

A large, stylized graphic of the American flag is positioned on the left side of the page. It features a dark blue field with a white star in the upper left, and horizontal stripes of red and white below. The graphic is partially cut off by the left edge of the page. The background of the page is a solid dark red color.

THE 2006 CIVIC AND POLITICAL HEALTH OF THE NATION:

A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities

Mark Hugo Lopez, *Research Director*

Peter Levine, *Director*

Deborah Both, *Senior Advisor*

Abby Kiesa, *Youth Coordinator*

Emily Kirby, *Senior Research Associate*

Karlo Marcelo, *Research Associate*

**CIRCLE: The Center for Information & Research
on Civic Learning & Engagement**

www.civicyouth.org

October 3, 2006

Funding for this research provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts



CIRCLE

The Center for Information & Research
on Civic Learning & Engagement

The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation

*A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate
in Politics and Communities*

CIRCLE
Center for Information and Research
on Civic Learning and Engagement

www.civicyouth.org

Mark Hugo Lopez
Research Director

Peter Levine
Director

Deborah Both
Senior Advisor

Abby Kiesa
Youth Coordinator

Emily Kirby
Senior Research Associate

Karlo Marcelo
Research Associate

October 3, 2006

Funding for this research has been provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts

Please direct all inquiries concerning this report to:

Dionne Williams
CIRCLE
2101 Van Munching Hall
College Park, MD 20742-1821

301-405-2790
dwillia8@umd.edu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
MEASURING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	6
A TYPOLOGY OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	8
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN 2006 - THE GOOD NEWS AND THE BAD	9
CIVIC ACTIVITIES	10
<i>Patterns of Volunteering and Community Involvement</i>	10
<i>Community Problem-Solving</i>	12
<i>Giving: Raising Money for Charities</i>	13
ELECTORAL ACTIVITIES	14
<i>A Turn Back to Politics?</i>	14
<i>Getting Out the Vote</i>	15
POLITICAL VOICE ACTIVITIES	17
<i>Expressing Political "Voice"</i>	17
<i>Immigrant Youth and the Spring 2006 Protests</i>	19
DISPARITIES IN ENGAGEMENT	19
<i>Education</i>	19
<i>Race and Ethnicity</i>	20
<i>Gender</i>	21
LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT	21
<i>Differences in Views of Government</i>	23
POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE	24
<i>Political Knowledge and Civic Engagement</i>	24
<i>Political Knowledge and Differences among Groups of Young People</i>	25
THE IMPORTANCE OF FOLLOWING THE NEWS FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	25
<i>Internet Use and Civic Engagement</i>	26
VIEWS OF POLITICS AND ELECTIONS	26
<i>Differences in Views of Politics and Elections by Demographic Groups</i>	27
OTHER IMPORTANT FINDINGS FROM THE 2006 CPHS	28
<i>Generational Identity Seems Weaker</i>	28
<i>Political Partisanship among Young People</i>	28
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	32
SURVEY METHODOLOGY	34
APPENDIX	36

THE 2006 CIVIC AND POLITICAL HEALTH OF THE NATION SURVEY

A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities

**CIRCLE: The Center for Information & Research
on Civic Learning & Engagement**

October 3, 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2006 National Civic and Political Health Survey (CPHS) is the most up-to-date and detailed look at how young Americans are participating in politics and communities and their attitudes towards government and current issues. In this report we examine the civic engagement of young Americans and adults across 19 core measures of engagement. We also examine attitudes towards government, levels of political knowledge, partisanship, and views of elections and politics. The survey was conducted from April 27 to June 11, 2006 by telephone and online survey and released on October 3. The survey provides nationally representative samples of young people and adults. Overall, 1,700 young people ages 15 to 25 were surveyed along with 550 adults ages 26 and older. The survey includes over-samples of young Latinos, African-Americans, and Asian-Americans. The questionnaire for this survey largely replicates one designed by Scott Keeter, Cliff Zukin, Molly Andolina, and Krista Jenkins fielded in 2002.¹

Some major findings from the 2006 CPHS

There is broad engagement, yet some are disengaged

- Young Americans are involved in many forms of political and civic activity. For example, 26% say they vote regularly (age 20-25 only); 36% have volunteered within the last year; and 30% have boycotted a product because of the conditions under which it was made or the values of the company that made it.
- Nevertheless, a considerable proportion of young Americans are not very engaged, including 17% who have not done *any* of 19 possible forms of participation within the last 12 months.

