%**

**Did not vote in 2016
86.5 million
38.6%**

**Not registered
66.5 million
76.8%**

**Registered
20.1 million
23.2%**

Voting in 2016

In 2016, there were approximately 224 million civilian voting age citizens in the United States. The citizen population estimates shown in this report include only the *non-institutionalized* population. This means that prisoners, nursing home residents, and other institutionalized persons are not included in any of the statistics reported here. However, voting age citizens who may be legally ineligible to vote in their state are still included in the estimates in this report. The specific reasons why a citizen may be legally ineligible to vote vary from state to state. For example, some states bar citizens with a previous felony conviction from voting for life.

In November 2016, only 61.4% of voting age citizens reported voting. This resulted in 86.5 million missing voters, 66.5 million of whom (76.8%) were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 1).

Notes

Please note that some numbers may appear not to add up correctly due to rounding. Voting data are from the Current Population Survey (November 2016). Population counts and percentages in this report are statistically-weighted estimates derived by the Bureau of the Census from a national sample of over 90,000 respondents in 54,000 households. Full technical details for the Missing Voters Project, links to the original census data, and other valuable resources are available at www.wiise-usa.org/mvp.
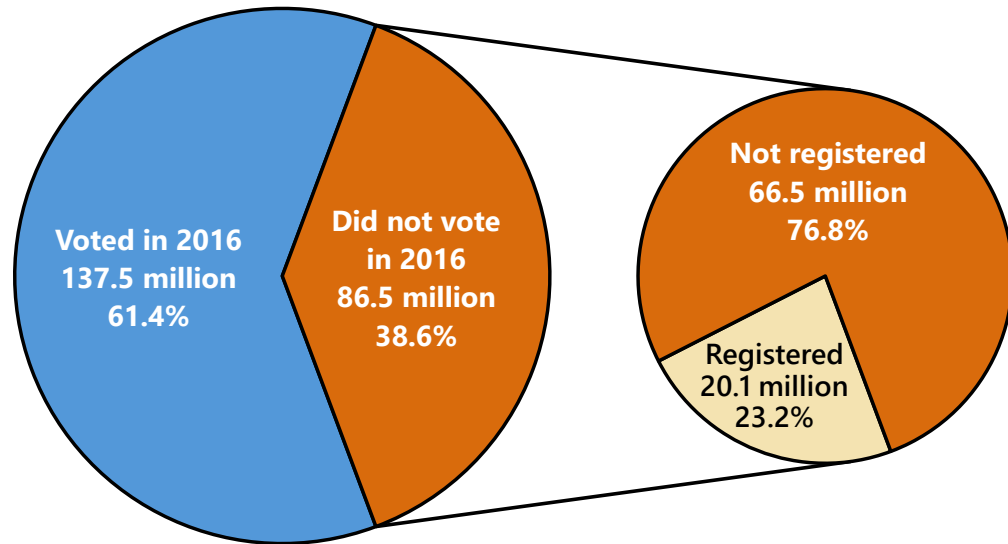
MISSING VOTERS PROJECT: United States 2016

Figure 2: Where did Citizens Register to Vote?
Citizens 18+ years old who were registered to vote in 2016
Total = 157.6 million

	Percent
1. At department of motor vehicles	25.5
2. At local registration office	17.1
3. Mailed form to election office . .	12.2
4. Online	6.3
5. At polls on election day	5.8
6. At school, hospital, or campus . .	5.1
7. Registration booth	3.9
8. Other place/way	3.8
9. At public assistance agency	1.1
10. Don't know/refused	19.1

Percent (0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30)

Voter Registration

Respondents to the Voting Supplement of the Current Population Survey were asked in November 2016 about the method and location of their most recent registration to vote. Only people who said that they were currently registered were asked this question. Almost one-fifth of registered citizens (19.1%) did not know or remember how they had registered to vote (Figure 2). It is possible that citizens who had been continuously registered at the same residential address for several years were less likely to remember their method of registration.

Local Government Offices

Taken together, registration at department of motor vehicles (25.5%), local registration offices (17.1%), and public assistance agencies (1.1%) accounted for 43.7% of voter registrations prior to the November 2016 elections. An additional 12.2% of registered citizens reported that they mailed their voter registration form to a government election office.

Voter Outreach Efforts

In total, 9.0% of registered citizens reported registering at either a school, hospital, or college campus (5.1%) or at an unspecified registration booth (3.9%). Another 5.8% of citizens did not register to vote until they reached the polls on election day.

Internet

The internet was a less common method of voter registration. In November 2016, only 6.3% of registered citizens reported that they had registered online.
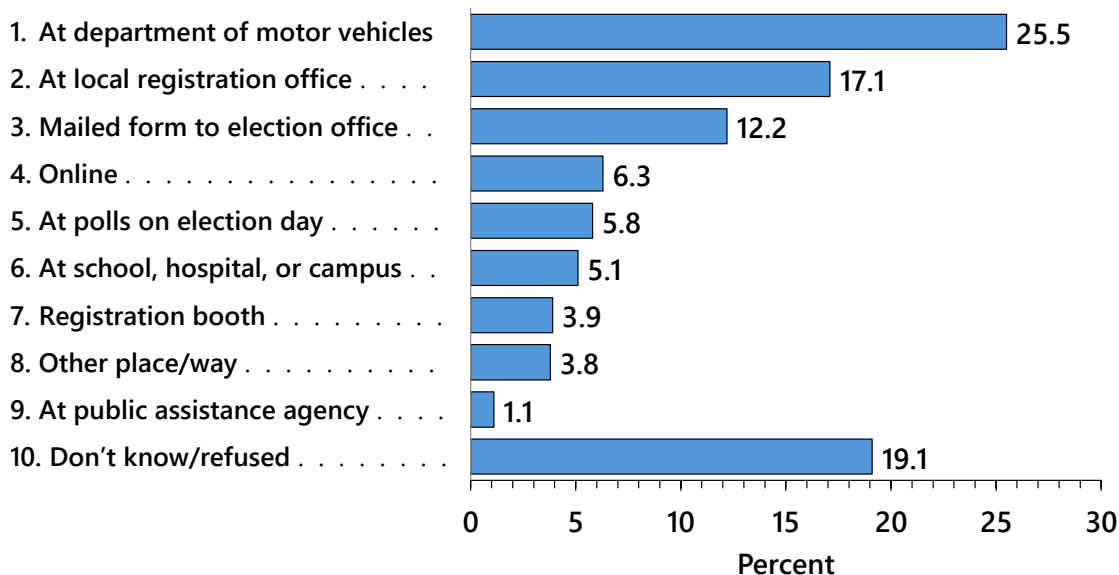
Notes

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Young Adults Least Likely to Vote as Voting Rates Increase with Age

Voting participation varied sharply by age in 2016. Only 43% of young adult citizens voted, compared with 70.9% of seniors aged 65 years and older (Figure 3). However, because the senior population is larger, the number of missing young adult voters (15.4 million) was only slightly larger than the number of missing senior voters (13.7 million) (Figure 4). The majority of missing voters were 25 to 44 years old (31.6 million) or 45 to 64 years old (25.9 million) (Figure 4).

Young Adults

Only 43% of the 26.9 million citizens aged 18 to 24 years voted in 2016 (Figure 3). This resulted in 15.4 million missing voters, 12 million of whom (78%) were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 4).

Adults 25-44 Years

Slightly more than half (56.5%) of adults 25 to 44 years old voted in 2016 (Figure 3). This resulted in 31.6 million missing voters (Figure 4). Only 24% of these missing voters were registered to vote before the election.

Middle-aged Adults

The largest number of voting age citizens are in this age group (77.5 million), and 66.6% reported voting (Figure 3). There were 25.9 million missing middle-aged voters, including 20.2 million who were not registered to vote in 2016 (Figure 4).

