CENTER FOR
INCLUSIVE
DEMOCRACY

The New Electorate: The Strength of the Latino, Black and Asian-American Vote

About the Center for Inclusive Democracy (CID)

The Center for Inclusive Democracy's mission is to improve the social and economic quality of life in U.S. communities by producing non-partisan academic 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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Introduction

The 2020 presidential general election was noteworthy for its high turnout. In that election, two-thirds of eligible voters in the U.S. cast a ballot, a more than six percentage point increase from the 2016 presidential election, according to the U.S. Elections Project.[1] This turnout rate generated the largest increase in voters between two U.S. presidential elections on record, with 21 million more people voting than in the 2016 general election. The number of Latino, Asian-American, and Black voters also grew notably between the two presidential elections, and voters of color were a substantial share of those casting a ballot in 2020 and a major factor in the election's outcomes.

However, the increases in turnout in 2020 did not occur at the same rate across racial and ethnic groups and in most cases did not mitigate inequities in representation. Significant long-standing disparities persisted in the eligible voter turnout rates (percent of adult citizens voting) between the white, non-Latino population and communities of color in the U.S. Latinos, Asian-Americans, and Blacks continued to be underrepresented in the nation's voting electorate compared to their shares of the U.S. eligible voter population; combined, these three groups comprised 22.5% of voters casting a ballot in the 2020 general election, but nearly 30% of those eligible to vote (adult citizens).

Greater and more sustained non-partisan investments (from governmental, philanthropic and community sources) to register and reach out to Latino, Asian-American, and Black potential voters can result in substantially more voters of color having a voice in U.S. elections. More than fifteen million Latino, five million Asian-American, and thirteen million Black eligible voters did not vote in the 2020 presidential election. These potential voters of color represent a wide array of experiences, viewpoints, and interests. Mobilizing these groups and reducing turnout disparities with white voters and the general electorate would likely have large impacts on many local and national election outcomes, including in presidential and congressional battleground states, and would help generate a government selected by an electorate more representative of the overall population.

With growing population numbers, voters of color are positioned to have a larger say in future elections under current (or higher) rates of voter turnout. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2045, Latinos will be almost a quarter of the total U.S. population (up from 18.7% in 2020), Asian Americans over 8% (up from 6.1% in 2020), and the Black population over 14% (up from 12.1% in 2020).[2]

Looking forward to the 2024 presidential election and beyond, it is critical to identify opportunities to register and turn out voters of color in order to see a more equitable and robust U.S. democracy. This report is the first in a series presenting findings from our analysis. It provides an up-to-date profile of the Latino, Black, and Asian-American voting power in the U.S. by examining the following four topics:

1. The Changing U.S. demographic landscape
2. Voter Turnout rates in recent elections
3. The voter representation gap
4. Opportunities for voter mobilization by state

Future reports in this series will include an analysis of the impact and opportunity of the Latino, Black, and Asian-American vote in 2024 swing states and competitive congressional districts.

Methodology

For this report, CID used voter files and publicly available eligible voter estimates. National aggregated voter files for 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022 general elections were provided by Catalist. Citizen voting-age population (CVAP) estimates, commonly used as a measure of the eligible voter population, were sourced from the American Community Survey Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) Special Tabulation, 5-year 2012-2016, 5-year 2014-2018, 5-year 2016-2020, and 5-year 2018-2022 estimates. For Asian-American CVAP, Asian alone estimates and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander estimates were combined. We utilize the available five-year estimates (versus one year-estimates) due to their greater stability for Latino, Black and Asian Americans across smaller population states, as well as their comparability across national, state, and sub-state geographic levels. Population counts were sourced from the 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census. U.S. population projections were sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 National Population Projection Tables.

Voter turnout of the citizen voting-age population is calculated using American Community Survey Special Tabulation data and CID analysis of Catalist registration and voting records. Catalist is a political data vendor that sells detailed registration and microtargeting data to campaigns. It collects voter registration data from all states, cleans the data, and makes the records uniform across geographies. It appends hundreds of variables to each voter record. The commonly applied research method to identify a voter's race and ethnicity from state voter records uses a combination of the registrant's name (surname analysis) and neighborhood characteristics (geocoding with census tract or census block data) to infer a voter's race and ethnicity based on population distributions. These methods are reliable in identifying Asian Americans, Latinos and, to a lesser extent, Black populations. Racial and ethnic identification for smaller population sizes in some states remains challenging. For our national analysis, we utilize the same data source for voter files across states and over multiple election cycles for methodological consistency. Due to the limited reliability of available research methods in identifying race and ethnicity in voter files, this report is restricted to examining Latino, Black, and Asian-American (as a pan-ethnic identity) voters.

We note here that this report does not utilize voter data published by the Current Population Survey (CPS) Voting and Registration Supplement, a national survey conducted to produce data on voter characteristics, voter trends, and turnout rates over time and across all fifty U.S. states. CPS data is the most commonly utilized estimate of voter turnout in the U.S. aside from official state voter files that largely do not provide demographic identification. However, CPS data can be problematic for research purposes because of the overreporting and occasional underreporting of self-reported turnout by some respondents. CPS survey non-response rates also vary by voter demographic group. Examinations of CPS data have found that these issues often produce unreliable state turnout rates, especially for voters of color.[3]

For a detail discussion of the appropriateness of using Catalist data for a subgroup examination of turnout disparities, as well as a comparison with Current Population Survey voter data see; The Turnout Gap: Race, Ethnicity, and Political Inequality in a Diversifying America by Dr. Bernard Fraga (Emory University).[4]

> Limited demographic information in county and state voter files hinders progress to improve the election experience for all voters. We encourage elections officials, policymakers, and stakeholders to discuss legal and reliable ways to gather more complete demographic data in states during and after the voter registration process.

U.S. Demographic Change

Section Highlights

- While the total U.S. population grew 7.4% between the 2010 and 2020 decennial census counts, the white, non-Latino population decreased by over two percent. During the same period, the Asian-American population grew over 35%, the Latino population grew by 23%, and the Black population grew by 6%.
- The U.S. Census projects that by 2045, Latinos will comprise nearly a quarter of the total population and Asian Americans will comprise 8.5%, while white, non-Latinos will drop to 50% of the population. The Black population has a more moderate growth projection, with their share of the population expected to rise to 14.3% by 2045.
- Between 2010 and 2020, the Asian-American eligible voter population increased by nearly 40%, and the Latino eligible voter population increased over 50%. The Black eligible voter population also saw notable, though smaller, growth of 14.5%. In contrast, the white, non-Latino eligible voter population increased by less than 3%.

U.S. Population Growth

The release of the 2020 U.S. decennial Census population data confirmed, again, that America's demographic landscape is changing. Between 2010 and 2020, people of color saw notable growth in their total population numbers that outpaced that of white, non-Latinos. Population growth projections suggest that these trends will continue, further increasing the political influence of communities of color throughout the country.

As the nation's population grows, the racial and ethnic makeup of the country continues to diversify. Between the 2010 and 2020 Decennial Censuses, the total U.S. population grew by 7.4%, but the growth rate varied across racial and ethnic groups. While the white, non-Latino population decreased, populations of color increased. Specifically, the white, non-Latino population decreased by over two percent between 2010 and 2020, while the Asian-American population grew over 35%, the Latino population grew by 23%, and the Black population grew by 6% (Table 1).

Table 1: Total U.S. Population Percent Growth: 2010 to 2020			
	2010 Population	**2020 Population**	**Percent Change**
Asian American	14,946,700	20,240,737	+35.4%
Black	37,685,848	39,940,338	+6.0%
Latino	50,477,594	62,080,044	+23.0%
White, Non-Latino	196,817,552	191,697,647	-2.6%
Total Population	308,745,538	331,449,281	+7.4%

Data Source: 2010 U.S. Census, 2020 U.S. Census

As a result of population shifts among different racial and ethnic groups, people of color are comprising an increasing share of the population, further diversifying the nation. Between 2010 and 2020, the share of the population that is Latino (2.4 percentage point increase) and Asian American (1.3 percentage point increase) grew, while the share of the population that is Black (0.1 percentage point decrease) and white, non-Latino (5.9 percentage point decrease) declined (Table 2).

Table 2: Total U.S. Population Percent Growth: 2010 to 2020					
	2010		2020		
	Total Population	**Share of Population**	**Total Population**	**Share of Population**	**Percentage Point Change**
Asian American	14,946,700	4.8%	20,240,737	6.1%	+1.3
Black	37,685,848	12.2%	39,940,338	12.1%	-0.1
Latino	50,477,594	16.3%	62,080,044	18.7%	+2.4
White, Non-Latino	196,817,552	63.7%	191,697,647	57.8%	-5.9
Total Population	308,745,538	-	331,449,281	-	-

Data Source: 2010 U.S. Census, 2020 U.S. Census

According to the U.S. Census, these upward trends are expected to continue for Asian-American and Latino populations over the coming decades, while the Black population is expected to begin to increase their share of the total population and the white, non-Latino population share is expected to decline (Figure 1).[5] Projections show that by 2045, Latinos will likely comprise nearly a quarter of the total population and Asian Americans 8.5%, while white, non-Latinos will drop to 50% of the population. The Black population has a more moderate growth projection with their share of the population expected to rise to 14.3% by 2045.

FIGURE 1

Share of U.S. Projected Total Population 2025 -2045

Data Source: U.S. Census 2023 National Population Projection
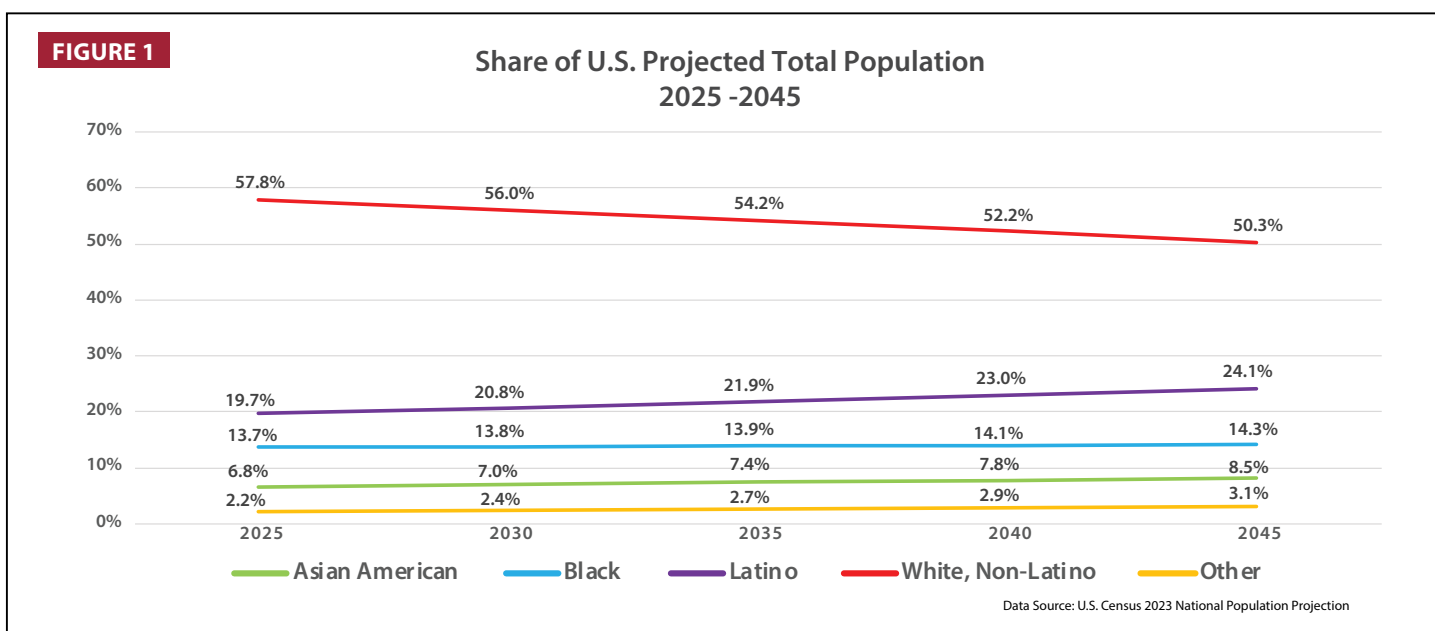
Citizen Voting-Age Population Change: 2010 to 2020

In addition to overall population increases, the growth in the Latino, Asian-American, and Black populations eligible to vote (adult citizens) in the U.S. also outpaced that of white, non-Latinos between 2010 and 2020. Between census years, the Asian-American eligible voter population increased by nearly 39%, and the Latino eligible voter share increased over 50% (Table 3). The Black eligible voter population also saw notable, though smaller, growth of 14.5%. In contrast, the white, non-Latino eligible voter population increased by less than 3%.

Table 3: U.S. Total Eligible Voter Population Growth: 2010 to 2020			
	2010 Eligible Voter Population	**2020 Eligible Voter Population**	**Percent Change**
Asian American	7,610,140	10,561,825	+38.8%
Black	25,437,215	29,128,205	+14.5%
Latino	19,778,965	29,875,190	+51.0%
White, Non-Latino	153,406,065	157,837,455	+2.9%
Total Population	210,235,180	233,440,760	+11.0%

Data Source: ACS 2006 to 2010, 5-year estimates, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates

Eligible voters of color also increased their share of the eligible voter population between 2010 and 2020, while the share of eligible voters who are white, non-Latinos notably dropped (Table 4). Latinos' share of the eligible voter population increased by 3.4 percentage points, while Asian American and Black eligible voters had more modest growth (0.9 and 0.4 percentage points, respectively). In comparison, the white, non-Latino share of the eligible voter population decreased by more than five percentage points.

Table 4: Share of U.S. Eligible Voter Population by Race and Ethnicity: 2010 to 2020					
	2010		**2020**		
	Eligible Voter Population	**Share of Eligible Voter Population**	**Eligible Voter Population**	**Share of Eligible Voter Population**	**Percentage Point Change**
Asian American	7,610,140	3.6%	10,561,825	4.5%	+0.9%
Black	25,437,215	12.1%	29,128,205	12.5%	+0.4%
Latino	19,778,965	9.4%	29,875,190	12.8%	+3.4%
White, Non-Latino	153,406,065	73.0%	157,837,455	67.6%	-5.4%
Total Population	210,235,180	-	233,440,760	-	-

Data Source: ACS 2006 to 2010, 5-year estimates, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates

For the purpose of this report, we use citizen voting-age population (CVAP) data from the American Community Survey 5-year estimates for the measure of the U.S. eligible voter population. We note that there are segments of the adult population that have been disenfranchised from voting due to current or past incarceration status, mental illness, and other factors. Consistent data sources are not available across states and over time to account for these populations when calculating those eligible to vote in the U.S.