African-Americans and Asian-Americans are engaged; many Latinos have protested

- Young African-Americans are the most *politically engaged* racial/ethnic group.

¹ For a discussion of survey development and results from 2002, see *The Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Generational Portrait* (2002) by Scott Keeter, Cliff Zukin, Molly Andolina, and Krista Jenkins (via www.civicyouth.org) and *A New Engagement? Political Participation, Civic Life, and the Changing American Citizen* (2006) by Cliff Zukin, Scott Keeter, Molly Andolina, Krista Jenkins, and Michael X. Delli Carpini.

- Young Asian-Americans—surveyed for the first time across a wide range of civic indicators—are highly engaged in volunteering and in several other ways.
- Although young Latinos are generally not as engaged as other racial/ethnic groups, 25% said that they had participated in a protest—more than twice the proportion of any other racial/ethnic group. It appears that the marches concerned with federal immigration policy last spring drew a substantial proportion of the national Latino youth population.²

Young people have lost confidence in government

- Two thirds of young people believe that government should do more to solve problems, but a plurality says that the government is “almost always wasteful and inefficient.” This represents a big drop in confidence since 2002.
- Young people, no matter which political party they identify with, are more likely to say that government is almost always wasteful and inefficient today than in 2002. Changes in this view have been greatest among Democrats and Independents, and smallest among Republicans.
- Young people who are more engaged in their communities have more positive views of government than those who are less involved. However, substantial numbers of young people, no matter their level of engagement, say “government is almost always wasteful and inefficient.”
- Asian-American youth have the most positive view of government relative to all other racial/ethnic groups. Seventy-two percent of young Asian-Americans say “government should do more to solve problems” compared to 68% of African-Americans, 65% of Latinos, and 60% of Whites. And 67% of young Asian-Americans say “government regulation of business is necessary” compared to 51% of young Whites, 52% of young African-Americans, and 55% of young Latinos.

Political knowledge is generally poor, and it matters

- Most young Americans are misinformed about important aspects of politics and current events. For example, 53% are unaware that only citizens can vote in federal elections; only 30% can correctly name at least one member of the President’s Cabinet (and of those, 82% name Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice); and only 34% know that the United States has a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (compared to 27% who know that France holds a seat).
- Those who participate are better informed. Among young people who say they did not participate in any civic engagement activities in the last year, 27% could not answer any of our political knowledge questions correctly. However, among those who had done at least one civic engagement activity in the last year, only 13% could not correctly answer any of our political knowledge questions. This pattern was more pronounced among young people engaged in certain civic engagement activities. Youth who are registered to vote are more informed than their non-registered peers. Eighty-six percent of young registered voters answered at least one of the political knowledge questions correctly as opposed to 78% of youth who are not registered to vote.

² According to a new report from the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars (2006), over 3.5 million people participated in protests last March and April. Unfortunately, there are no reliable estimates available on the number of young immigrants who participated in these protests.

Young people are tolerant, but somewhat less so than in 2002

- Although young people remain more favorable toward immigrants and gays than their elders, there has been a decline in youth tolerance for those two groups since 2002.
- Sixty-seven percent say they have confronted someone who said something that they considered offensive, such as a racist or other prejudiced comment.

Young people are paying attention to the news, discussing politics, and leaning to the Democrats

- Young people appear to be paying attention to politics and following the news. Seventy-two percent of young Americans say they follow what's going on in government and public affairs at least some of the time.
- There has been a slight shift, since 2002, among young people away from the Republican Party. Among 18-to-25-year-olds today, 47% are Democrats or lean to the Democrats; 28% are Republicans or lean Republican, and 24% identify as Independents. This represents a drop of three percentage points among young people who identify as Republican or lean Republican, an increase of two points in the percentage who identify as Independent, and no change in the percentage who identify as Democrats.

People are more likely to participate if they follow the news and are asked to vote or volunteer

- Young people who are asked to volunteer or vote are much more likely to do so.
- There is a powerful relationship between following the news and being civically engaged. For every one of 19 forms of civic engagement and every one of five forms of news (newspaper, radio, television, magazine, and Internet), those who use the news sources regularly are more likely to participate than those who do not.

Fewer young people today see their generation as unique, compared to four years ago

- Fifty-nine percent of people between the ages of 15 and 25 today say their generation is "unique." This is down 10 points from 2002, when 69% of 15-to-25-year-olds then said their generation was unique.
- Among young people who are 19 to 29 today (and were 15 to 25 in 2002), 56% say their generation is unique today. This is down 13 points from 2002.