Seniors

There were 47.0 million senior citizens in 2016 and 70.9% of them voted (Figure 3). Among the 13.7 million missing voters, 75.5% were not registered to vote prior to the 2016 election (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Voting by Age
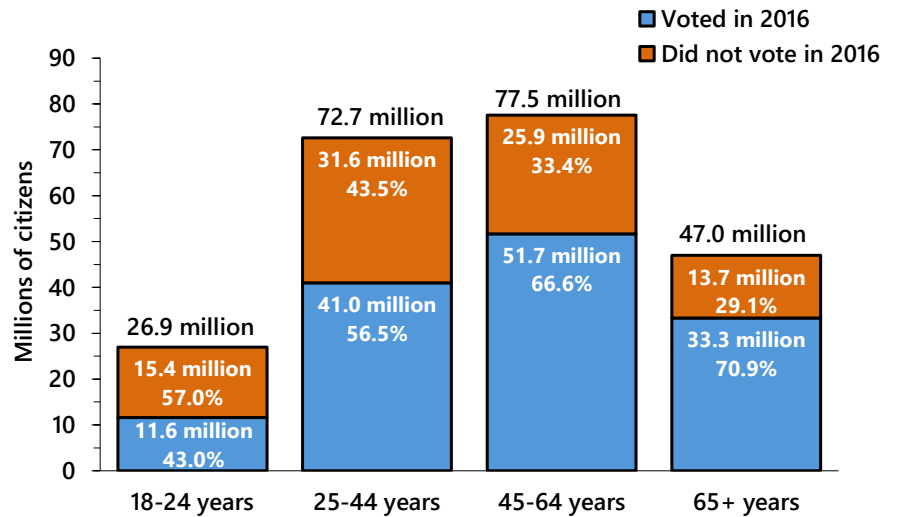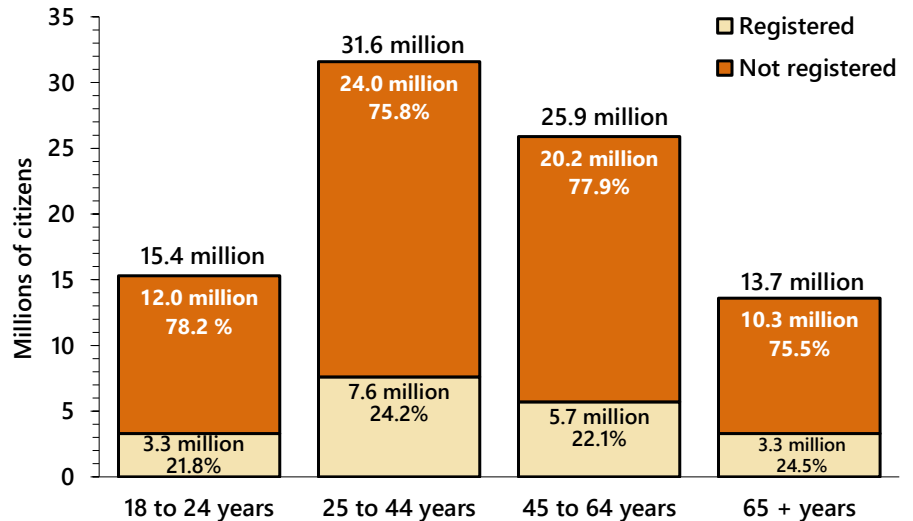### Citizens 18+ years old in 2016
Total = 224 Million

Legend:
- Voted in 2016
- Did not vote in 2016

Millions of citizens

18-24 years — 26.9 million
- 15.4 million 57.0% (Did not vote)
- 11.6 million 43.0% (Voted)

25-44 years — 72.7 million
- 31.6 million 43.5% (Did not vote)
- 41.0 million 56.5% (Voted)

45-64 years — 77.5 million
- 25.9 million 33.4% (Did not vote)
- 51.7 million 66.6% (Voted)

65+ years — 47.0 million
- 13.7 million 29.1% (Did not vote)
- 33.3 million 70.9% (Voted)

Figure 4: Missing Voters by Age
Citizens 18+ years old who did not vote in 2016
Total = 86.5 million

Legend:
- Registered
- Not registered

Millions of citizens

18 to 24 years — 15.4 million
- 12.0 million 78.2% (Not registered)
- 3.3 million 21.8% (Registered)

25 to 44 years — 31.6 million
- 24.0 million 75.8% (Not registered)
- 7.6 million 24.2% (Registered)

45 to 64 years — 25.9 million
- 20.2 million 77.9% (Not registered)
- 5.7 million 22.1% (Registered)

65 + years — 13.7 million
- 10.3 million 75.5% (Not registered)
- 3.3 million 24.5% (Registered)

Notes

Please note that some numbers may appear not to add up correctly due to rounding. Voting data are from the Current Population Survey (November 2016). Population counts and percentages in this report are statistically-weighted estimates derived by the Bureau of the Census from a national sample of over 90,000 respondents in 54,000 households. Full technical details for the Missing Voters Project, links to the original census data, and other valuable resources are available at www.wiise-usa.org/mvp.
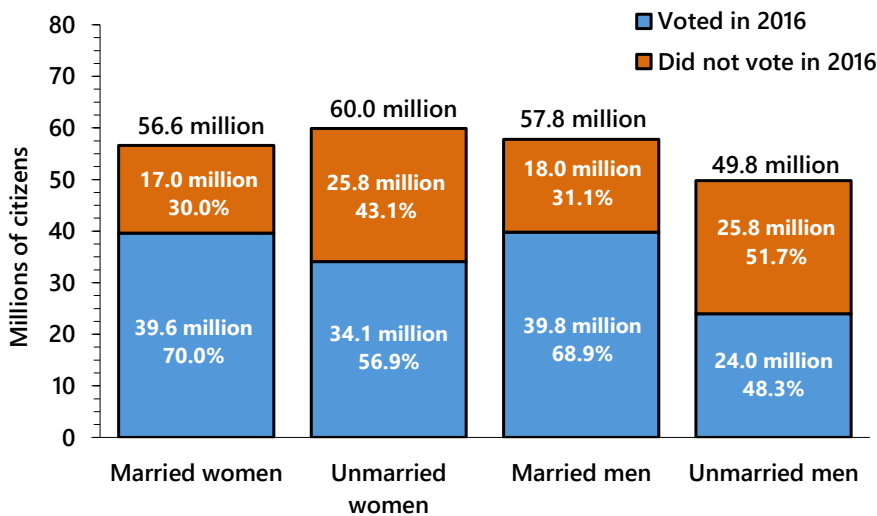
MISSING VOTERS PROJECT: United States 2016

Married Women Most Likely to Vote; Majority of Missing Voters were Unmarried

Married women were most likely to vote in 2016 (70.0%), followed closely by married men (68.9%) (Figure 5). Rates of voter participation were much lower for unmarried women (56.9%) and unmarried men (48.3%). The number of missing voters was roughly equal for unmarried women and men (25.8 million), and unmarried people accounted for 60% of all missing voters (51.6 million out of 86.5 million) (Figure 6).

Figure 5: Voting by Gender and Marital Status
Citizens 18+ years old in 2016
Total = 224 million

| | Voted in 2016 | Did not vote in 2016 |

Millions of citizens

Married women — 56.6 million: 17.0 million 30.0% (Did not vote); 39.6 million 70.0% (Voted)

Unmarried women — 60.0 million: 25.8 million 43.1% (Did not vote); 34.1 million 56.9% (Voted)

Married men — 57.8 million: 18.0 million 31.1% (Did not vote); 39.8 million 68.9% (Voted)

Unmarried men — 49.8 million: 25.8 million 51.7% (Did not vote); 24.0 million 48.3% (Voted)

Figure 6: Missing Voters by Gender and Marital Status
Citizens 18+ years old who did not vote in 2016
Total = 86.5 million

| | Registered | Not registered |

Millions of citizens

Married women — 17.0 million: 13.2 million 77.5% (Not registered); 3.8 million 22.5% (Registered)

Unmarried women — 25.8 million: 19.5 million 75.7% (Not registered); 6.3 million 24.3% (Registered)

Married men — 18.0 million: 13.8 million 76.5% (Not registered); 4.2 million 23.5% (Registered)

Unmarried men — 25.8 million: 20.0 million 77.7% (Not registered); 5.7 million 22.3% (Registered)

Married Women

The majority (70.0%) of married women voted in 2016 (Figure 5). There were 17.0 million missing voters, 13.2 million of whom (77.5%) were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 6).