Growth in Eligible Voters: 2016 to 2022 General Elections

Turning to recent elections examined throughout this report, the eligible voter population among communities of color has also been increasing between cycles. Between the 2016 and 2020 general elections, the Asian-American eligible population increased more than three times the rate of the general population, while the Latino eligible voter population increased more than four times the rate of all eligible voters (Table 5). Additionally, Black eligible voters grew at a slightly higher rate (4.4%) than the general population. In contrast, the white, non-Latino eligible voter population in the U.S. increased by less than one percent.

Similar growth trends in eligible voter populations were also seen between the 2018 and 2022 midterm elections.

Note: For the growth of the citizen voting-age population by race/ethnicity and state, see online appendix.

Table 5: U.S. Eligible Voter Population Growth: 2016 to 2022 General Elections					
	Asian American	**Black**	**Latino**	**White, Non-Latino**	**General Population**
2016 to 2020 Presidential Elections	13.2%	4.4%	17.1%	0.7%	3.9%
2018 to 2022 Midterm Elections	13.0%	3.3%	16.3%	0.7%	4.0%

Data Source: ACS 2012 to 2016, 5-year estimates, ACS 2014 to 2018 5-year estimates, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates

Voter Turnout Rates: 2020 and 2022 General Elections

Section Highlights
- Historic turnout disparities by race and ethnicity continued in the 2020 election, with Asian-American, Black, and Latino turnout below that of white, non-Latino voters and the general population.
- In the 2020 general election, however, Asian Americans saw a narrowing of their turnout gap with whites. The gap between Latino turnout and white, non-Latino turnout slightly widened from 25.2 percentage points in 2016 to 27.0 percentage points in 2020, while the Black turnout gap widened to twenty percentage points from seventeen percentage points.

Voting in the U.S. is a two-step process in which eligible voters must first register to vote and then cast a ballot in an election. While the registered voter population saw notable increase, in both the presidential and midterm election cycles, turnout continues to be lower among people color compared to both the general population and white, non-Latinos, continuing a historic trend.

As the U.S. eligible voter population continues to grow and diversify, the potential electoral influence of Asian-American, Latino, and Black populations will only increase. However, if historic turnout gaps continue, the diverse voices of these groups will not be equally represented in U.S. elections.

Growth in Voter Registration
The 2020 presidential election drew historically high rates of voter registration numbers and voter turnout. While the eligible voter population increased for all racial and ethnic groups between the 2016 and 2020 general elections, the number of registered voters and actual voters increased even more (Table 6). Asian Americans, for example, saw the largest increase of registered voters (30.7%) and actual voters (47.2%) between the two presidential elections. Black registered voters increased by 10.2%, nearly twice the growth seen in Black eligible voters, while Latino registered voters increased by more than 25% and Latino voters increased 31% compared to their 17.3% growth in eligible voters.

U.S. Voting Rights Act of 1965
The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is considered to be one of the most sweeping pieces of civil rights legislation in U.S. history. It prohibited racial discrimination in voting and aimed to ensure the right to vote for racial minorities in the U.S. under the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments. The Act contained several provisions for elections: it outlawed voting restrictions based on race or language, banned literacy tests, and effectively barred poll taxes. It also required certain jurisdictions with histories of voting discrimination to have any change in voting rules approved by the U.S. attorney general or U.S. District court in D.C before it could be implemented. However, the U.S. Supreme Court's 2013 decision in Shelby County v. Holder made this preclearance coverage formula void. Since its implementation, the Voting Rights Act has helped increase voter turnout and registration in the U.S. and California, especially among Black communities and other communities of color.

Table 6: Registered Voter and Voting Population Growth: 2016 to 2022 General Elections						
		Asian American	Black	Latino	White, Non-Latino	General Population
2016 to 2020 Presidential Elections	Registered Voter Population	30.7%	10.2%	25.8%	5.3%	9.0%
	Voter Population	47.2%	13.5%	31.0%	10.8%	14.3%
2018 to 2022 Midterm Elections	Registered Voter Population	31.4%	12.6%	25.8%	11.3%	13.8%
	Voter Population	4.4%	-15.5%	-10.7%	2.8%	-0.1%

Data Source: Catalist

Voter registration also grew markedly between the 2018 and 2022 midterm elections, but did not precede a similar growth in actual voters. While the Asian-American voter population increased by 4.4% between midterm elections, the Black and Latino voter population decreased by 10.7% and 15.5%, respectively. Historically, however, people of color have had lower registration rates than both the general population and the white, non-Latino population due to oppressive de facto and de jure barriers these groups have faced in accessing their constitutional right to vote.[6]
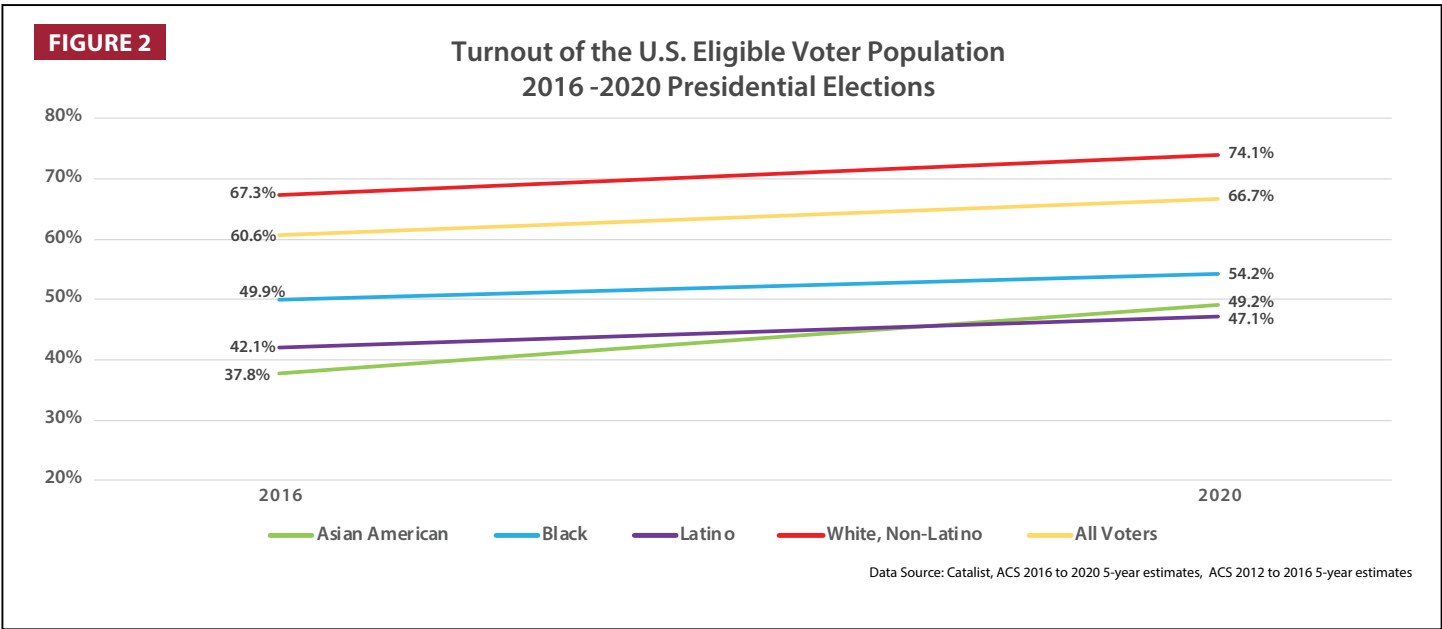
Eligible Voter Turnout Disparities Continue

Historic turnout disparities by race and ethnicity continued in the 2020 election, with Asian-American, Black, and Latino turnout below that of white, non-Latino voters and the general population.[7] While the Asian-American turnout gap narrowed between presidential elections, Black and Latino turnout gaps widened. In contrast, participation declined between the 2018 and 2022 midterm elections, with Black and Latino turnout notably dropping compared to white, non-Latino and Asian-American voters.

The historic registration rates described in the previous section are an important contributor to these eligible voter turnout gaps. Registration remains a significant barrier to voting in the U.S. that disproportionately affects voters of color. While registration has increased in recent years, that hasn't translated to an equal increase in votes cast by people of color. See page 14 for an analysis of registered voter turnout rates versus eligible turnout.

All racial and ethnic groups examined experienced growth in eligible voter turnout in the 2020 general election compared to the 2016 general election (Figure 2). Despite this growth large turnout gaps between voters of color and white, non-Latino voters persisted. The outcomes were the best for Asian Americans, who saw a narrowing of their turnout gap with whites in the 2020 general election. Asian-American turnout increased from 37.8% in the 2016 general election (a 29.5 percentage point gap from white, non-Latino turnout) to 49.2% in 2020 (a 24.9 percentage point gap).

Voting in the U.S. and California is a two-step process. Eligible residents must first register to vote before they are able to exercise their voice at the ballot box. However, disparities in California registration rates (the percent of adult citizens who are registered to vote), although smaller since the time of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, are still significant across racial and ethnic groups. Due to the significant disparities present in registration rates by race and ethnicity in California, we examine turnout as a percentage of the eligible voter population, not as a percentage of the registered voter population.

FIGURE 2

**Turnout of the U.S. Eligible Voter Population
2016 -2020 Presidential Elections**

Figure 2. Turnout of the U.S. Eligible Voter Population 2016-2020 Presidential Elections. Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

Other voting groups of color, however, did not experience the same narrowing of the turnout gap experienced by Asian Americans. The gap between Latino turnout and white, non-Latino turnout slightly widened, with a turnout gap of 25.2 percentage points (42.1% versus 67.3%, respectively) in the 2016 general election and 27.0 percentage points (47.1% versus 74.1%, respectively) in the 2020 general election.

The gap between Black voter turnout and white, non-Latino turnout increased to nearly twenty percentage points (54.2% versus 74.1%, respectively) in 2020 compared to a little over seventeen percentage points (59.9% versus 67.3%, respectively) in 2016.

In contrast to the turnout gains between presidential elections, turnout among voters of color declined between the 2018 and 2022 midterm elections. Latinos saw the largest decline, from 31% in 2018 to 23.8% in 2022. This widened the gap between Latino turnout and white, non-Latino turnout from 23 percentage points to over 31 percentage points (Figure 3). The Black and white, non-Latino turnout gap also widened between midterm elections, increasing from 14.7 percentage points in 2018 to nearly 23 percentage points in 2022. The Asian-American turnout remained similar (29.5% versus 27.2%), and the turnout gap with white, non-Latinos only slightly widened from 24.6 to 27.9 percentage points.

FIGURE 3

**Turnout of the U.S. Eligible Voter Population
2018 -2022 Midterm Elections**

Figure 3. Turnout of the U.S. Eligible Voter Population 2018-2022 Midterm Elections. Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2014 to 2018 5-year estimates, ACS 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates*
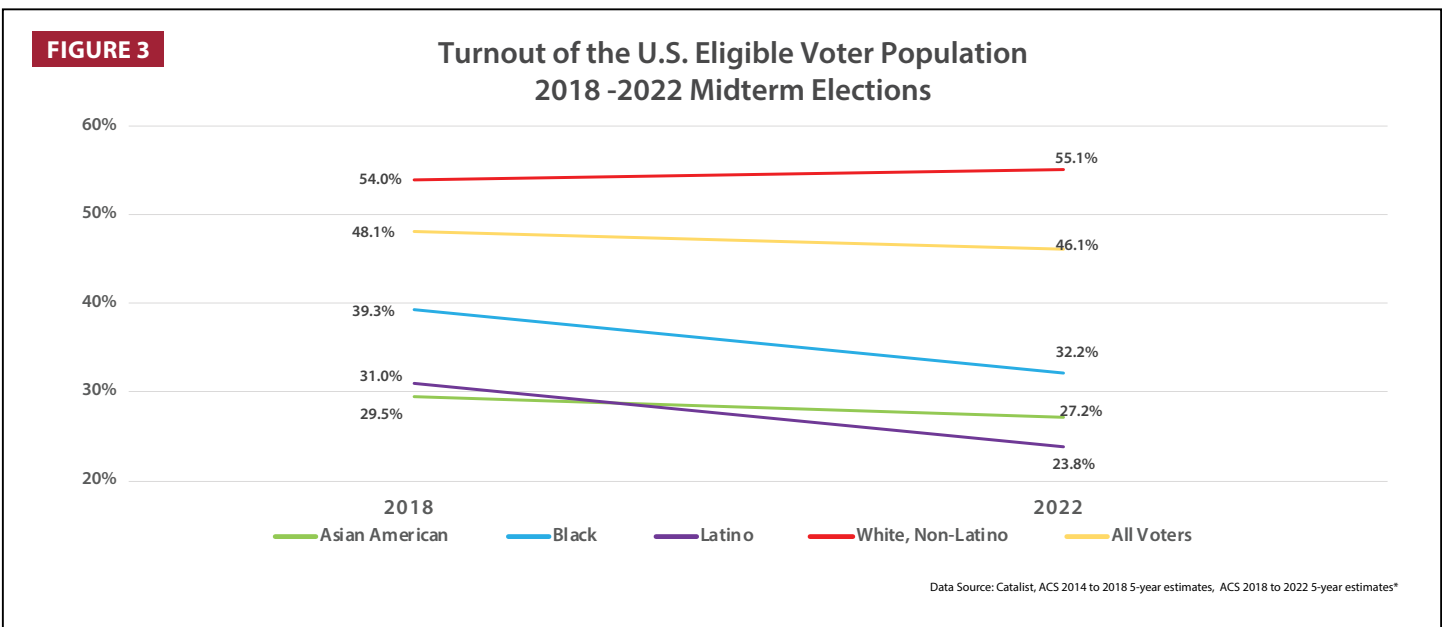
Comparison: Eligible Voter Turnout and Registered Voter Turnout

In the 2020 presidential election, turnout gaps as a share of all registered voters were less pronounced than the gaps as a share of all eligible voters. As shown in Figure 4, the turnout as a share of registered voters is more similar across racial and ethnic categories than the turnout as a share of eligible voters. Looking at registered voters specifically, the turnout gap ranged from 4.8 percentage points (between Asian-Americans at 71.0% and white, non-Latinos at 75.8%) to 14.5 percentage points (between Black voters at 61.3% and white, 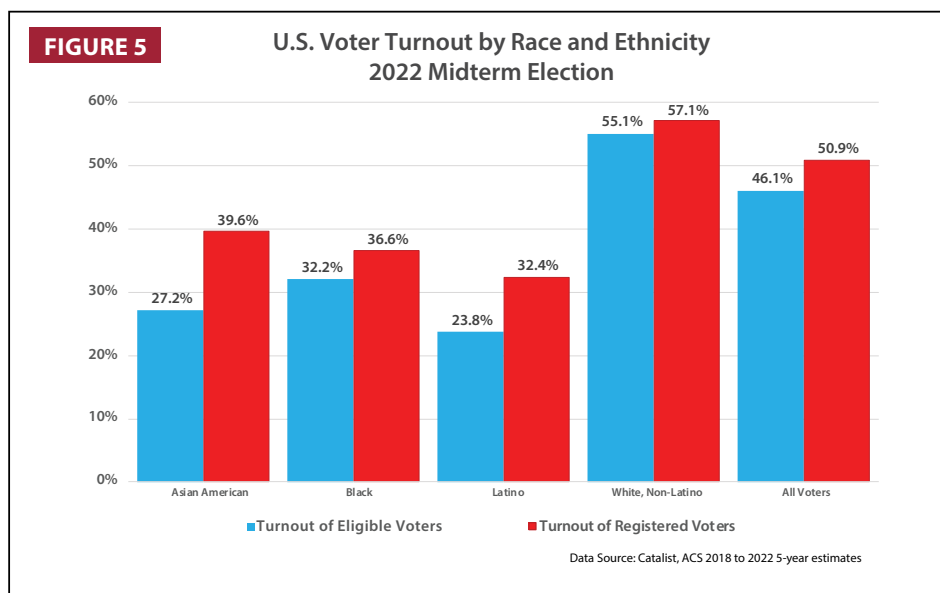non-Latino voters at 75.8%). In contrast, the turnout gaps among eligible voters were larger, ranging from 19.9 percentage points (between Black voters at 54.2% and white, non-Latinos at 74.1%) to 27.0 percentage points (between Latinos at 47.1% and white, non-Latinos at 74.1%).

