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New National Study Finds Persistent Lower Voter Turnout Among People of Color Despite Relative Population Gains

Center for Inclusive Democracy at USC examines data for Latino, Asian-American and Black voters in national elections spanning 2016-2020

Los Angeles, Jan. 29, 2024 – While the U.S. has become more racially and ethnically diverse over the last decade, the pace of voter turnout among Latinos, Asian Americans and Blacks continues to lag behind that of white non-Latinos, according to a [new study](#) released today by the Center for Inclusive Democracy (CID) at the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy. The findings were announced at a conference held today at the USC Capitol Campus in Washington, D.C.

The new research found that despite significant population gains between 2010 and 2020 of 35% for Asian Americans, 23% for Latinos and 6% for Blacks—percentages that outpaced white, non-Latinos, whose numbers fell by 2%—voters of color in the U.S. continue to be underrepresented in the electorate, casting a smaller share of votes proportional to their share of the eligible voter population.

[*The New Electorate: The Strength of the Latino, Black and Asian-American Vote*](#) report revealed that in the 2020 presidential election, Asian-American, Black and Latino eligible voters comprised nearly 30% of those eligible to vote, but represented just over 22% of all votes cast, significantly lower than their share of eligible voters. The report found this entrenched voter representation gap evident across nearly all U.S. elections.

“Eligible voters of color have substantial potential to hold greater influence over the outcomes of local and national elections,” said CID Director Mindy Romero, the study’s lead author. “There are millions of eligible non-voters of color who, if mobilized, could have a transformative and immediate impact in the 2024 elections. We need to do more to reach and engage these voters, and help narrow the voter representation gap if we are to achieve a truly inclusive electorate.”

In the 2020 elections, voter turnout—those who actually cast a vote in an election—for Asian Americans, Blacks and Latinos was below that of white, non-Latino voters and the general population across the board. While Asian Americans saw a slight narrowing of their turnout gap with whites, from 29 percentage points (ppts) to 25 ppts, the gap between Latino turnout and white, non-Latino turnout

slightly widened from 25 ppts in 2016 to 27 ppts in 2020, while the Black turnout gap widened from 17 ppts to 20 ppts.

“What the data tells us is that despite attempts at voting and election reforms, we are not making significant progress toward closing the voter representation gap,” added Romero. “Race disparities remain entrenched in our electoral system and continue to leave voters of color behind.”

Read the full report [here](#).

Center for Inclusive Democracy (CID)

The [Center for Inclusive Democracy](#) (CID) is part of the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy. CID’s mission is to improve the social and economic quality of life in U.S. communities by producing non-partisan research that informs policy and on-the-ground organizing efforts through education and outreach for a more engaged, transparent and representative democracy. CID conducts pioneering research that explores voting behavior, civic engagement, as well as electoral and economic issues at the intersection of social justice and democracy.

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For more than 90 years, the [USC Sol Price School of Public Policy](#) has sought to improve the quality of life for people and communities through path-breaking research and scholarship.

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