Unmarried Women

Slightly more than half (56.9%) of unmarried women voted in 2016 (Figure 5). This resulted in 25.8 million missing voters (Figure 6). Only 24.3% of these missing voters were registered to vote before the election.
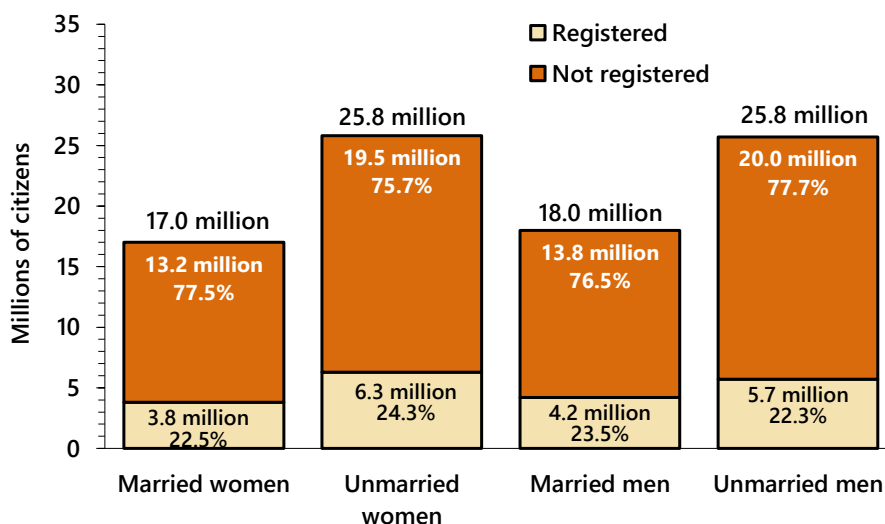
Married Men

The majority of married men (68.9%) voted in 2016 (Figure 5). There were 18.0 million missing voters (Figure 6). The majority of missing voters (13.8 million) were not registered to vote before the election.

Unmarried Men

Only 48.3% of unmarried men voted in 2016 (Figure 5), resulting in 25.8 million missing voters. The majority of these missing voters (20.0 million, 77.7%) were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 6).

Notes

Unmarried includes persons who were never married, divorced, separated, widowed, or married living separately. Please note that some numbers may appear not to add up correctly due to rounding. Voting data are from the Current Population Survey (November 2016). Population counts and percentages in this report are statistically-weighted estimates derived by the Bureau of the Census from a national sample of over 90,000 respondents in 54,000 households. Full technical details for the Missing Voters Project, links to the original census data, and other valuable resources are available at https://www.wiise-usa.org/mvp.

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Lowest Voting Rate Among Hispanics; Majority of Missing Voters were White

Voting participation varied markedly by race and Hispanic origin in 2016. More than half of non-Hispanic white citizens (65.3%) and Black citizens (58.9%) voted, compared with fewer than half of Hispanic citizens (47.6%) and Asian citizens (49.8%) (Figure 7). The majority of voting age citizens were non-Hispanic white (69%). Consequently the largest number of missing voters were white (40.3 million), despite the highest rate of voting participation (Figure 8). More than three-quarters of missing voters of all ethnicities were not registered prior to the election, with the highest rates of non-registration among Hispanics (81.5%) and Asians (85.2%) (Figure 8).

Whites

The majority (65.3%) of non-Hispanic white citizens voted in 2016 (Figure 7). There were 53.6 million missing voters, including 40.3 million (75.2%) who were not registered to vote prior to the election (Figure 8).

Blacks

More than half (58.9%) of Black citizens voted in 2016 (Figure 7). This resulted in 12.5 million missing voters (Figure 8). Only 24.6% of these missing voters were registered to vote before the election.
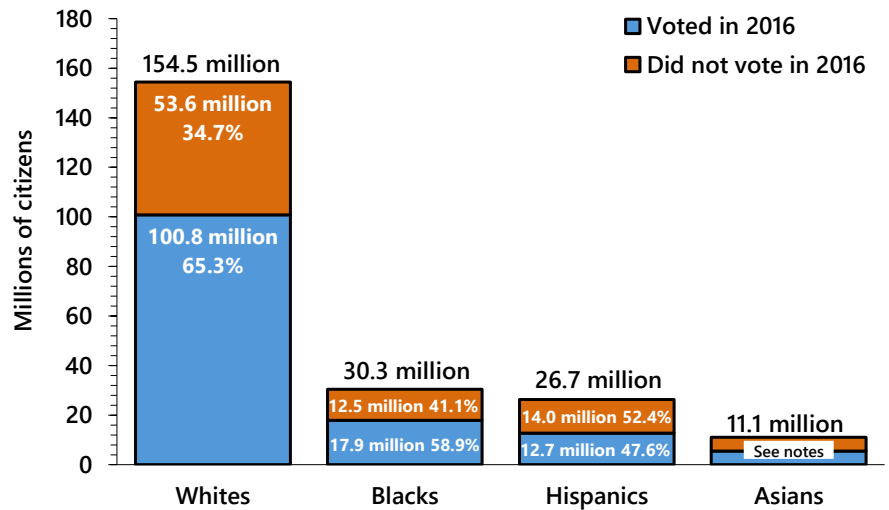
Hispanics

Only 47.6% of Hispanic citizens voted in 2016 (FIgure 7), resulting in 14.0 million missing voters. The majority of missing Hispanic voters (11.4 million, 81.5%) were not registered to vote before the election.

Asians

Fewer than half (49.8%) of Asian citizens voted in 2016 (Figure 7). There were 5.6 million missing voters, including 4.7 million (85.2%) who were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 8).
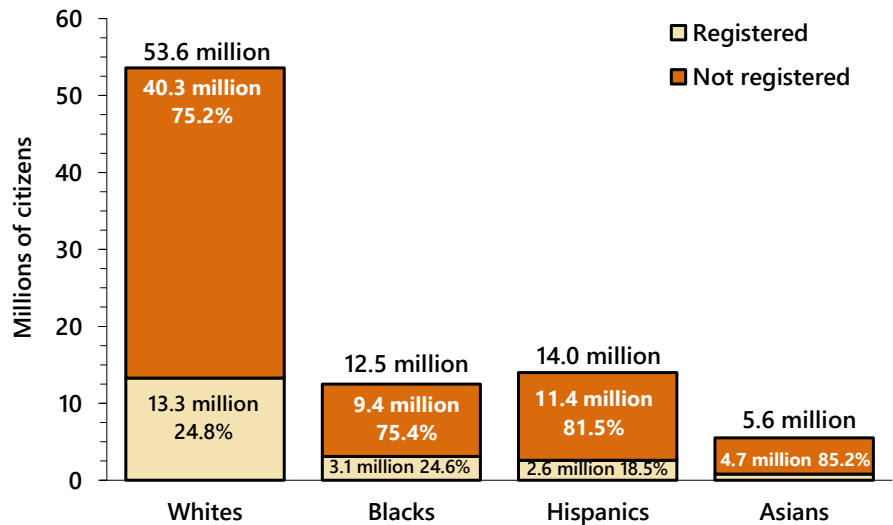
Figure 7: Voting by Race and Hispanic Origin
Citizens 18+ years old in 2016
Total = 224 million

Figure 8: Missing Voters by Race and Hispanic Origin
Citizens 18+ years old who did not vote in 2016
Total = 86.5 Million

Notes

Whites are non-Hispanic, and *Hispanics* may be of any race. *Blacks* and *Asians* include small number of multiracial individuals. For Asians in Figure 7, 5.5 million citizens voted, and 5.6 million did not vote. Please note that some numbers may appear not to add up correctly due to rounding. Voting data are from the Current Population Survey (November 2016). Population counts and percentages in these charts are statistically-weighted estimates derived by the Bureau of the Census from a national sample of over 90,000 respondents in 54,000 households. Full technical details for the Missing Voters Project, links to the original census data, and other valuable resources are available at https://www.wiise-usa.org/mvp.

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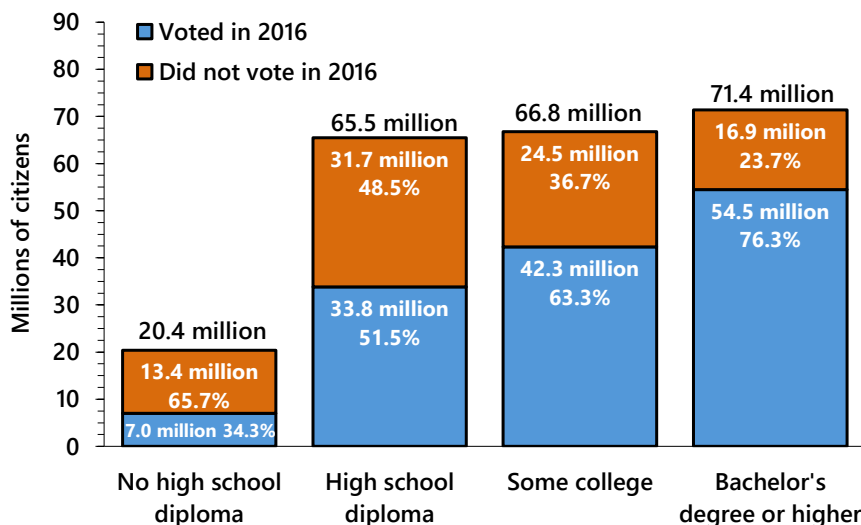www.wiise-usa.org

College Grads Most Likely to Vote; 45.1 Million Missing Voters Did Not Attend College

Voting participation varied dramatically by educational attainment in 2016. Among the 20.4 million citizens who had not graduated from high school, only 34.3% voted (Figure 9). More than half (51.5%) of citizens with a high school diploma voted, while 63.3 of those with some college voted. The highest voting participation (76.3%) was found among the largest group of citizens – those with a bachelor's degree or higher. Adults with a high school diploma were the largest group (31.7 million) of missing voters (Figure 10).