Despite registered voters turning out to vote more consistently than the eligible voter population, many registered voters are not casting a ballot. Nationally, over 2 million registered Asian-American voters, almost 10 million registered Black voters, and over 8 million registered Latino voters did not vote in the 2020 general election.

FIGURE 4 — U.S. Voter Turnout by Race and Ethnicity 2020 Presidential Election

	Asian American	Black	Latino	White, Non-Latino	All Voters
Turnout of Eligible Voters	49.2%	54.2%	47.1%	74.1%	66.7%
Turnout of Registered Voters	71.0%	61.3%	62.7%	75.8%	72.3%

Data Source: Catalyst, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates
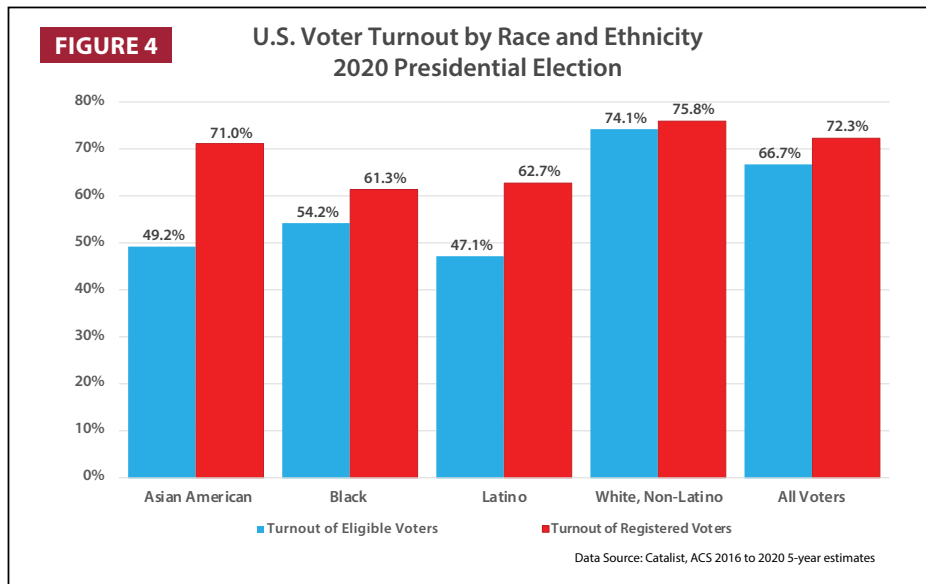
Similar trends occurred in the 2022 midterm election, with registered voter turnout gaps between voters of color and white, non-Latinos being smaller than the gaps among eligible voters (Figure 5). The registered voter turnout gaps were, however, larger than those in the 2020 presidential election.

FIGURE 5 — U.S. Voter Turnout by Race and Ethnicity 2022 Midterm Election

	Asian American	Black	Latino	White, Non-Latino	All Voters
Turnout of Eligible Voters	27.2%	32.2%	23.8%	55.1%	46.1%
Turnout of Registered Voters	39.6%	36.6%	32.4%	57.1%	50.9%

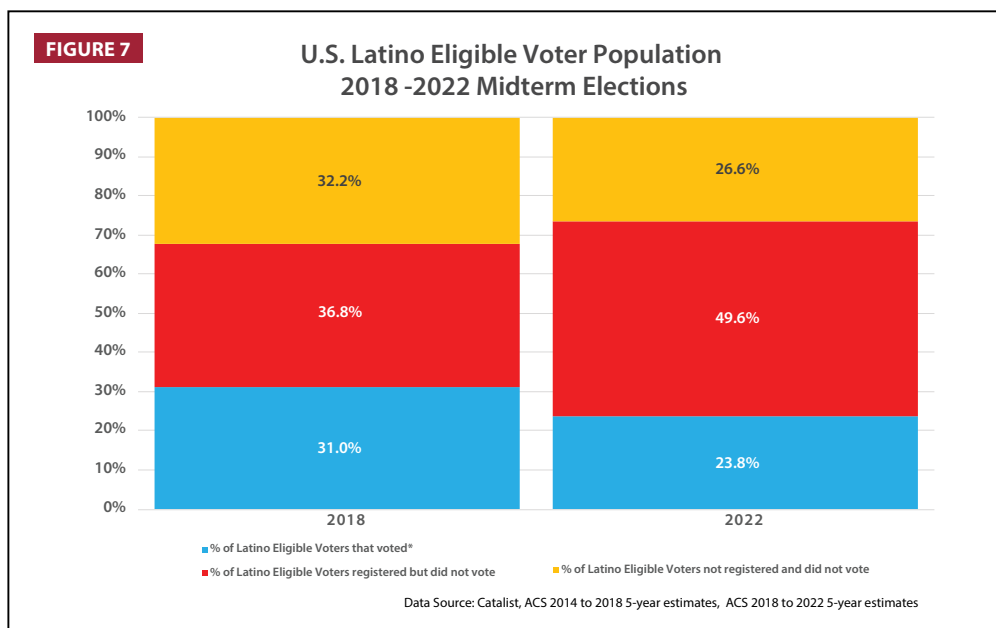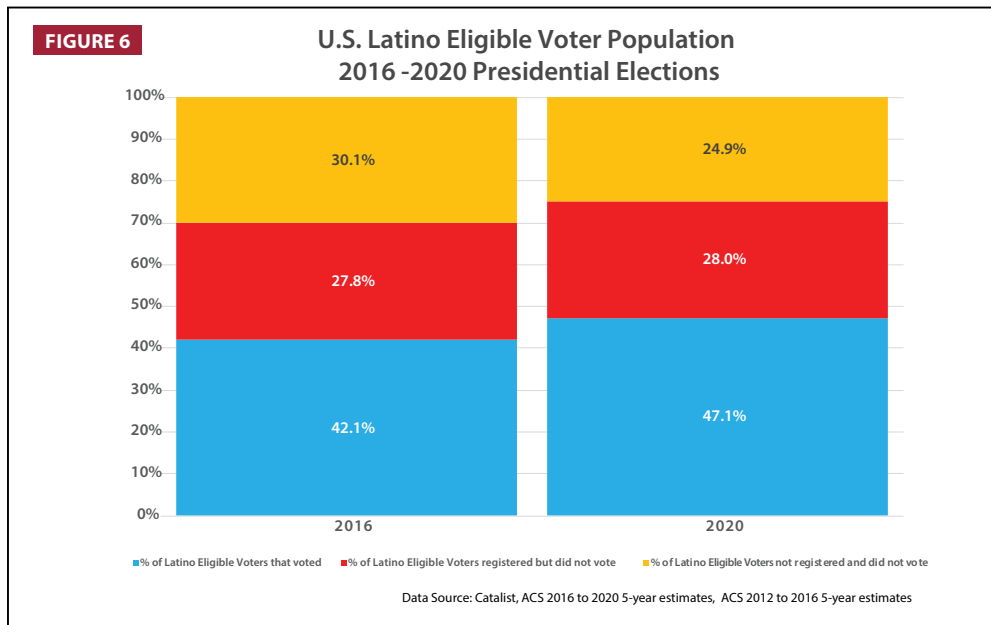Data Source: Catalyst, ACS 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates

Latino Participation

Voter registration among Latinos has increased in recent years, although this has not always resulted in increased voting. Between presidential elections, the share of Latino eligible voters who were registered to vote increased from around 70% in 2016 to nearly 75% in 2020, however still nearly one-quarter of Latino eligible voters were not registered to vote (Figure 6). As registration rates increased, so did the percentage of Latino registered voters who cast a ballot in the 2020 general, increasing from 42.1% in 2016 to 47.1% in 2020.

While the Latino registration rate also grew between midterm elections, the share of Latino eligible voters who cast a ballot decreased from 2018 to 2022.

We note here that there is variation across states in the type of available registration options.

FIGURE 6

U.S. Latino Eligible Voter Population
2016 -2020 Presidential Elections

	2016	2020
% not registered and did not vote	30.1%	24.9%
% registered but did not vote	27.8%	28.0%
% that voted	42.1%	47.1%

% of Latino Eligible Voters that voted   % of Latino Eligible Voters registered but did not vote   % of Latino Eligible Voters not registered and did not vote

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

FIGURE 7

U.S. Latino Eligible Voter Population
2018 -2022 Midterm Elections

	2018	2022
% not registered and did not vote	32.2%	26.6%
% registered but did not vote	36.8%	49.6%
% that voted*	31.0%	23.8%

% of Latino Eligible Voters that voted*
% of Latino Eligible Voters registered but did not vote   % of Latino Eligible Voters not registered and did not vote

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2014 to 2018 5-year estimates, ACS 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates

Asian-American Participation

Asian-American participation in recent years has followed similar trends to those for Latino participation. The percent of Asian-American eligible voters who were registered to vote increased substantially from 60.0% in the 2016 general election to 69.3% in the 2020 general election (Figure 8). Asian-American eligible turnout also increased from 37.8% in 2016 to nearly 50% in 2020. Additionally, the percent of Asian-American registered voters who did not cast a ballot decreased more than two percentage points in the 2020 general election from the 2016 general election.
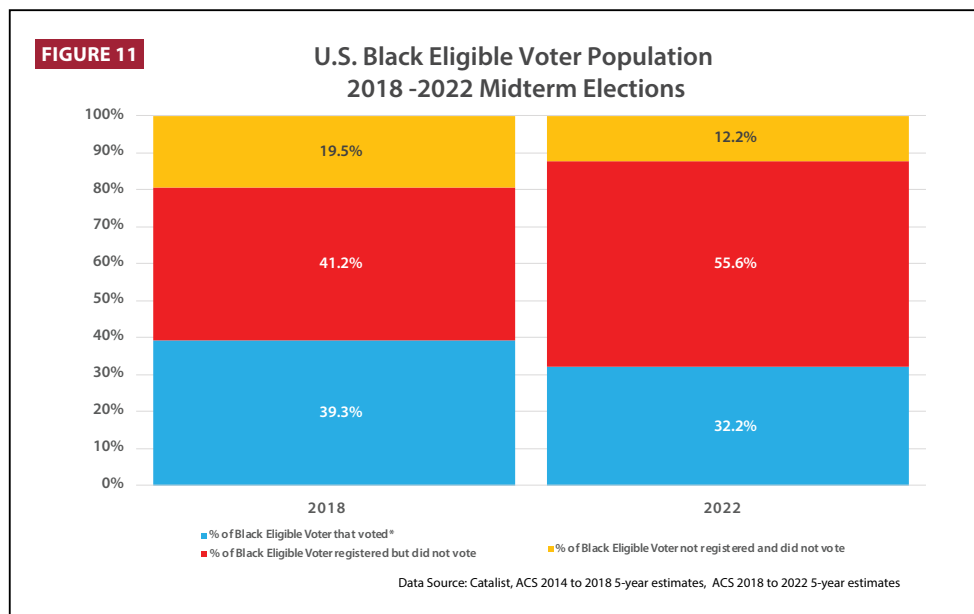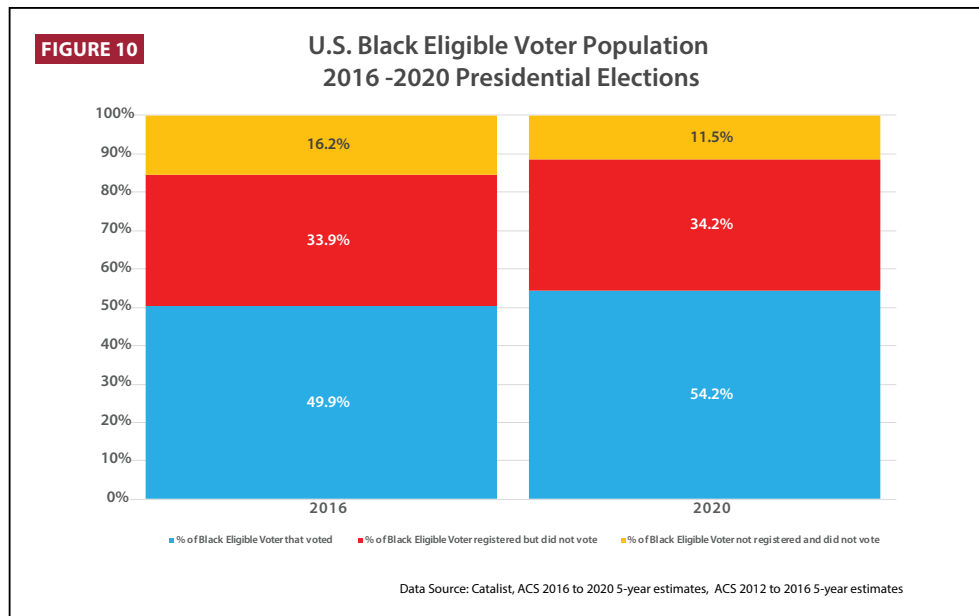
Between midterm elections, Asian-American registration rates rose in the same way that they rose between presidential elections. Those who cast a ballot, however, slightly decreased in 2022 compared to 2018.