Figure 9: Voting by Education
Citizens 18+ years old in 2016
Total = 224 million

- ■ Voted in 2016
- ■ Did not vote in 2016

No high school diploma – 20.4 million
- 13.4 million 65.7%
- 7.0 million 34.3%

High school diploma – 65.5 million
- 31.7 million 48.5%
- 33.8 million 51.5%

Some college – 66.8 million
- 24.5 million 36.7%
- 42.3 million 63.3%

Bachelor's degree or higher – 71.4 million
- 16.9 million 23.7%
- 54.5 million 76.3%

Figure 10: Missing Voters by Education
Citizens 18+ years old who did not vote in 2016
Total = 86.5 million

- □ Registered
- ■ Not registered

No high school diploma – 13.4 million
- 11.1 million 82.8%
- 2.3 million 17.2%

High school diploma – 31.7 million
- 24.5 million 77.3%
- 7.2 million 22.7%

Some college – 24.5 million
- 18.0 million 73.3%
- 6.5 million 26.7%

Bachelor's degree or higher – 16.9 million
- 12.9 million 76.4%
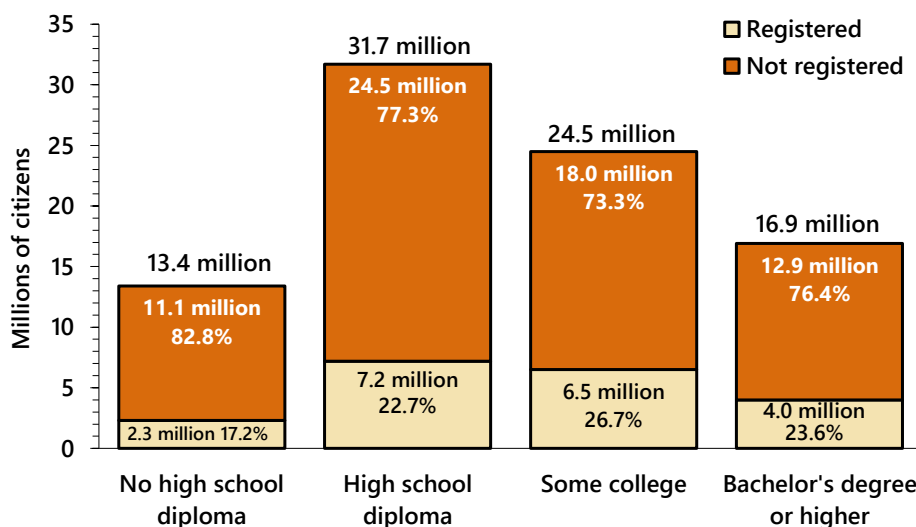- 4.0 million 23.6%

No Diploma

Only 34.3% of the 20.4 million citizens with no high school diploma voted in 2016 (Figure 9). This resulted in 13.4 million missing voters, 11.1 million of whom (82.8%) were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 10).

High School Diploma

Slightly more than half (51.5%) of adults with no more than a high school diploma voted in 2016 (Figure 9). This resulted in 31.7 million missing voters (Figure 10), of whom 24.5 million (77.3%) were not registered to vote before the election.

Some College

The majority (63.3%) of citizens with some college education voted in 2016 (Figure 9). There were 24.5 million missing voters, including 18.0 million (73.3%) who were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 10).

Bachelor's or Higher

The largest number of voting age citizens had college degrees (71.4 million) and 76.3% reported voting in 2016 (Figure 9). There were 16.9 million missing voters, and only 23.6% were registered to vote before the election (Figure 10).

Notes

Some college includes people with Associates degrees. Please note that some numbers may appear not to add up correctly due to rounding. Voting data are from the Current Population Survey (November 2016). Population counts and percentages in this report are statistically-weighted estimates derived by the Bureau of the Census from a national sample of over 90,000 respondents in 54,000 households.Full technical details for the Missing Voters Project, links to the original census data, and other valuable resources are available at www.wiise-usa.org/mvp.

Majority of Voting Age Citizens Resided in Owner-Occupied Housing Units

Voting participation varied markedly by type of housing in 2016. The majority (66.9%) of voting age citizens who resided in owner-occupied housing units voted (Figure 11). In contrast, fewer than half (48.8%) of citizens who resided in rental units voted. Nonetheless, because the majority of citizens resided in owner-occupied housing, the majority of missing voters (51.8 million) also resided in owner-occupied housing. Residents of rental housing comprised 40% of all missing voters (Figure 12).

Who Resides in Owner-Occupied Housing?

Readers should keep in mind that not every adult who resides in an owner-occupied housing unit is a home owner. For example, a 19-year old student who lives with homeowner parents is not a home owner, but resides in an owner unit.

### Residents of Owner-Occupied Housing

The majority (66.9%) of owner-occupied housing residents voted in 2016 (Figure 11). There were 51.8 million missing voters, including 40.0 million (77.1%) who were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 12).

Residents of Rental Housing Units

There were 67.8 million voting age citizens residing in rental housing in 2016 (Figure 11). Fewer than half (48.8%) of these citizens voted, resulting in 34.7 million missing voters. The majority of missing voters (26.5 million, 76.4%) were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 12).
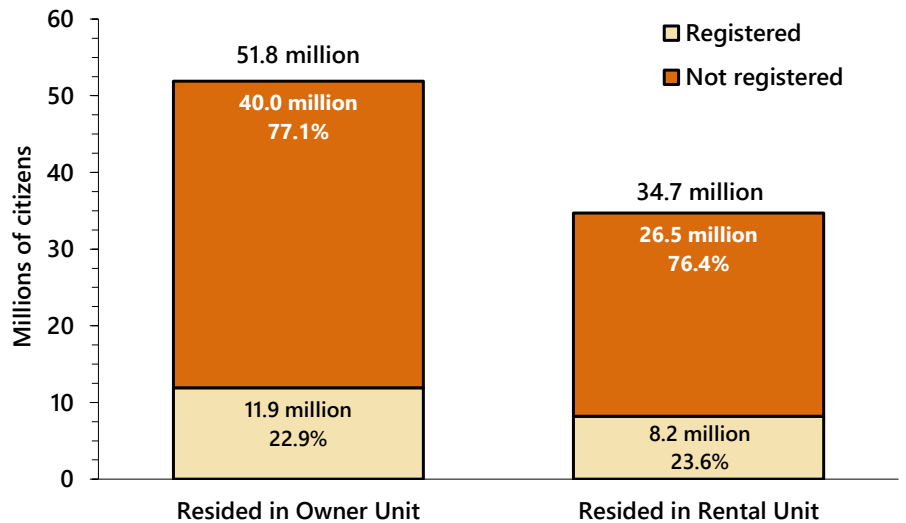
Figure 11: Voting by Type of Housing
Citizens 18+ years old in 2016
Total = 224 million
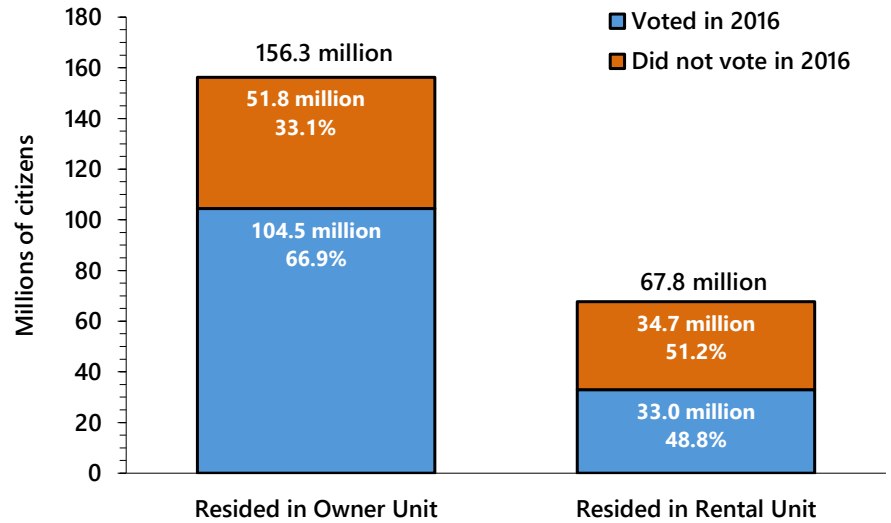
Figure 12: Missing Voters by Type of Housing
Citizens 18+ years old who did not vote in 2016
Total = 86.5 million

Notes

Please note that some numbers may appear not to add up correctly due to rounding. Voting data are from the Current Population Survey (November 2016). Population counts and percentages in this report are statistically-weighted estimates derived by the Bureau of the Census from a national sample of over 90,000 respondents in 54,000 households. Full technical details for the Missing Voters Project, links to the original census data, and other valuable resources are available at www.wiise-usa.org/mvp.

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Length of Residence

Recent Movers Least Likely to Vote, but Most Missing Voters Long-Time Residents

Voting participation was lowest among citizens who had moved less than one year earlier, with only 55.0% voting in 2016 (Figure 13). The largest group of citizens were those who had lived in the same residence for 5 or more years (115.5 million). Over three-fourths (75.6%) of these citizens voted in 2016, but they still comprised the largest group of missing voters (28.2 million). The majority of missing voters were not registered to vote before the election, regardless of length of residence (Figure 14).

Figure 13: Voting by Length of Residence
Citizens 18+ years old in 2016
Total = 193 million (see Notes)

Figure 14: Missing Voters by Length of Residence
Citizens 18+ years old who did not vote in 2016
Total = 57.3 million (see Notes)
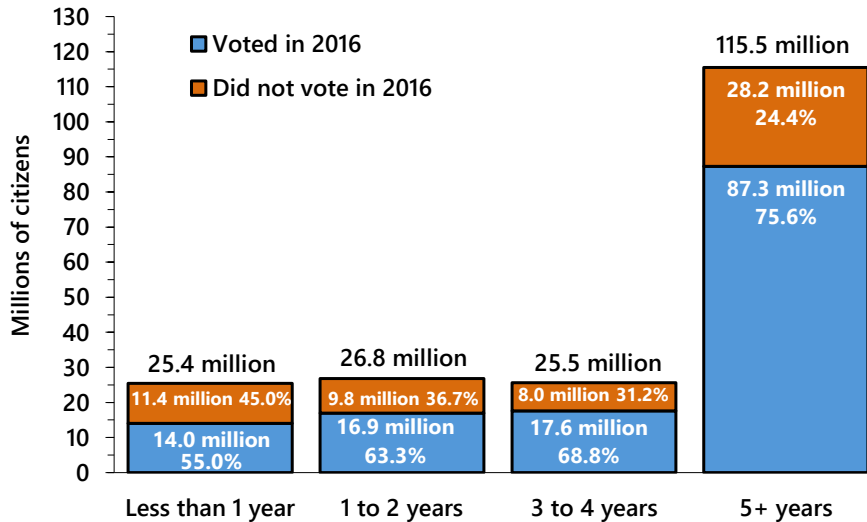
Less than 1 year

There were 25.4 million voting age citizens who had moved less than 1 year earlier, and only 55.0% voted in 2016 (Figure 13). This resulted in 11.4 million missing voters, including 7.7 million who were not registered before the election (Figure 14).

1-2 years

The majority (63.3%) of citizens who had moved 1 to 2 years earlier voted in 2016 (Figure 13). There were 9.8 million missing voters, including 6.7 million who were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 14).

3-4 years

The majority (68.8%) of citizens who had moved 3 to 4 years earlier voted in 2016 (Figure 13). There were 8.0 million missing voters, including 5.3 million who were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 14).

5 or more years

There were 115.5 million citizens who had lived at the same residence for 5 or more years, and 75.6% voted in 2016 (Figure 13). There were 28.2 million missing voters, including 18.0 million who were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 14).

Notes

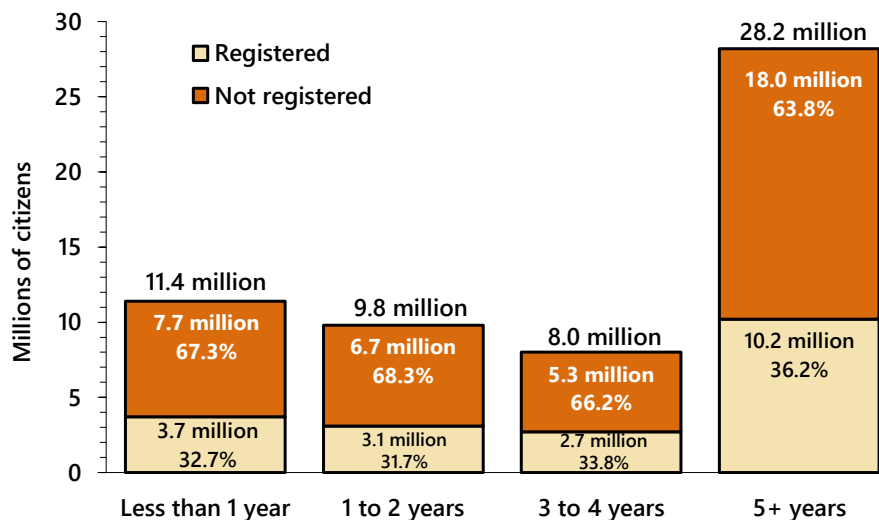Length of residence data were not available for 31 million citizens due to survey non-response. Please note that some numbers may appear not to add up correctly due to rounding. Voting data are from the Current Population Survey (November 2016). Population counts and percentages in this report are statistically-weighted estimates derived by the Bureau of the Census from a national sample of over 90,000 respondents in 54,000 households. Full technical details for the Missing Voters Project, links to the original census data, and other valuable resources are available at www.wiise-usa.org/mvp.

MISSING VOTERS PROJECT: United States 2016

Missing Voters Split Between Private Industry Employment and Not in the Labor Force

The majority (61%) of voting age citizens were employed in 2016, and government workers had the highest voting rate (74.4%), following by self-employed workers (66.8%), and citizens employed in private industry (61.4%) (Figure 15). Citizens not in the labor force (see notes) had a lower rate of voting (58.4%), and only half of unemployed workers reported voting. The largest number of missing voters were employed in private industry (41.6 million), followed by those not in the labor force (33.7 million) (Figure 16).

Employed in Private Industry

The majority (61.4%) of private employees voted in 2016 (Figure 15). There were 41.6 million missing voters, with 31.4 million (75.4%) not registered to vote before the election (Figure 16).

Employed in Government

Government workers had the highest voting rate (74.4%) in 2016 (Figure 15). There were 5.3 million missing voters, including 3.9 million who were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 16).
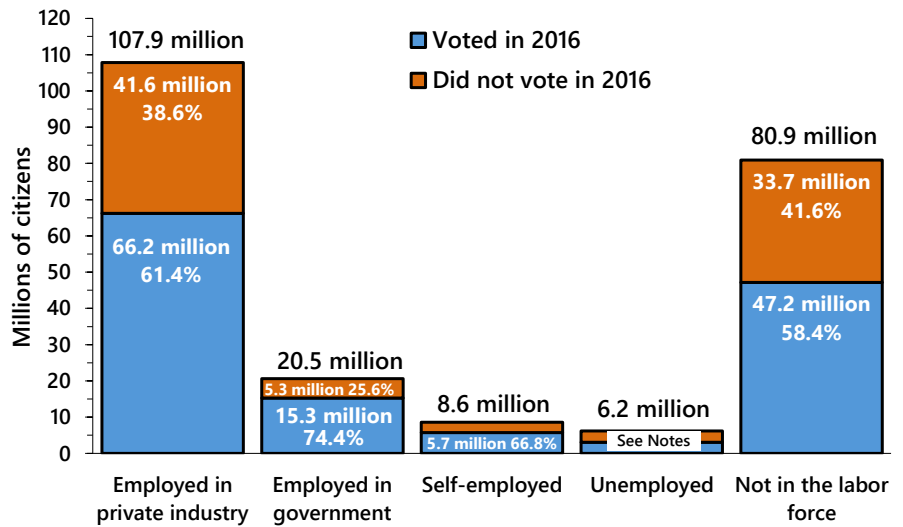
Self-Employed

Only 8.6 million voting age citizens reported being self-employed and 66.8% voted in 2016 (Figure 15). There were 2.9 million missing voters, most of whom (79.4%) were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 16).