FIGURE 8

**U.S. Asian-American Eligible Voter Population
2016 -2020 Presidential Elections**

2016: 37.8% (voted), 22.2% (registered but did not vote), 40.0% (not registered and did not vote)
2020: 49.2% (voted), 20.1% (registered but did not vote), 30.7% (not registered and did not vote)

■ % of Asian-American Eligible Voters that voted   ■ % of Asian-American Eligible Voters not registered and did not vote
■ % of Asian-American Eligible Voters registered but did not vote

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

FIGURE 9

**U.S. Asian-American Eligible Voter Population
2018 -2022 Midterm Elections**

2018: 29.5% (voted), 29.6% (registered but did not vote), 40.9% (not registered and did not vote)
2022: 27.2% (voted), 41.5% (registered but did not vote), 31.3% (not registered and did not vote)

■ % of Asian-American Eligible Voter that voted*
■ % of Asian-American Eligible Voter registered but did not vote   ■ % of Asian-American Eligible Voter not registered and did not vote

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2014 to 2018 5-year estimates, ACS 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates

Black Participation

Black registration rates, too, increased in recent years while eligible voter turnout varied. The share of Black eligible voters who were not registered declined from 16.2% in 2016 to 11.5% in 2020 (Figure 10). In this case, the increase in registration was reflected in votes cast, with the share of Black eligible voters casting a ballot increasing from 49.9% in 2016 to 54.2% in 2020 and the share of those who were registered but who did not vote remaining around 34%.

Between midterm elections, however, the share of Black eligible voters casting a ballot decreased as registration rose. Nearly 40% of Black eligible voters cast a ballot in the 2018 midterm election, which decreased to 32.2% in 2022. Instead, the share of Black eligible voters who were registered but did not vote increased by nearly fifteen percentage points.

FIGURE 10

**U.S. Black Eligible Voter Population
2016 -2020 Presidential Elections**

	2016	2020
% of Black Eligible Voter not registered and did not vote	16.2%	11.5%
% of Black Eligible Voter registered but did not vote	33.9%	34.2%
% of Black Eligible Voter that voted	49.9%	54.2%

Legend: ■ % of Black Eligible Voter that voted ■ % of Black Eligible Voter registered but did not vote ■ % of Black Eligible Voter not registered and did not vote

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

FIGURE 11

**U.S. Black Eligible Voter Population
2018 -2022 Midterm Elections**

	2018	2022
% of Black Eligible Voter not registered and did not vote	19.5%	12.2%
% of Black Eligible Voter registered but did not vote	41.2%	55.6%
% of Black Eligible Voter that voted*	39.3%	32.2%

Legend: ■ % of Black Eligible Voter that voted* ■ % of Black Eligible Voter registered but did not vote ■ % of Black Eligible Voter not registered and did not vote

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2014 to 2018 5-year estimates, ACS 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates

Latino Eligible Voter Turnout by State

Latino turnout rates showed large variations across states in the 2020 presidential and 2022 midterm elections. In the 2020 presidential election, for example, Latino eligible voter turnout ranged from 10.5% in Mississippi to 58.5% in Florida (Figure 12). In general, states with the largest Latino turnout were those where large proportions of the total eligible voter population were also Latino. For example, the three states with the largest Latino turnout rates in 2020 (Florida, New Jersey, and California) also had large proportions of their eligible voter population that is Latino. Over 20% of Florida's eligible voters were Latino and 58.5% of them voted in 2020. Latinos represented over 15% of New Jersey's eligible voter population and the Latino turnout rate was 55.6%. Nearly one-third of eligible voters in California were Latino in 2020 and 55.3% of them cast a ballot. In contrast, states with the lowest Latino turnout rates were those with small proportions of their eligible voter population that were Latino. Under 2% of Mississippi's eligible voters were Latino in 2020 and just 10.5% of them voted in the presidential election. Similarly, 2.4% of South Dakota's eligible voter population was Latino and their turnout rate was 17.4%.

The total number of Latino eligible voters who did not cast a ballot in the 2020 presidential election surpassed 15.5 million people. These potential voters represent a vast array of ideas and viewpoints which should be represented in elections. If mobilized, these potential Latino voters could help move elections towards being more representative.

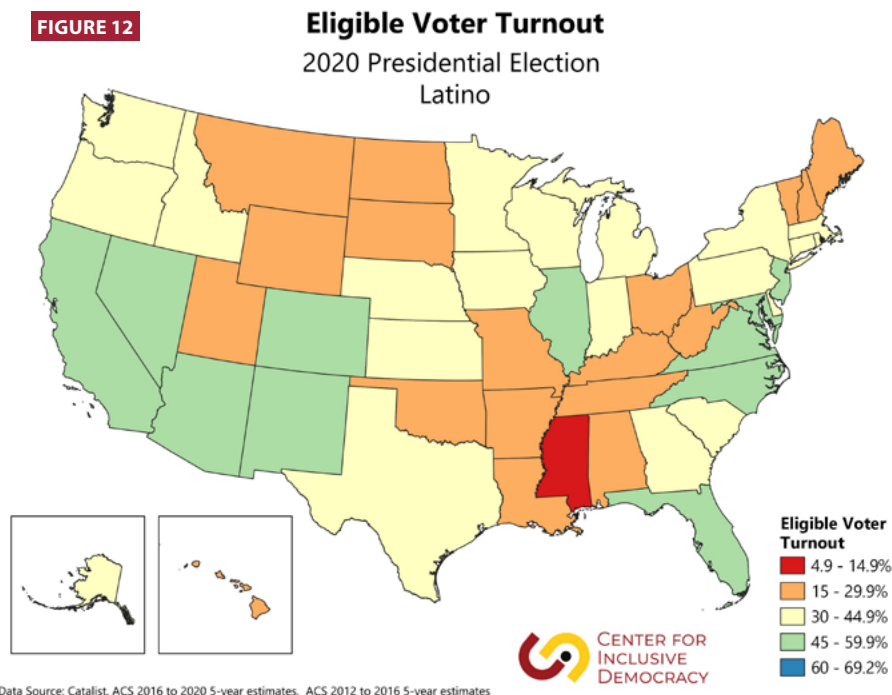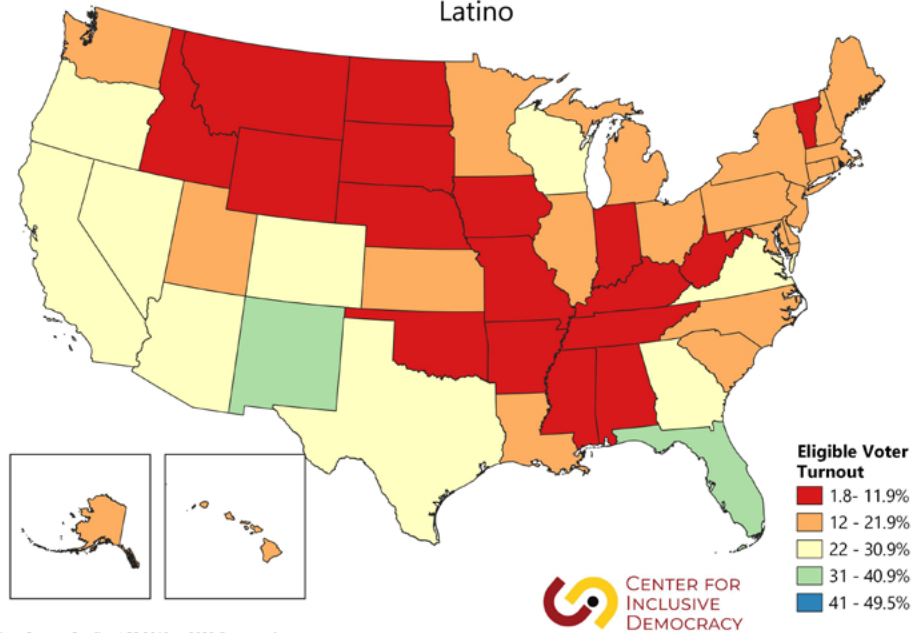Note: For share of eligible voters by race/ethnicity and state, see online appendix.

FIGURE 12

Eligible Voter Turnout
2020 Presidential Election
Latino

Eligible Voter Turnout
- 4.9 - 14.9%
- 15 - 29.9%
- 30 - 44.9%
- 45 - 59.9%
- 60 - 69.2%

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Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

FIGURE 13

Eligible Voter Turnout
2022 Midterm Election
Latino

Eligible Voter Turnout
- 1.8- 11.9%
- 12 - 21.9%
- 22 - 30.9%
- 31 - 40.9%
- 41 - 49.5%

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates

Latino turnout was lower than white, non-Latino turnout in every state in both the 2020 presidential and 2022 midterm elections and the disparity varied considerably from state to state. Figure 14 shows that in the 2020 general election, the Latino-white, non-Latino turnout disparity was largest in Montana (63.3 percentage points) and Maine (60.5%) and smallest in Florida (18.0 percentage points), California (23.2 percentage points), and Illinois (26.0 percentage points). Generally, states with low proportions of their eligible voter population that are Latino also have larger disparities than states with large Latino eligible voter populations.

Note: For share of eligible voters by race/ethnicity and state, see online appendix.

FIGURE 14

Eligible Voter Turnout Disparity
2020 Presidential Election
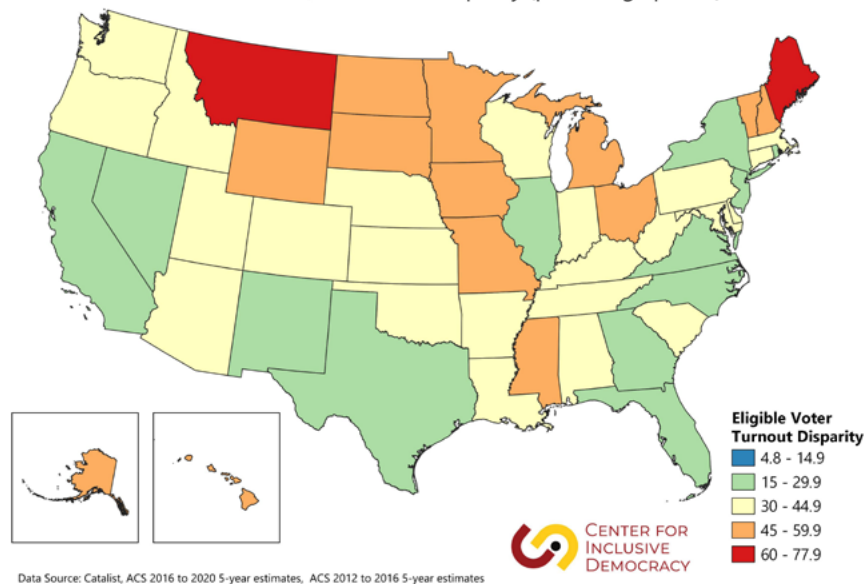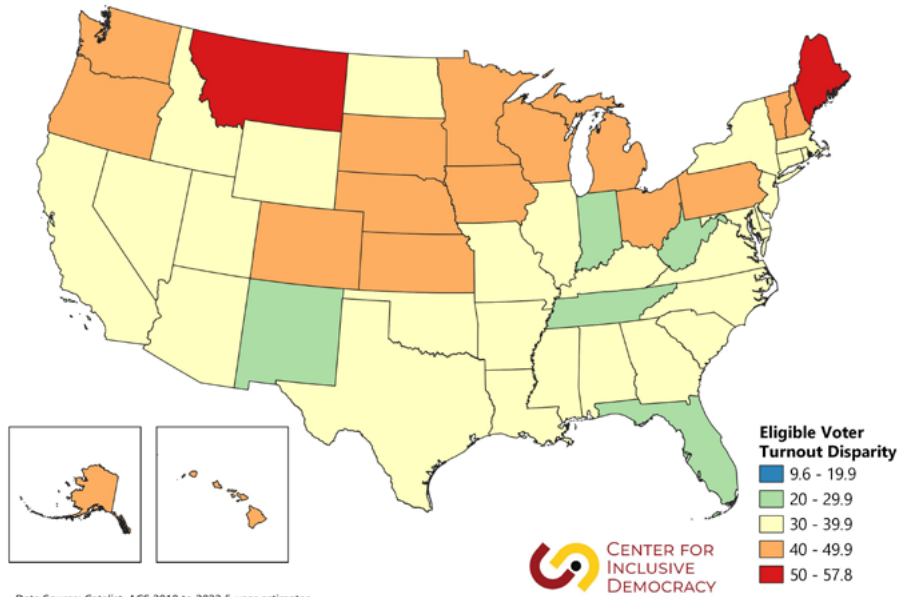Latino-White, non-Latino Disparity (percentage points)

Eligible Voter Turnout Disparity
- 4.8 - 14.9
- 15 - 29.9
- 30 - 44.9
- 45 - 59.9
- 60 - 77.9

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

FIGURE 15

Eligible Voter Turnout Disparity
2022 Midterm Election
Latino-White, non-Latino Disparity (percentage points)

Eligible Voter Turnout Disparity
- 9.6 - 19.9
- 20 - 29.9
- 30 - 39.9
- 40 - 49.9
- 50 - 57.8