Not in the Labor Force

More than half (58.4%) of citizens not in the labor force voted in 2016 (Figure 15), resulting in 33.7 million missing voters. There were 26.6 million missing voters who were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 16).
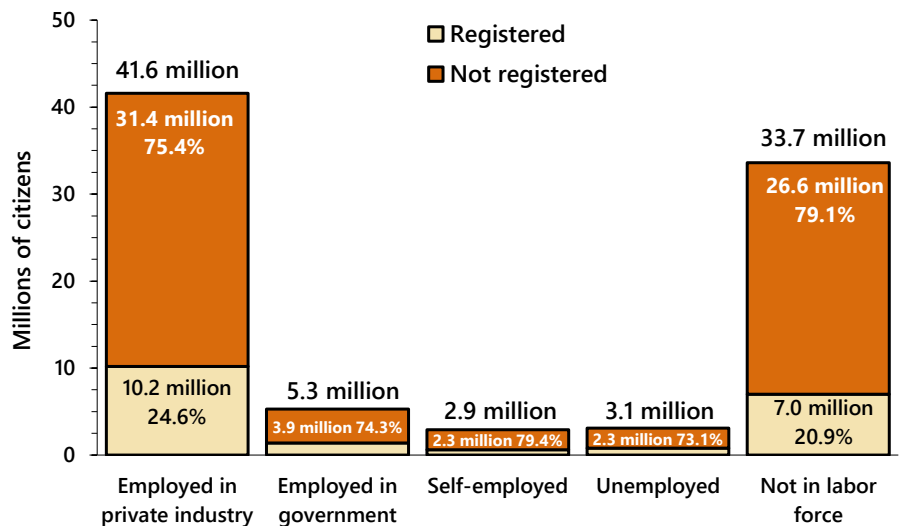
Figure 15: Voting by Labor Force Status
Citizens 18+ years old in 2016
Total = 224 million

Legend:
- Voted in 2016
- Did not vote in 2016

- Employed in private industry: 107.9 million (41.6 million 38.6% did not vote; 66.2 million 61.4% voted)
- Employed in government: 20.5 million (5.3 million 25.6% did not vote; 15.3 million 74.4% voted)
- Self-employed: 8.6 million (5.7 million 66.8% voted)
- Unemployed: 6.2 million (See Notes)
- Not in the labor force: 80.9 million (33.7 million 41.6% did not vote; 47.2 million 58.4% voted)

Figure 16: Missing Voters by Labor Force Status
Citizens 18+ years old who did not vote in 2016
Total = 86.5 million

Legend:
- Registered
- Not registered

- Employed in private industry: 41.6 million (31.4 million 75.4% not registered; 10.2 million 24.6% registered)
- Employed in government: 5.3 million (3.9 million 74.3% not registered)
- Self-employed: 2.9 million (2.3 million 79.4% not registered)
- Unemployed: 3.1 million (2.3 million 73.1% not registered)
- Not in labor force: 33.7 million (26.6 million 79.1% not registered; 7.0 million 20.9% registered)

Notes

Not in the labor force includes full-time students, homemakers, retired, and discouraged workers who were not actively seeking employment. For unemployed in Figure 15, 3.1 million citizens voted and 3.1 million citizens did not vote. Please note that some numbers may appear not to add up correctly due to rounding. Voting data are from the Current Population Survey (November 2016). Population counts and percentages in this report are statistically-weighted estimates derived by the Bureau of the Census from a national sample of over 90,000 respondents in 54,000 households. Full technical details for the Missing Voters Project, links to the original census data, and other valuable resources are available at www.wiise-usa.org/mvp.

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Figure 17: Voting by Family Income
Citizens 18+ years old residing in families in 2016
Total = 129.5 million (see text)
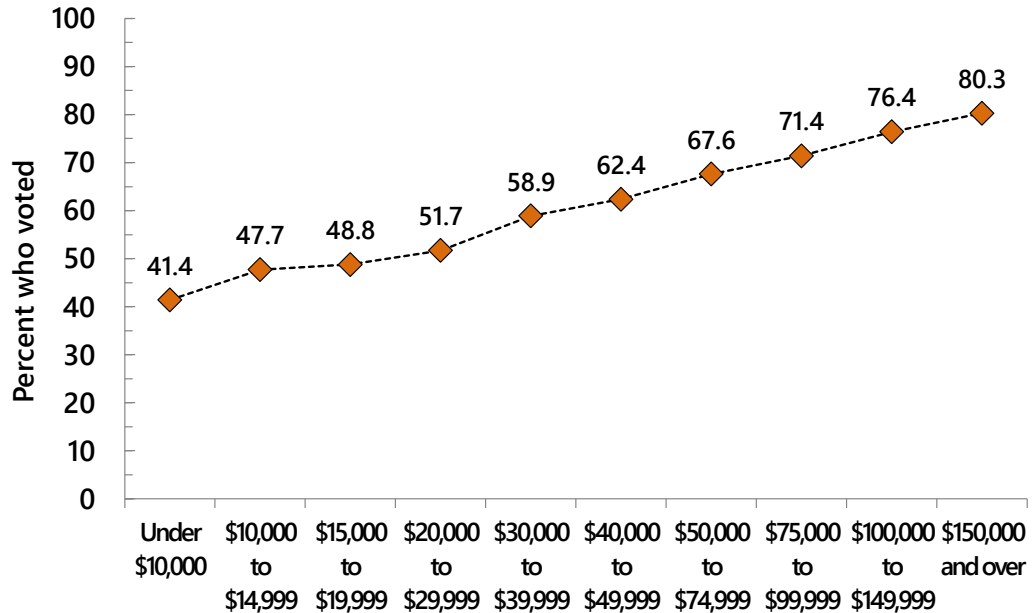
Who is Included in the Voting by Family Income Chart?

Family income is the total annual dollar income for all members of a family combined. Family members were defined as people with the following relationship to the householder: spouse, child, grandchild, parent, sibling, or other relative. The data presented here are limited to persons who resided in a family and reported income. The Bureau of the Census excluded foster children, unmarried partners, non-relatives, and roommates from family income tabulations. Voting data for respondents who refused to state their income or reported not knowing their income are not shown.

Voting by Family Income

Fewer than half of low-income citizens voted in 2016: 41.4% of those with family incomes less than $10,000 per year, 47.7% of those with family incomes $10,000 to $14,999 per year, and 48.8% of those with family incomes $15,000 to $19,999 per year (Figure 17).

In contrast, over three-fourths of citizens with the highest family incomes voted in 2016: 76.4% of those with family incomes $100,000 to $149,999 per year and 80.3% of those with family incomes $150,000 per year and higher (Figure 17).

Missing Voters by Family Income

We did not calculate missing voter counts by family income because of the large number of citizens who were missing family income data (94.5 million out of 224 million) in the Bureau of the Census data.

Notes

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MISSING VOTERS PROJECT: United States 2016

Figure 18: Where Do Missing Voters Live?
Top 20 states with citizens 18+ years old who did not vote in 2016
Total = 86.5 million

State	Millions of missing voters
California	10.5
Texas	7.8
New York	5.9
Florida	5.9
Pennsylvania	3.6
Illinois	3.3
Ohio	3.1
Georgia	2.8
Michigan	2.6
New Jersey	2.3

State	Millions of missing voters
North Carolina	2.3
Tennessee	2.2
Indiana	2.0
Virginia	1.9
Arizona	1.8
Washington	1.7
Massachusetts	1.7
Missouri	1.6
Alabama	1.6
Maryland	1.4

All remaining states = 20.8 million

South

There were 8 southern states among the top 20 states with missing voters in 2016 (Figure 18). These states were Texas (7.8 million missing voters), Florida (5.9 million missing voters), Georgia (2.8 million missing voters), North Carolina (2.3 million missing voters), Tennessee (2.2 million missing voters), Virginia (1.9 million missing voters), Alabama (1.6 million missing voters), and Maryland (1.4 million missing voters).

Midwest

There were 5 midwestern states among the top 20 states with missing voters in 2016 (Figure 18). These states were Illinois (3.3 million missing voters), Ohio (3.1 million missing voters), Michigan (2.6 million missing voters), Indiana (2.0 million missing voters), and Missouri (1.6 million missing voters).

Northeast

There were 4 northeastern states among the top 20 states with missing voters in 2016 (Figure 18). These states were New York (5.9 million missing voters), Pennsylvania (3.6 million missing voters), New Jersey (2.3 million missing voters), and Massachusetts (1.7 million missing voters).