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DEMOCRACY

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates
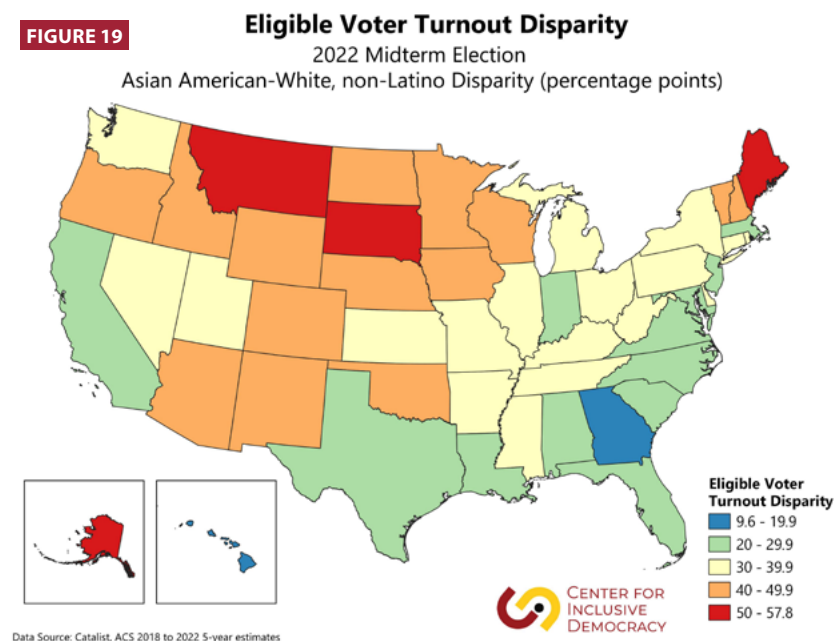
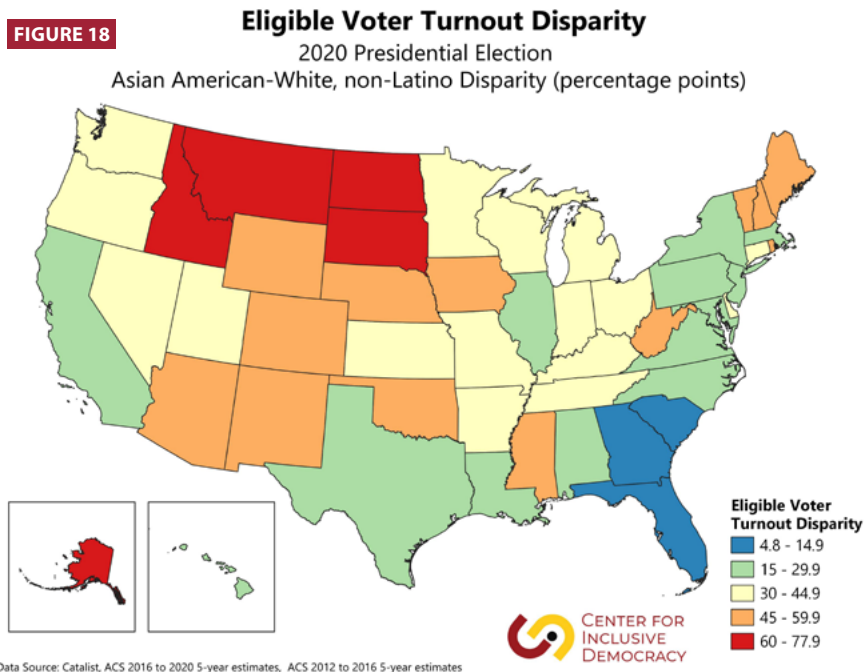## Asian-American Eligible Voter Turnout by State

In both the 2020 presidential and 2022 midterm elections, Asian-American turnout ranged widely from state to state. In the 2020 presidential election, for example, Asian-American eligible voter turnout ranged from 4.5% in Montana to 67.5% in Florida (Figure 16). States with the lowest turnout rates among Asian Americans also had low proportions of their eligible voter population who were Asian American. Of the three states with the lowest Asian American turnout rates (Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota), Asian Americans' share of the state's eligible voter population did not exceed 0.7%. In comparison, the share of eligible voter population that were Asian American in the three states with the highest Asian American turnout rates (Florida, Georgia, and Virginia) had somewhat higher Asian American eligible voter populations, ranging from 2.2% (Florida) to 5.0% (Virginia). States with the largest shares of eligible voter who were Asian American (California at 14.2% and Hawaii at 46.3%), had relatively high Asian-American eligible voter turnout (52.6% in California and 49.7% in Hawaii). Overall, over five million eligible Asian Americans did not vote in the 2020 general election.

Note: For share of eligible voters by race/ethnicity and state, see online appendix.

FIGURE 16

Eligible Voter Turnout
2020 Presidential Election
Asian American

Eligible Voter Turnout
- 4.5 - 14.9%
- 15 - 29.9%
- 30 - 44.9%
- 45 - 59.9%
- 60 - 67.6%

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

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FIGURE 17

Eligible Voter Turnout
2022 Midterm Election
Asian American

Eligible Voter Turnout
- 1.8 - 11.9%
- 12 - 21.9%
- 22 - 30.9%
- 31 - 40.9%
- 41 - 49.5%

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates

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In every state, Asian-American turnout was lower than white, non-Latino turnout in both the 2020 presidential and 2022 midterm elections. The disparity between these two turnout rates varied considerably from state to state in the 2020 presidential election, ranging from 4.8 percentage points in Georgia to 77.9 percentage points in Montana. The two states with the largest Asian-American eligible voter populations also had large turnout disparities between Asian American and white, non-Latino voters. California, a state where nearly 14% of eligible voters are Asian American, had a 25.9 percentage point turnout disparity in 2020. Hawaii, where over 46 percent of eligible voters are Asian American, had a 26.0 percentage point turnout disparity.

Note: For a detailed table of share of eligible voters by race/ethnicity and the disparity in turnout rates by state, see online appendix.

FIGURE 18

Eligible Voter Turnout Disparity
2020 Presidential Election
Asian American-White, non-Latino Disparity (percentage points)

Eligible Voter Turnout Disparity
4.8 - 14.9
15 - 29.9
30 - 44.9
45 - 59.9
60 - 77.9

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

FIGURE 19

Eligible Voter Turnout Disparity
2022 Midterm Election
Asian American-White, non-Latino Disparity (percentage points)

Eligible Voter Turnout Disparity
9.6 - 19.9
20 - 29.9
30 - 39.9
40 - 49.9
50 - 57.8

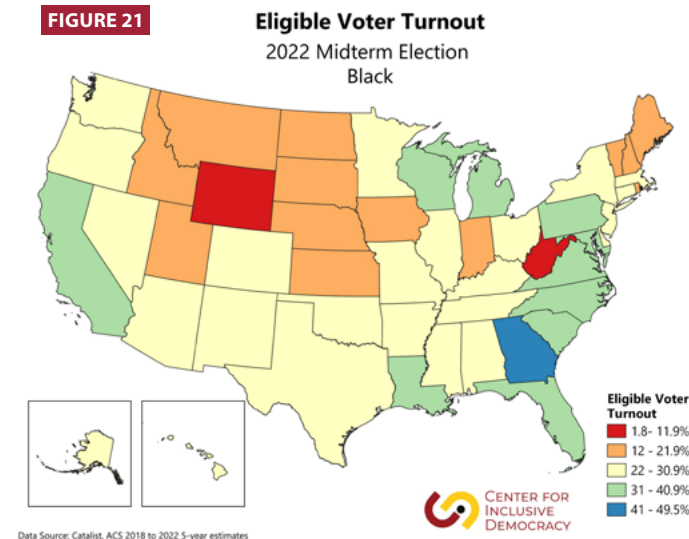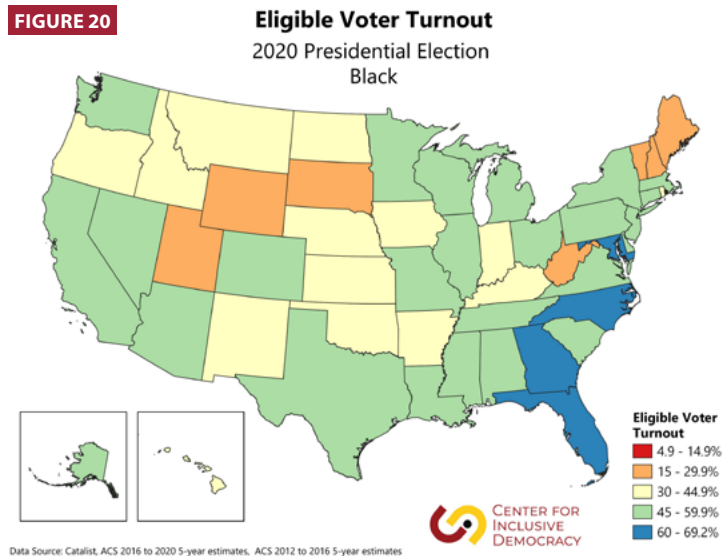Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates

Black Eligible Voter Turnout by State

There was a wide range of Black turnout rates across the U.S. in both the 2020 presidential and 2022 midterm elections, with some turnout rates being as low as one-tenth of the eligible voter population and as high as more than two-thirds of the eligible voter population (Figures 20 and 21). In the 2020 presidential election, for example, Black turnout rates ranged from 17.5% in Utah to 67.6% in North Carolina. States with the highest Black turnout rates also had relatively high percentages of their eligible voter population that were Black, while states with the lowest Black turnout rates had relatively small shares of Black eligible voters. The five states with the lowest Black turnout rates did not have a Black share of eligible voters that exceeded 3.5%, while the five states with highest Black turnout rates had eligible voter populations that were between 14.5% (Florida) and 32.1% (Georgia) Black. North Carolina, the state with the highest Black turnout rate (67.6%), had an eligible voter population that was 21.7% Black in the 2020 election. In contrast, Utah, the state with the lowest Black turnout rate (17.5%), had an eligible voter population that was 0.9% Black in the 2020 general.
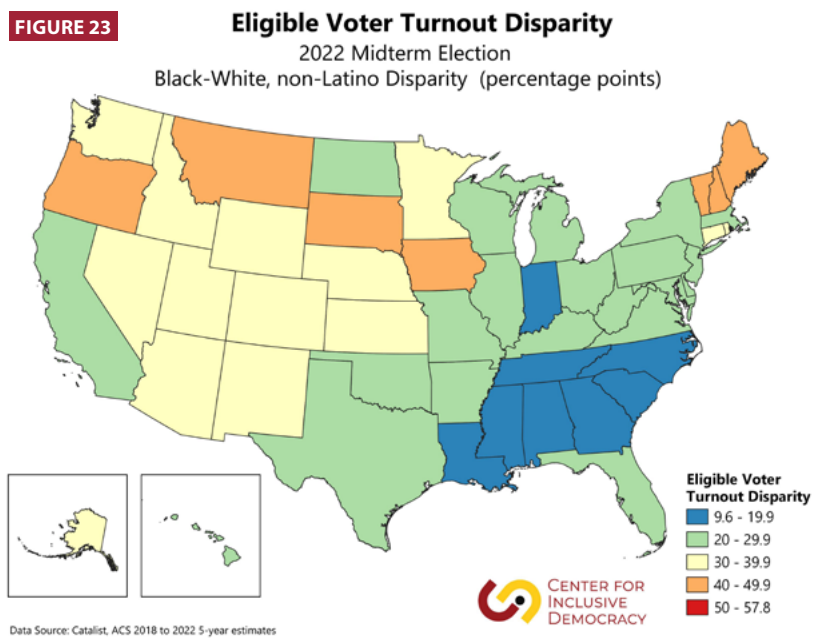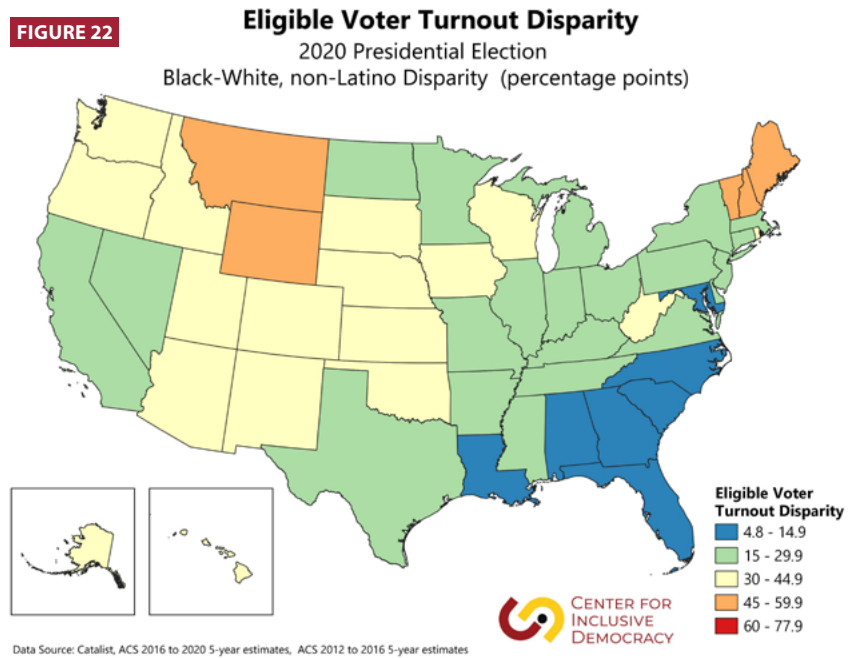
In the 2020 presidential election, over 13 million eligible Black voters did not cast a ballot. As a group of voters with a wide range of experiences and opinions, mobilizing Black eligible voters who have not participated in past elections will move our democracy to be more representative of all citizens.

Note: For a detailed table of the share of eligible voters by race/ethnicity and the disparity in turnout rates by state, see online appendix.

FIGURE 20

Eligible Voter Turnout
2020 Presidential Election
Black

Eligible Voter Turnout
- 4.9 - 14.9%
- 15 - 29.9%
- 30 - 44.9%
- 45 - 59.9%
- 60 - 69.2%

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Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

FIGURE 21

Eligible Voter Turnout
2022 Midterm Election
Black

Eligible Voter Turnout
- 1.8- 11.9%
- 12 - 21.9%
- 22 - 30.9%
- 31 - 40.9%
- 41 - 49.5%

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Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates

Black turnout rates were lower than white, non-Latino turnout rates in all 50 states and the disparities varied considerably from state to state. In 2020, the disparity between Black and white, non-Latino turnout was lowest in Albama (7.8 percentage points), North Carolina (8.0 percentage points), South Carolina (8.2 percentage points), and Georgia (10.2 percentage points) and highest in New Hampshire (51.7 percentage points), Maine (51.4 percentage points), and Vermont (48.9 percentage points). Generally, states with larger turnout disparities also had very small shares of their eligible voter population that were Black. In states with lower turnout disparities, however, the proportions of eligible voter populations that were Black were much higher. Among the three states with the smallest gaps (Alabama, North Carolina, and South Carolina), Black eligible voters represented between 21.7% (North Carolina) and 26.4% (South Carolina) of all eligible voters in the state.

Note: For a detailed table of the share of eligible voters by race/ethnicity and the disparity in turnout rates by state, see online appendix.

FIGURE 22

Eligible Voter Turnout Disparity
2020 Presidential Election
Black-White, non-Latino Disparity (percentage points)

Eligible Voter Turnout Disparity
- 4.8 - 14.9
- 15 - 29.9
- 30 - 44.9
- 45 - 59.9
- 60 - 77.9

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

FIGURE 23

Eligible Voter Turnout Disparity
2022 Midterm Election
Black-White, non-Latino Disparity (percentage points)

Eligible Voter Turnout Disparity
- 9.6 - 19.9
- 20 - 29.9
- 30 - 39.9
- 40 - 49.9
- 50 - 57.8

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates

The Voter Representation Gap:
Share of the Eligible Voter Population Versus Share of Votes Cast
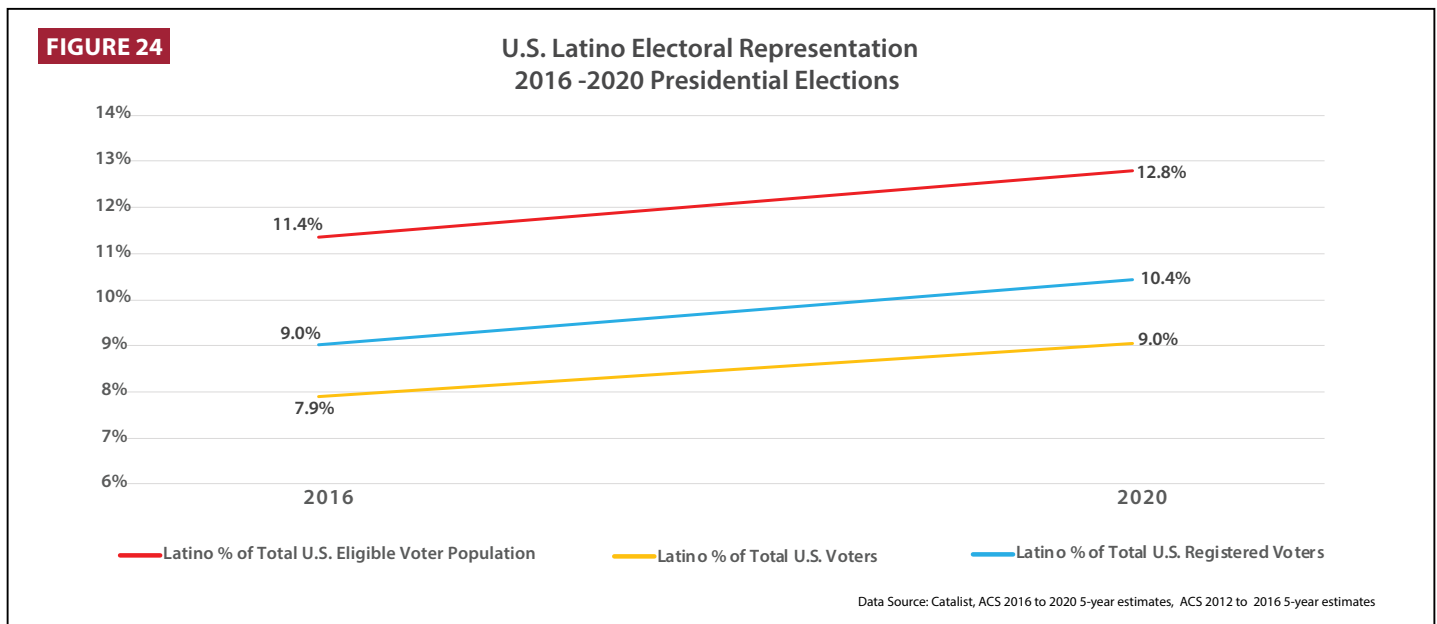
Section Highlights
- Historic representation gaps have persisted in recent election cycles, with people of color representing smaller shares of votes cast in elections than their share of the eligible voter population.
- The Latino and Black representation gaps widened in the 2020 presidential election compared to the 2016 presidential election, while the Asian-American representation gap slightly narrowed.
- In recent midterm elections, the representation gaps widened for all racial and ethnic groups examined between 2018 and 2022.

Eligible voters of color have substantial potential to hold greater influence over the outcomes of local and national elections. Combined, Asian-American, Black, and Latino eligible voters comprised nearly 30% of those eligible to vote in the 2020 presidential election. Historically, however, voters of color have been underrepresented in the electorate, comprising a smaller share of votes cast in elections than their share of the eligible voter population. In the 2020 presidential election, for example, eligible voters of color represented just over 22% of all votes cast, more than seven percentage points lower than their share of eligible voters. This entrenched representation gap continues in nearly all U.S. elections today.

Due to increasing disparities in voter turnout rates, representation gaps for many people of color widened nationally between 2016 and 2020. The Latino and Black representation gaps widened between the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections, while the Asian-American representation gap narrowed. Representation gaps widened for all people of color between the 2018 and 2022 midterm elections, with the Latino representation gap widening the most.
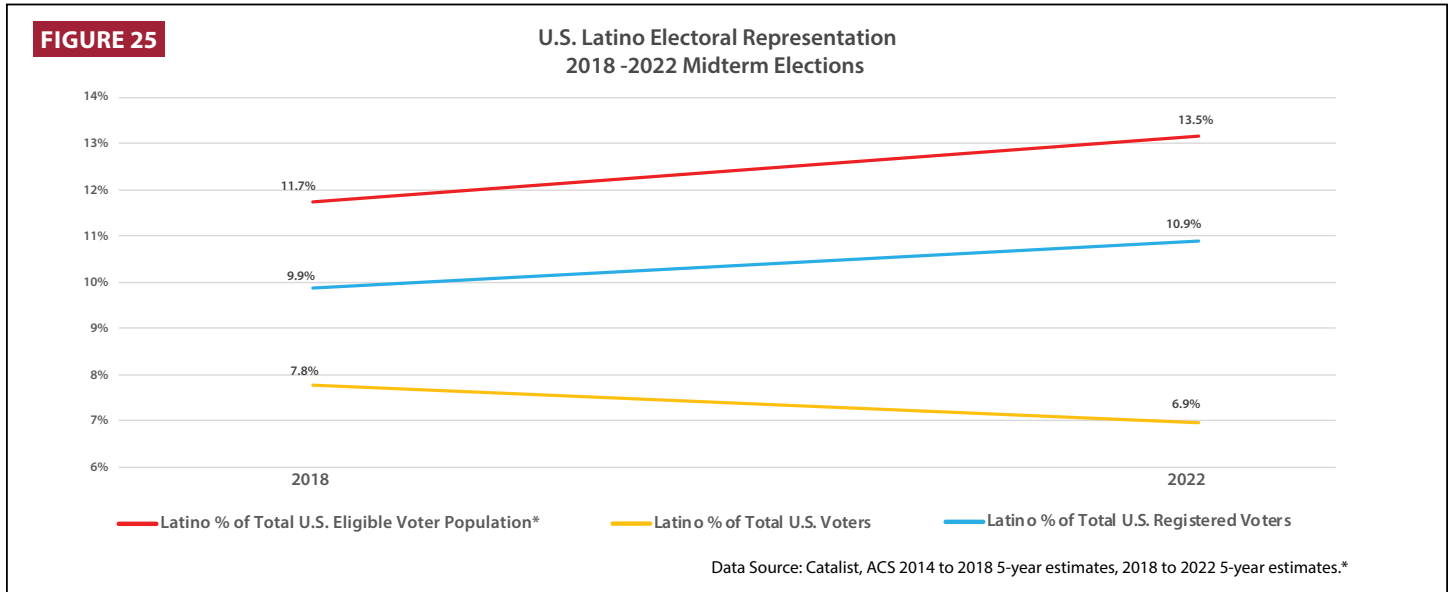
Latino Representation at the Polls – Presidential Elections
The Latino representation gap slightly widened in 2020 compared to the 2016 presidential election. Figure 24 shows that in 2020, Latinos represented 12.8% of all eligible voters in the country but 9.0% of all votes cast—a 3.8 percentage point gap, up from a 3.5 percentage point gap in the 2016 election. A similar shift occurred in the gap between Latinos' share of registered voters and votes cast, with a 1.4 percentage point gap in 2020, up from a 1.1 percentage gap in 2016. While the Latino share of registered voters grew from 2016 to 2020, it did not keep pace with growth in the Latino eligible voter population.

FIGURE 24

**U.S. Latino Electoral Representation
2016 – 2020 Presidential Elections**

- Latino % of Total U.S. Eligible Voter Population: 11.4% (2016) → 12.8% (2020)
- Latino % of Total U.S. Registered Voters: 9.0% (2016) → 10.4% (2020)
- Latino % of Total U.S. Voters: 7.9% (2016) → 9.0% (2020)

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates
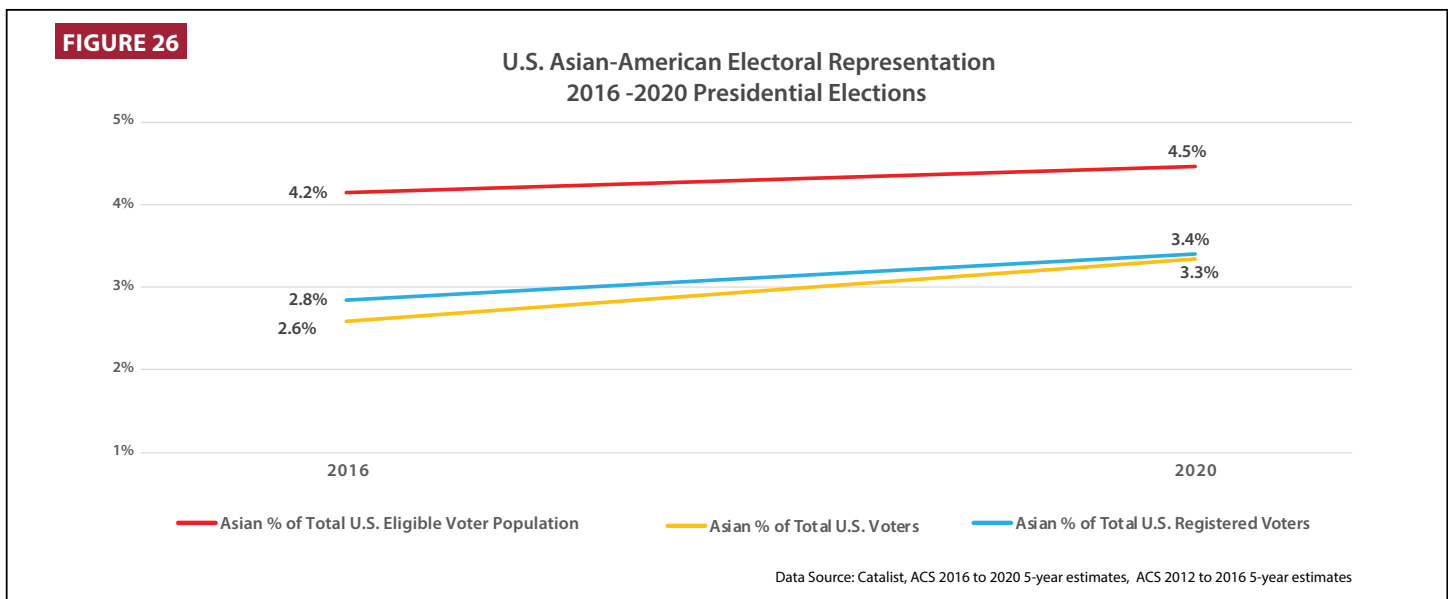
Latino Representation at the Polls – Midterm Elections

Looking at shifts from the 2018 to 2022 midterm elections, despite Latinos increasing their share of registered voters, representation gaps widened. Figure 25 shows that in the 2018 election, a midterm with the highest turnout in decades, Latinos represented 11.7% of all eligible voters and 7.8% of ballots cast (3.9 percentage point gap). While their share of eligible voters rose to 13.5% in 2022, their share of votes cast decreased to 6.9%, widening the representation gap to 6.6 percentage points. Even though Latinos' share of registered voters increased from 9.9% in 2018 to 10.9% in 2022, the growth did not keep pace with their eligible voter population growth.

FIGURE 25

U.S. Latino Electoral Representation
2018 -2022 Midterm Elections

— Latino % of Total U.S. Eligible Voter Population* — Latino % of Total U.S. Voters — Latino % of Total U.S. Registered Voters

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2014 to 2018 5-year estimates, 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates.*
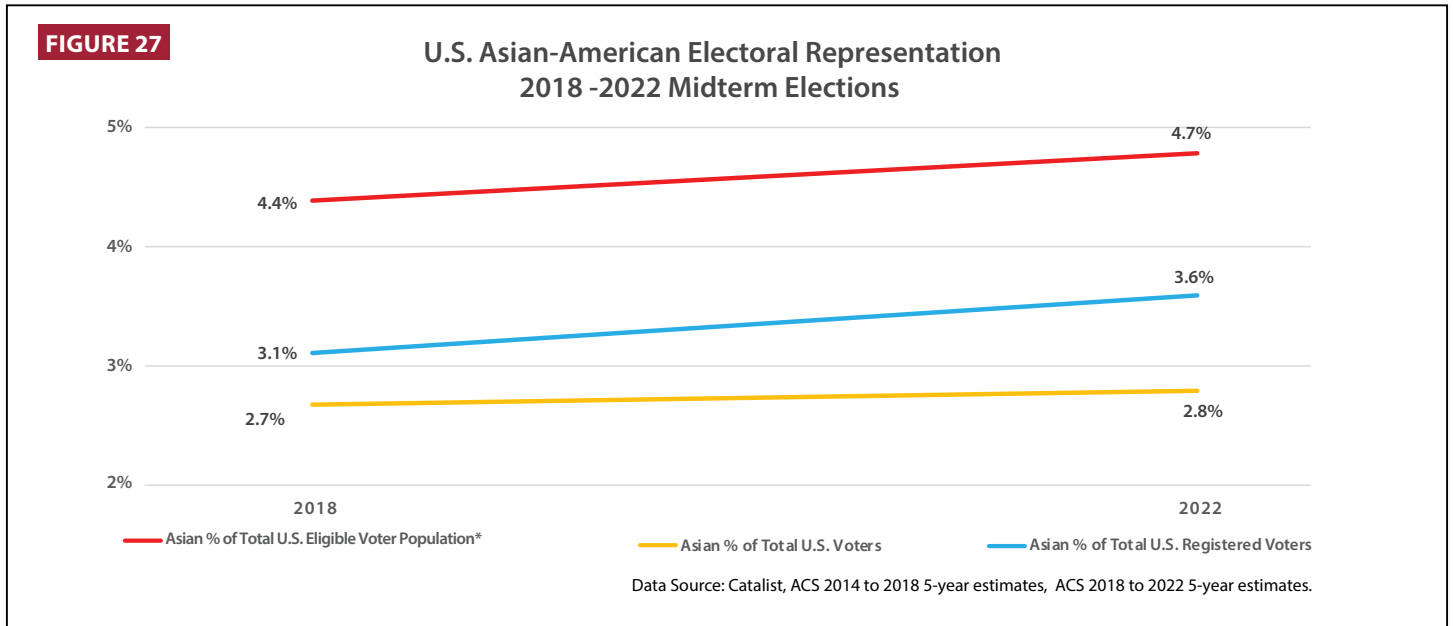
Asian American Representation at the Polls – Presidential Elections

Between the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections, Asian Americans' share of ballots cast increased more than their share of eligible voters increased, narrowing their representation gap. Figure 26 shows that while Asian Americans' share of U.S. eligible voters increased from 4.2% in the 2016 general election to 4.5% in the 2020 general election, their share of ballots cast increased from 2.6% (1.6 percentage point gap) to 3.3% (1.2 percentage point gap). Additionally, the share of registered voters who are Asian American increased from 2.8% in 2016 to 3.4% in 2020, with the gap between their share of registered voters and actual voters narrowing to just 0.1 percentage points.