West

There were 3 western states among the top 20 states with missing voters in 2016 (Figure 18). These states were California (10.5 million missing voters), Arizona (1.8 million missing voters) and Washington (1.7 million missing voters).
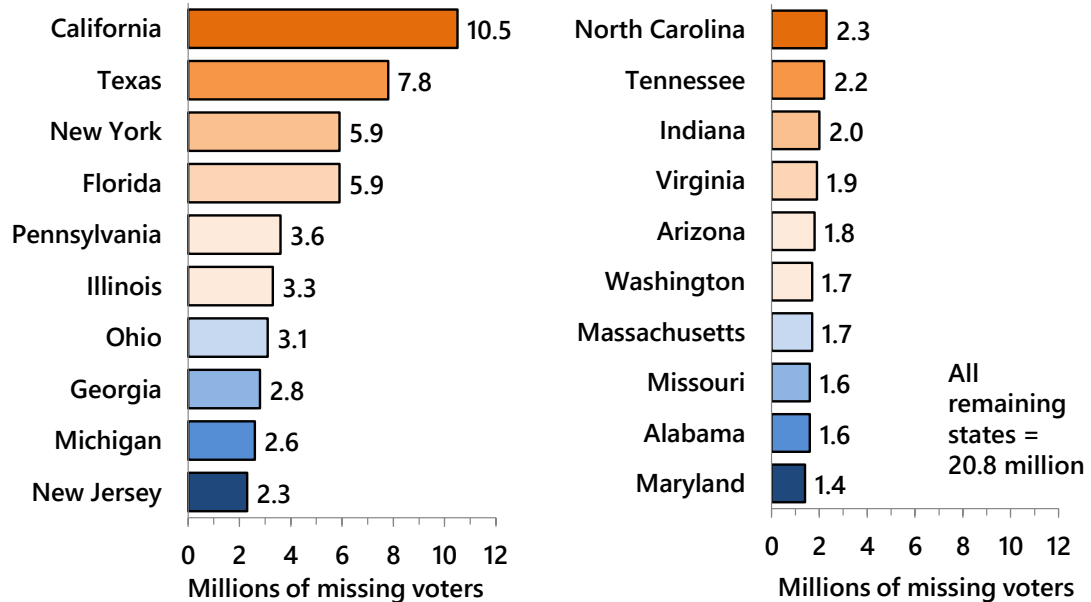
Notes

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MISSING VOTERS PROJECT: United States 2016

Figure 19: Missing Voters by State
Percent of citizens 18+ years who did not vote in 2016

Percent
25.8 38.6 52.8

Connecticut	36.1
Massachusetts	33.3
New Hampshire	31.0
Rhode Island	39.4
Vermont	37.5

Washington 33.7
Oregon 33.7
Idaho 37.9
Montana 34.1
Wyoming 35.1
North Dakota 35.8
South Dakota 40.8
Minnesota 31.3
Wisconsin 29.5
Maine 27.4
Nevada 39.5
Utah 37.3
Colorado 30.5
Nebraska 33.2
Iowa 36.6
Michigan 35.7
New York 42.8
Pennsylvania 37.4
California 42.1
Kansas 38.7
Missouri 35.2
Illinois 36.2
Indiana 41.7
Ohio 36.4
West Virginia 49.3
Kentucky 43.0
Virginia 31.8
Arizona 39.6
New Mexico 45.2
Oklahoma 43.4
Arkansas 41.4
Tennessee 46.0
North Carolina 32.5
South Carolina 37.9
Alabama 42.6
Georgia 39.8
Mississippi 32.3
Lousiana 38.4
Texas 44.6
Alaska 38.6
Hawaii 52.8
Florida 40.5

Delaware	37.7
District of Columbia	25.8
Maryland	34.2
New Jersey	38.5

Average States (Yellow)

In the United States as a whole, 38.6% of adult citizens were missing voters. States with missing voter proportions similar to the national average were found in all regions of the country. Examples include Louisiana (38.4%) and South Carolina (37.9%) in the South, Kansas (38.7%) in the Midwest, New Jersey (38.5%) and Vermont (37.5%) in the Northeast, and Idaho (37.9%) and Alaska (38.6%) in the West (Figure 19).

Worse than Average States (Red)

Hawaii had the highest proportion (52.8%) of citizens who were missing voters in 2016 (Figure 19). Hawaii's historically low voter participation rates have been attributed to its small population, geographic location, and time zone (3 hours behind the west coast). West Virginia, with only 1.4 million voting age citizens, had the second worst proportion of missing voters (49.3%). The four most populous states in the nation all had missing voter percentages greater than 40%: California (42.1%), Texas (44.6%), Florida (40.5%), and New York (42.8%).

Better than Average States (Blue)

States for which the missing voter proportion was less than 35% in 2016 were predominantly found in the northern half of the country (Figure 19). The District of Columbia had the lowest percentage of missing voters (25.8%), followed by Maine (27.4%), Wisconsin (29.5%), and Colorado (30.5%). Three states in the South had better than average missing voter proportions: North Carolina (32.5%), Mississippi (32.3%), and Virginia (31.8%).
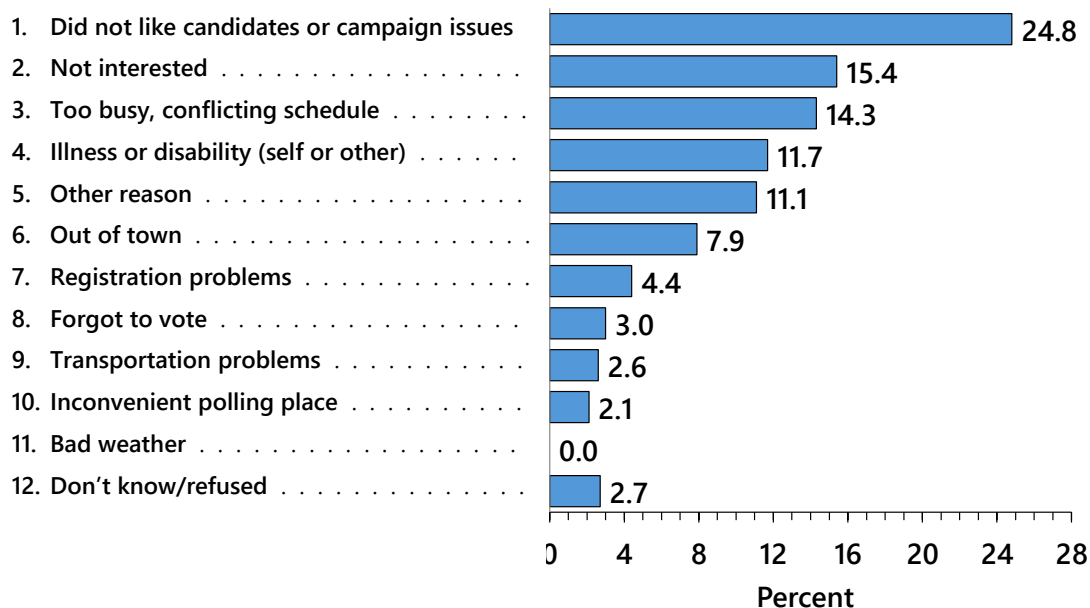
Notes

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MISSING VOTERS PROJECT: United States 2016

Figure 20: Reasons for Not Voting
Citizens 18+ years old who were registered but did not vote in 2016
Total = 18.9 million (see text)

#	Reason	Percent
1.	Did not like candidates or campaign issues	24.8
2.	Not interested	15.4
3.	Too busy, conflicting schedule	14.3
4.	Illness or disability (self or other)	11.7
5.	Other reason	11.1
6.	Out of town	7.9
7.	Registration problems	4.4
8.	Forgot to vote	3.0
9.	Transportation problems	2.6
10.	Inconvenient polling place	2.1
11.	Bad weather	0.0
12.	Don't know/refused	2.7

Percent

What Does this Chart Show About Reasons for Not Voting?

Non-voting respondents to the November 2016 Current Population Survey were asked if they were registered to vote. Respondents who said "yes" were then asked about their reasons for not voting (Figure 20). However, respondents who said "no" were asked why they did not register instead of why they did not vote (see page 15). Readers should also note that respondents who refused to state whether or not they had voted were not asked either of these questions. In our analyses, *missing voters* include people who refused to say whether or not they had voted, and *unregistered citizens* include people who refused to say whether or not they were registered.

Aversion and Apathy

Aversion and apathy together account for 40.2% of registered citizens not voting in 2016 (Figure 20). *Did not like candidates or campaign issues* was the leading reason (24.8%), followed by *not interested* (15.4%).

Personal Barriers

The four reasons for not voting that can be considered personal-level barriers accounted for 36.9% of registered citizens not voting in 2016 (Figure 20). These reasons were: *too busy, conflicting schedule* (14.3%), *illness or disability (self or other)* (11.7%), *out of town* (7.9%), and *forgot to vote* (3.0%).

Structural Barriers

The four reasons for not voting that can be considered structural barriers accounted for 9.1% of registered citizens not voting in 2016 (Figure 20). These reasons were: *registration problems* (4.4%), *transportation problems* (2.6%), *inconvenient polling place* (2.1%), and *bad weather* (<0.1%).