FIGURE 26

U.S. Asian-American Electoral Representation
2016 -2020 Presidential Elections

— Asian % of Total U.S. Eligible Voter Population — Asian % of Total U.S. Voters — Asian % of Total U.S. Registered Voters

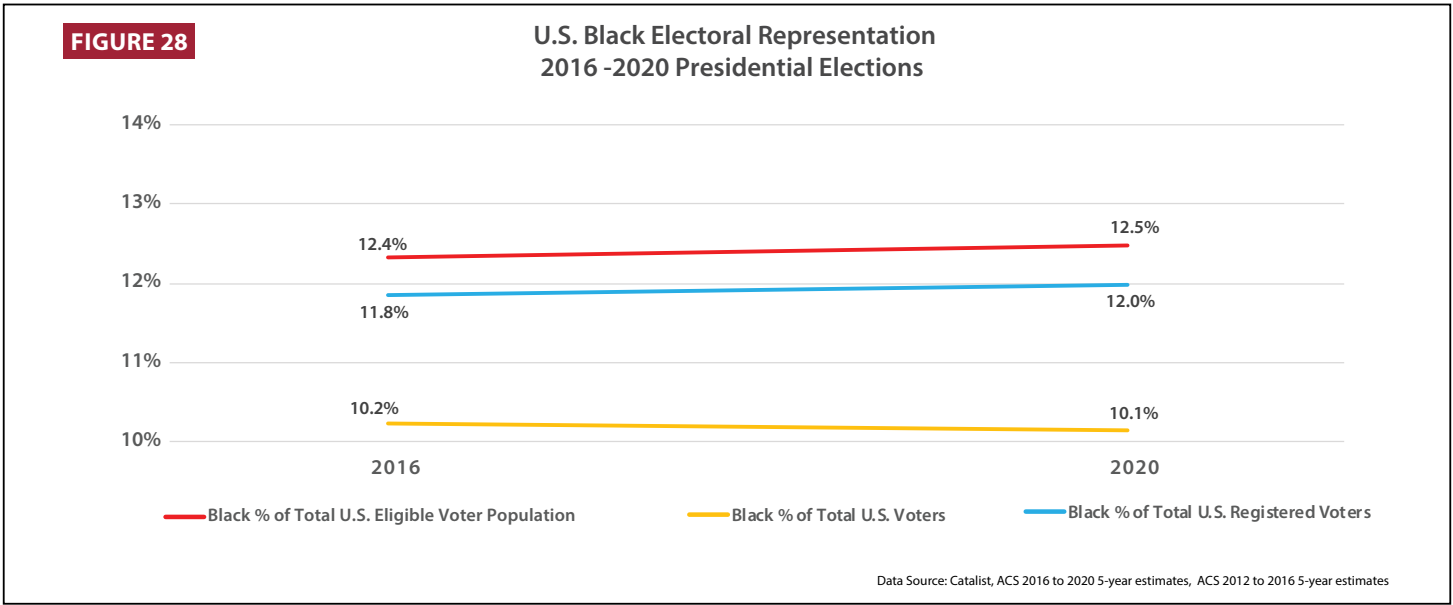Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

Asian American Representation at the Polls – Midterm Elections

Despite narrowing in presidential elections, the Asian-American representation gap in midterm elections widened in 2022. Figure 27 shows that while Asian Americans' share of the eligible voter population increased from 4.4% in 2018 to 4.7% in 2022, their share of ballots cast only increased 0.1 percentage points (2.7% versus 2.8%). Additionally, their share of registered voters increased more than their share of eligible voters and ballots cast, widening the gap between shares of registered voters and actual voters.

FIGURE 27

U.S. Asian-American Electoral Representation
2018 -2022 Midterm Elections

- Asian % of Total U.S. Eligible Voter Population*
- Asian % of Total U.S. Voters
- Asian % of Total U.S. Registered Voters

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2014 to 2018 5-year estimates, ACS 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates.

Black Representation at the Polls – Presidential Elections

Black representation at the ballot box saw little change between the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections. As Figure 28 shows, in the 2016 election, 12.4% of eligible voters were Black, while 10.2% of votes were cast by Black voters (2.2 percentage point gap). While the share of eligible voters who were Black remained fairly stable between presidential elections (12.4% and 12.5%), Black voters represented 10.1% of ballot cast, slightly widening the representation gap to 2.4 percentage points. Additionally, the share of registered voters who were Black increased by 0.2 percentage points between 2016 (11.8%) and 2020 (12.0%), essentially mirroring the increase of eligible voters.

FIGURE 28

U.S. Black Electoral Representation
2016 -2020 Presidential Elections

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

Black Representation at the Polls– Midterm Elections

While there was small decline in Black representation between the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections, the Black representation gap widened more substantially between the 2018 and 2022 midterm elections. The share of eligible voters who were Black remained similar between 2018 (12.5%) and 2022 (12.4%), but the share of ballots cast by Black voters declined from 10.2% in 2018 to 8.7% in 2022, widening the Black representation gap from 2.3 to 3.7 percentage points (Figure 29). Similarly, the Black representation gap between the share of registered voters and ballots cast widened from 1.9 percentage points in 2018 to 3.4 percentage points in 2020.

FIGURE 29

U.S. Black Electoral Representation
2018 -2022 Midterm Elections

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2014 to 2018 5-year estimates, ACS 2018 to 2022 5-year estimates
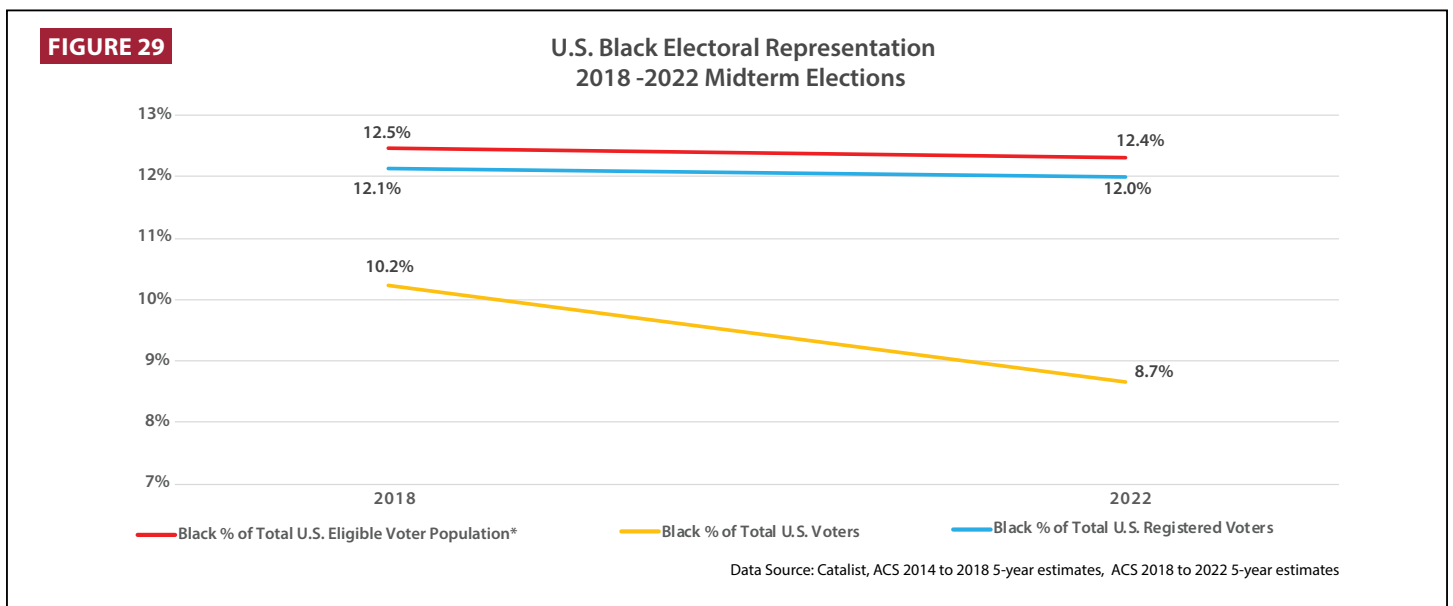
Opportunities for Voter Mobilization

Section Highlights

- Heading into the 2024 presidential election, there are considerable opportunities to mobilize eligible voters of color and maximize their influence in election outcomes.
- Across all states, large shares of eligible voters of color did not cast a ballot in the 2020 presidential election, totaling over thirty-four million potential voters and representing nearly fifteen percent of all eligible voters in the country.
- Voter mobilization is only one piece of improving representation in U.S. elections. Historic and current policies designed to discourage voting and that disproportionately impact communities of color need to be addressed in tandem with increased mobilization efforts.

Our findings underscore the prospects of increasing Asian-American, Black, and Latino voter participation in every state. In the past decade, people of color overall have seen tremendous growth in their share of the total population and the eligible voter population throughout the U.S. Despite these gains, electoral representation and turnout gaps between voters of color and the general population persist. The cumulative effect of millions of voters not voting results in an unrepresentative democracy. Mobilizing all voters should result in a much wider set of needs and interests being heard by elected officials and policy makers. With many elections being very close, even states with small shares of eligible voters of color would benefit from this mobilization. Mobilization in states with large shares of eligible voters of color, such as California, Texas, and Georgia, could play key roles in the outcomes of state and national elections. Potential voters of color in every state have the opportunity to play critical roles in the 2024 election cycle.

While mobilization of voters is critical to having a more representative democracy, it is important to recognize the challenges in reaching voters, especially with varying access to state election systems. Many communities of color face historic and current policy barriers to voting.[8]

Heading into the 2024 presidential election, agencies, organizations, and funders with an interest in or mandate to support civic participation have considerable opportunities to mobilize eligible voters of color and maximize their influence and equitable say in election outcomes. Across all states, large shares of eligible voters of color did not cast a ballot in the 2020 presidential election, totaling over thirty-four million potential voters and representing nearly fifteen percent of all eligible voters in the country.

The following report sections provide a focused discussion on data from 2020, the most recent presidential election - in order to better understand opportunities in the next presidential election. See online appendix for more information on midterm elections.
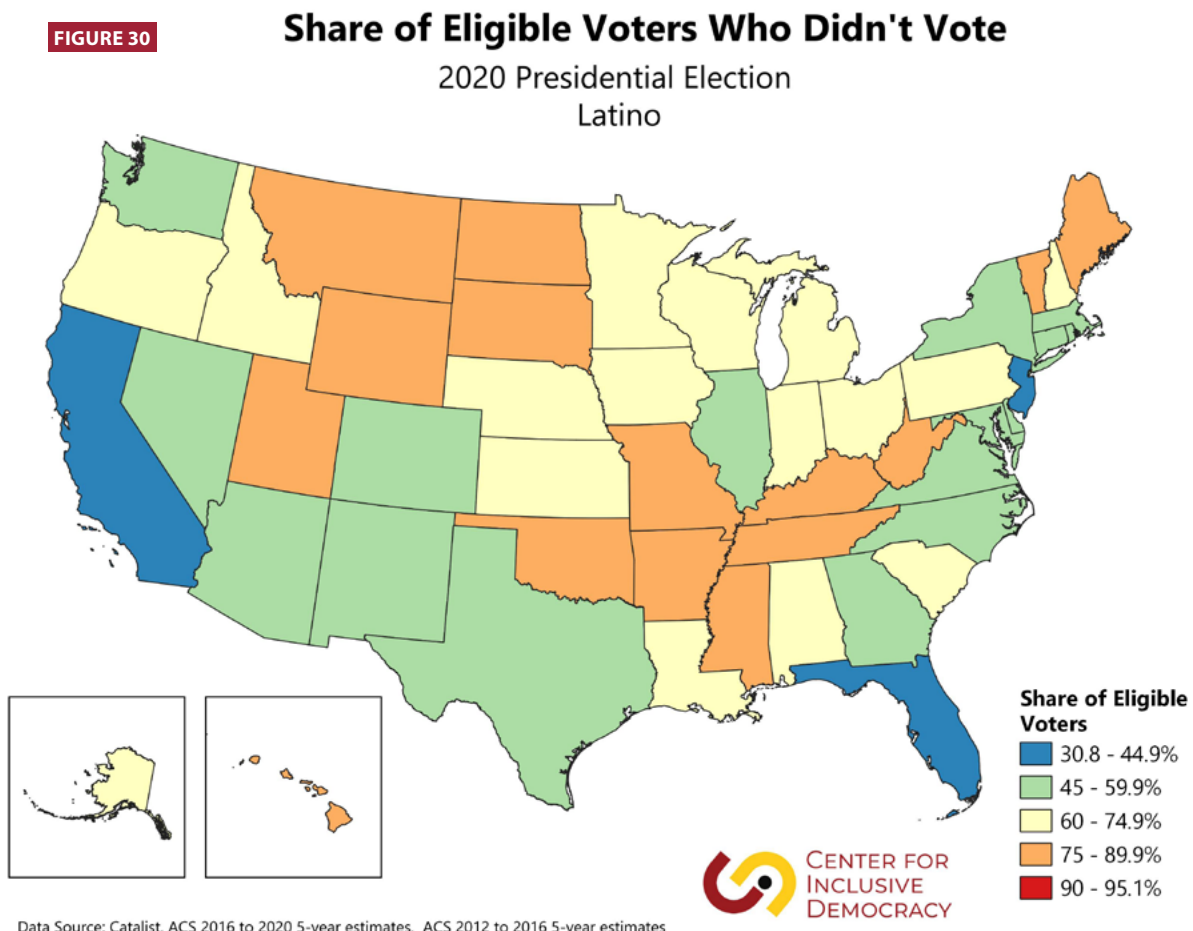
Opportunities for Latino Voter Mobilization

Over half of Latino eligible voters did not cast a ballot in the 2020 general election. The Latino population is one the fastest growing demographic groups, so mobilizing these eligible voters could increase their voices and influence on election outcomes. Across states, between 41.5% (Florida) and 89.5% (Mississippi) of Latino eligible voters did not vote in 2020 (Figure 30). In the five states in which Latinos represent more than 20% of the total eligible voter population (Arizona, California, Florida, New Mexico, and Texas), between 41.5% (Florida) and 57.2% (Texas) of Latino eligible voters did not cast a ballot. Additionally, very large shares of Latino eligible voters in states in which they represent relatively small shares of the eligible voter population did not vote in 2020. In South Dakota, for example, Latinos represented 2.4% of the eligible voter population but 82.6% of them did not cast a ballot.