Notes

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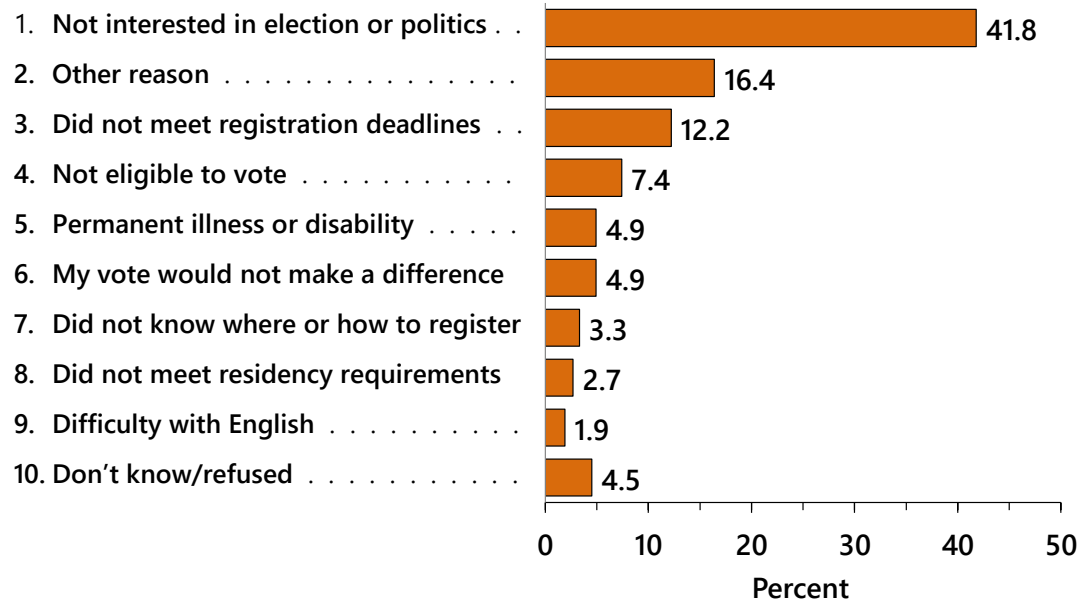
Figure 21: Reasons for Not Registering
Citizens 18+ years old who were not registered in 2016
Total = 32.6 million (see text)

Reason	Percent
1. Not interested in election or politics . .	41.8
2. Other reason	16.4
3. Did not meet registration deadlines . .	12.2
4. Not eligible to vote	7.4
5. Permanent illness or disability	4.9
6. My vote would not make a difference	4.9
7. Did not know where or how to register	3.3
8. Did not meet residency requirements	2.7
9. Difficulty with English	1.9
10. Don't know/refused	4.5

Percent (0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50)

What Does this Chart Show About Reasons for Not Registering?

Non-voting respondents to the November 2016 Current Population Survey were asked if they had registered to vote. Respondents who replied "no" were asked their reason for not registering. However, respondents who refused to state whether or not they had registered were not included. Therefore, the respondent universe for this question (32.6 million adults) is smaller than the total number who were not registered (66.5 million). This is because in our analyses, we included people who refused to say whether or not they were registered as unregistered citizens.

Apathy

The single largest reason (41.8%) that citizens stated for not registering was that they were *not interested in the election or they were not involved in politics* (Figure 21).

Logistical Barriers

The 6 reasons for not registering that can be considered logistical barriers together accounted for 32.4% of citizens not registering to vote (Figure 21). These reasons were: *did not meet registration deadline* (12.2%), *not eligible to vote* (7.4%), *permanent illness or disability* (4.9%), *did not know where or how to register* (3.3%), *did not meet residency requirements* (2.7%), and *difficulty with English* (1.9%).

Despair

A notable minority (4.9%) of citizens stated that they did not register to vote because they believed that their *vote would not make a difference* to the outcome of the election (Figure 21).

Notes

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Community-based, faith-based, and worker-friendly local organizations can use the resources listed below to aid in efforts to motivate citizen involvement, expand voter registration, combat voter suppression, eliminate election day logistical barriers to voting, and monitor local election procedures.

The webpage links in the listings below were active as of September 2018. Please visit our website: (https://www.wiise-usa.org/mvp-resources) for an expanded resources list with current links.

FREE Resources for Local Organizations

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
https://naacp.org/campaigns/fighting-for-democracy/
The NAACP's Civic Engagement focus, Turn Out 2018, is a voter registration and mobilization program designed to reach voters and convey the message "Defeat Hate. Vote!" Extensive FREE resources for local organizations and individuals are available for download.

National Voter Registration Day
https://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/
National Voter Registration Day is September 25, 2018. Find extensive FREE resources to help your local organization hold voter registration drives. Register as a partner and receive FREE posters and stickers.

Vote411.org
http://www.vote411.org/
VOTE411.org is a FREE "one-stop-shop" for election related information. It provides state-specific nonpartisan information to the public. An important and very popular component of VOTE411.org is the polling place locator, which enables users to type in their street address and retrieve their poll location.

Voter Identification Requirements for Every State
https://www.voteriders.org/get-voter-id/voter-id-info-cards/
Vote Riders will print and mail FREE state info wallet cards to any non-profit organization in any state. These cards summarize the forms of voter ID required to vote for each state.

Voting Rights Organizations

Advancement Project
https://advancementproject.org/issues/voting-rights/
Advancement Project is a next generation, multi-racial civil rights organization. Advancement Project is deeply involved in movement-based work aimed at blocking barriers to the ballot for voters of color and expanding access to the vote before Election Day.

Common Cause
https://www.commoncause.org
Common Cause is a nonpartisan grassroots organization with chapters in 35 states that works to promote government transparency, equal voting opportunities and fair representation in the political process.

Demos
https://www.demos.org/issue/voting-rights-voter-registration
Demos ("the people") is a public policy organization working to reduce political and economic inequality and to guarantee the freedom to vote, through research, advocacy, litigation, and strategic communications.

League of Women Voters (LWV)
https://www.lwv.org
The LWV encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. State and local leagues work to ensure equal participation in voting.

Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)
https://www.splcenter.org/our-issues/voting-rights
The SPLC is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society, using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy for equal opportunity.

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UNIDOS US
https://www.unidosus.org/issues/voting/
UNIDOS US (formerly National Council of La Raza) and its network of nearly 300 affiliates serve the Hispanic community through research, policy analysis, and state and national advocacy, and community programs.

Voter Participation Center
https://www.voterparticipation.org/
The Voter Participation Center's mission is to increase civic engagement among the Rising American Electorate: unmarried women, people of color, and millennials.

Voto Latino
http://votolatino.org/election-center/election-center/
Voto Latino is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to civic engagement, issue advocacy, and leadership development. They provide extensive resources to promote voter participation among young Latinos.

Youth Organizations

Alliance for Youth Action
https://www.allianceforyouthaction.org/campaign/democracy-done-right/
Alliance for Youth Action is a nationwide network of organizations building political power of young people. The Democracy Done Right campaign supports automatic voter registration for all citizens.

March for Our Lives
https://marchforourlives.com/vote-for-our-lives/
Created by, inspired by, and led by the students of Parkland High School, the mission of March For Our Lives is to assure that no special interest group or political agenda is more critical than the timely passage of legislation to effectively address the gun violence issues that are rampant in our country.

Rock the Vote
https://www.rockthevote.org/voting-information/
Rock the Vote is a nonpartisan nonprofit dedicated to using pop culture, music, art, and technology to engage young people in politics. They provide extensive state-level information on voting requirements.

Disability Organizations

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)
https://www.aapd.com/advocacy/voting/
The AAPD advocates for policies that allow people with disabilities to fully participate in the political process, including accessibility of polling locations and voting technology.

National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
http://www.ndrn.org/en/public-policy/voting.html
The NDRN provides legal advocacy services for individuals with disabilities including access to voting, throughi the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy Systems and the Client Assistance Programs.

Education Organizations

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
https://www.aft.org
The AFT is a union of professionals who champion fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for students, their families and communities.

National Education Association (NEA) Education Votes
https://educationvotes.nea.org/who-we-are/
The NEA's Education Votes informs public education advocates on the issues, and supports the mission of providing every student—regardless of their ZIP code—with the strong public schools they need to succeed.

The National Parent Teachers Association (PTA)
https://www.pta.org/home/advocacy/advocacy-resources/Election-Guides
The National PTA encourages members from across the country to get involved by reviewing PTA election guides, rolling out voter registration and pledge campaigns, and engaging with their communities about registering to vote and the significance of the voting process.