In every state, the share of Latino eligible voters who did not cast a ballot in the 2020 presidential election was larger than the share of white, non-Latino voters who did not vote (see the online appendix for white, non-Latino participation by state). In Florida, the state with the smallest share of Latino eligible voters who did not vote (41.5%), less than one-quarter of white, non-Latino eligible voters did not cast a ballot. While nearly half of white, non-Latino eligible voters in Utah didn't vote in 2020, over three-quarters of Latino eligible voters did not vote.

While the Latino eligible voter population is politically diverse, mobilizing Latino eligible voters could impact election outcomes, especially in states with razor thin margins. In total, there are over 15.5 million Latino eligible voters who did not vote in the 2020 presidential election who can be mobilized to assert their electoral power in the 2024 presidential election.

Note: For share of the eligible voter population by race/ethnicity and state, see online appendix.

FIGURE 30

Share of Eligible Voters Who Didn't Vote
2020 Presidential Election
Latino

Share of Eligible Voters
- 30.8 - 44.9%
- 45 - 59.9%
- 60 - 74.9%
- 75 - 89.9%
- 90 - 95.1%

CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

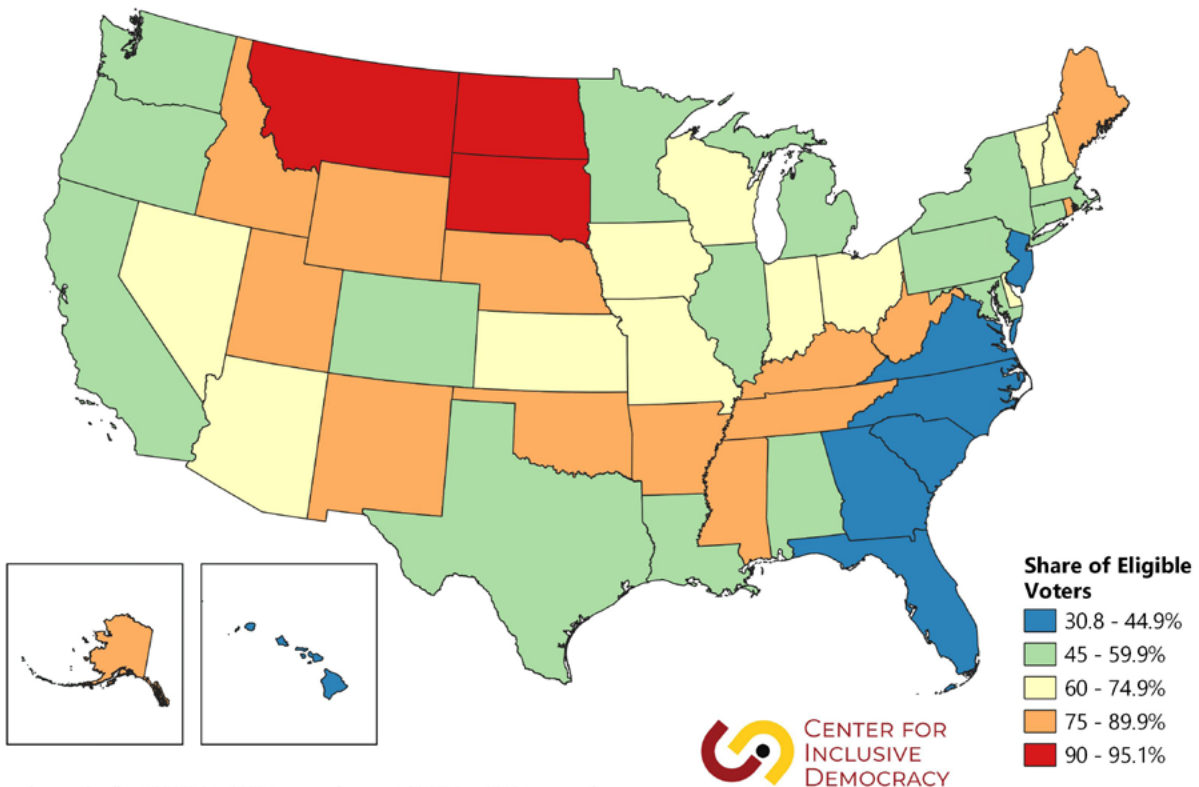# Opportunities for Asian-American Voter Mobilization

As the fastest growing demographic in the past decade, Asian Americans' opportunity to influence election outcomes has continued to grow. In the 2020 presidential election, however, just over half of Asian-American eligible voters did not cast a ballot. Throughout the states, the share of Asian-American eligible voters who did not vote ranged from over 32% in Florida to over 95% in Montana (Figure 31). In states like Hawaii and California, where Asian Americans represent large shares of the eligible voter population, around half of Asian-American eligible voters did not cast a ballot. In eighteen states, over three-quarters of Asian-American eligible voters didn't vote in the presidential election.

In comparison to white, non-Latino eligible voters, the share of Asian-American eligible voters who did not vote was larger in every state (see online appendix for white, non-Latino participation by state). Even in Hawaii and California, states with large Asian-American eligible voter populations, a smaller share of white, non-Latino eligible voters (24.3% and 21.5%, respectively) did not vote in 2020 compared to Asian-American eligible voters (50.3% and 44.4%, respectively).

Altogether, over five million Asian-American eligible voters did not vote in 2020, and if mobilized, could play a major role in national and local election outcomes in 2024.

Note: For share of the eligible voter population by race/ethnicity and state, see online appendix.

FIGURE 31

Share of Eligible Voters Who Didn't Vote
2020 Presidential Election
Asian American

Share of Eligible Voters
- 30.8 - 44.9%
- 45 - 59.9%
- 60 - 74.9%
- 75 - 89.9%
- 90 - 95.1%

CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY

Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

Opportunities for Black Voter Mobilization

Representing over twelve percent of all eligible voters in America, Black eligible voters have tremendous opportunity to influence local and national elections. In the 2020 presidential election, over 45% of Black eligible voters did not cast a ballot, with that share ranging from 32.4% in North Carolina to 82.5% in Utah (Figure 32). In the majority of states (30), more than half of Black eligible voters did not vote in 2020, including Mississippi, a state in which Black eligible voters represent over one-third of all eligible voters. In North Carolina, a state in which over one-fifth of eligible voters are Black, nearly one-third of Black eligible voters did not vote.

In every state, larger shares of Black eligible voters did not cast a ballot than their white, non-Latino counterparts (see online appendix for white, non-Latino participation by state). While 37 states had less than 30% of the white, non-Latino eligible voter population that did not vote in 2020, no state had less than 30% of Black eligible voters who did not cast a ballot. In North Carolina, the state with the smallest share of Black eligible voters who did not vote in 2020 (32.4%), less than one-quarter of white, non-Latino eligible voters did not cast a ballot. Utah where over 82% of Black eligible voters did not cast a ballot, less than half of white, non-Latino voters didn't vote.

Overall, over thirteen million Black eligible voters did not participate in the previous presidential election. Mobilizing these potential voters in the 2024 presidential election cycle would further Black Americans' influence on the priorities, actions, and accountability of elected officials at all levels of government.

Note: For share of the eligible voter population by race/ethnicity and state, see online appendix.

FIGURE 32

Share of Eligible Voters Who Didn't Vote
2020 Presidential Election
Black

Share of Eligible Voters
- 30.8 - 44.9%
- 45 - 59.9%
- 60 - 74.9%
- 75 - 89.9%
- 90 - 95.1%

CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY
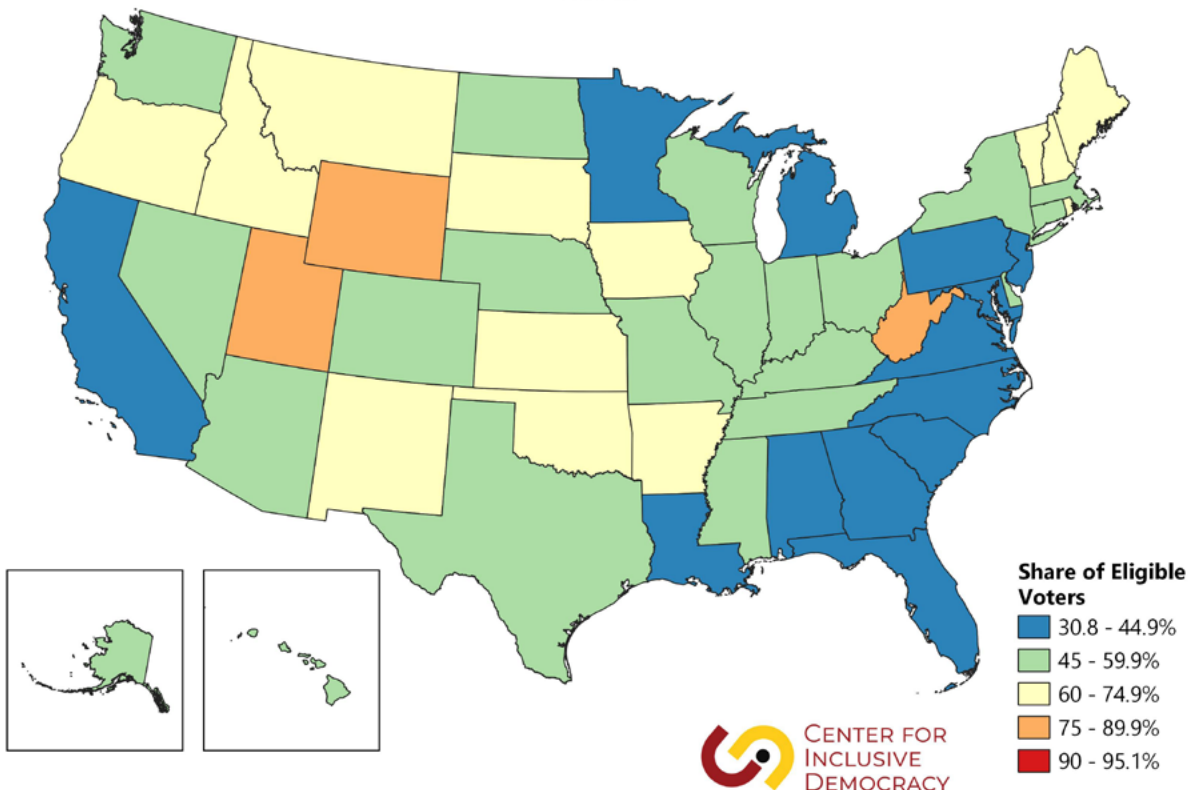
Data Source: Catalist, ACS 2016 to 2020 5-year estimates, ACS 2012 to 2016 5-year estimates

Summary

The U.S. demographic landscape has been changing, with Asian-American, Latino, and Black populations increasing their share of the total U.S. population. This pattern is expected to continue, with the U.S. Census projecting that the U.S. population will be 24.1% Latino, 8.5% Asian American, and 14.3% Black in 2045. As these groups' share of the population has grown, so has their share of the eligible voter population, increasing their potential influence on local and national elections. The share of the total U.S. eligible voter population that was Latino increased from 11.4% in 2016 to 12.8% in 2020, the share that was Asian American grew from 4.2% to 4.5%, and the share that was Black grew from 12.4% to 12.5%.

Despite notable growth in registration numbers, large turnout and participation gaps between eligible voters of color and white, non-Latino voters remain. In both presidential and midterm elections, people of color represented smaller shares of total votes cast than their share of the eligible voter population. In total, over five million Asian-American eligible voters, 15.8 million Latino eligible voters, and 13.3 million Black eligible voters did not cast a ballot in the 2020 presidential election, totaling over 34 million votes.

The findings in this report highlight the current representation gaps and the potential increased influence Latinos, Blacks, and Asian Americans can have on U.S. elections. These voters represent diverse communities with a wide range of experiences, ideas, and opinions, all of which should be equitably represented throughout the political process. Heading into the 2024 election cycle, there are considerable opportunities to mobilize eligible voters of color and maximize their influence in local and national elections. Greater and more sustained non-partisan investments (from governmental, philanthropic and community sources) to register and reach out to Latino, Asian-American, and Black potential voters can result in substantially more voters of color having a voice in U.S. elections. In tandem with addressing historic and current policies that have created barriers to voting in communities of color, mobilizing people of color to vote will not only increase these voters' political power, but it will also help create a more representative democracy.

This report is the first in a series examining the changing U.S. electorate. To further the conversation surrounding the changing U.S. demographics and the potential impacts in 2024 and future election cycles, upcoming CID reports will examine electoral representation and turnout in battleground states and competitive districts.

Notes

1.   U.S. Elections Project. For more information about voter turnout in the 2020 General Election see: https://www.electproject.org/home

2.   For more information on U.S. Census population projections, see: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popproj.html

3.   For more information on CPS methodology, see: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/technical-documentati on/complete.html. For more information on CPS overreport bias, see: https://www.electproject.org/election-data/cps-vote-over-report-and-non-response-bias-correction

4.   See, Fraga,BernardL.(2018)TheTurnoutGap:Race,Ethnicity,andPolitical Inequalityin aDiversifyingAmerica.NewYork:CambridgeUniversityPress.

5.   For more information on U.S. Census population projections, see: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popproj.html

6.   For more information on voting rates and registration rates between 1980 and 2020, see: https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/time-series/demo/voting-historical-time-series.html

7.   For more information on voting rates and registration rates between 1980 and 2020, see: https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/time-series/demo/voting-historical-time-series.html

8.   Fore more information on the impacts of voter suppression on communities of color, see: https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/impact-voter-suppression-communities-color