On behalf of CIRCLE (The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement), Princeton Survey Research Associates International obtained telephone and web interviews with a nationally representative sample of 2,232 people aged 15 and older living in the continental United States. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is ± 3.5 percentage points. The margin of error for youth sample is (n=1,658) is ± 2.6 percentage points.

Funding was provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

MEASURING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Five years after the September 11th terror attacks and on the eve of an important national election with several contested state and local races, young Americans are working in many valuable ways to improve their communities, their nation, and the world.

There are debates about how to define “civic engagement,” but our study asks about 19 major indicators of civic engagement, plus several other forms of participation, to help quantify and define the concept. This breadth is important, because people have numerous ways to influence the world around them, and it is important to look beyond the most frequently measured forms of engagement (voting and volunteering).

Some definitions:

- “Young people” means American residents between the ages of 15-25, unless otherwise specified.
- The 19 “indicators of civic engagement” are measures of activities. They are listed on the next page.
- “Civic specialists” say that they perform at least two activities that involve service, group membership, or charity.
- “Electoral specialists” say that they perform at least two different activities related to campaigns and elections.
- “Dual activists” qualify as both civic specialists and electoral specialists.
- The “disengaged” qualify as neither civic specialists nor electoral specialists.

Most of the indicators were developed as a part of a national study, *The Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Generational Portrait* conducted by Scott Keeter, Cliff Zukin, Molly Andolina, and Krista Jenkins. Their work was funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts and presented in collaboration with CIRCLE. A complete list of indicators is shown on the next page.

Keeter et. al. (2002) and Zukin et. al. (2006) emphasized 19 indicators that they divided into three main categories of activities: civic activities, electoral activities, and political voice activities. These categories represent three different ways in which individuals can contribute to public life.

- *Civic* activities generally focus on improving ones’ local community and helping individuals. Examples of civic activities include volunteer service, joining a local civic association, or supporting a non-profit organization or cause by participating in a fundraiser.
- *Electoral* activities concentrate on the political process and include activities such as voting, persuading others to vote, or volunteering for a political campaign.
- Finally, *political voice* activities are things people do to express their political or social viewpoints and include activities like writing to an elected official, sending an e-mail petition, or protesting.

Table 1 - The 19 Core Indicators of Engagement

Indicator	Survey Question
<i>Civic Activity Indicators</i>	
<i>Community Problem Solving</i>	Have you ever worked together informally with someone or some group to solve a problem in the community where you live? If YES, was this in the last 12 months or not?
<i>Regular volunteering for a non-electoral organization</i>	Have you ever spent time participating in any community service or volunteer activity, or haven't you had time to do this? By volunteer activity, I mean actually working in some way to help others for no pay. If YES, Have you done this in the last 12 months? Thinking about the volunteer work over the last 12 months, is this something you do on a regular basis, or just once in a while?
<i>Active membership in a group or association</i>	Do you belong to or donate money to any groups or associations, either locally or nationally? Are you an active member of this group/any of these groups, a member but not active, or have you given money only?
<i>Participation in fund-raising run/walk/ride</i>	Have you personally walked, ran, or bicycled for a charitable cause -this is separate from sponsoring or giving money to this type of event?
<i>Other fund raising for charity</i>	And have you ever done anything else to help raise money for a charitable cause?
<i>Electoral Activity Indicators</i>	
<i>Regular voting</i>	We know that most people don't vote in all elections. Usually between one-quarter to one-half of those eligible actually come out to vote. Can you tell me how often you vote in local and national elections? Always, sometimes, rarely, or never?
<i>Persuading others</i>	When there is an election taking place do you generally talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates, or not?
<i>Displaying buttons, signs, stickers</i>	Do you wear a campaign button, put a sticker on your car, or place a sign in front of your house, or aren't these things you do?
<i>Campaign contributions</i>	In the past 12 months, did you contribute money to a candidate, a political party, or any organization that supported candidates?
<i>Volunteering for candidate or political organizations</i>	From volunteering sequence, respondent indicated having volunteered for "A political organization or candidates running for office"
<i>Political Voice Indicators</i>	
<i>Contacting officials</i>	[Now I'm going to read you a quick list of things that some people have done to express their views. For each one I read, please just tell me whether you have ever done it or not. (FOR EACH YES, PROBE: And have you done this in the last 12 months, or not?)] Contacted or visited a public official - at any level of government - to ask for assistance or to express your opinion?
<i>Contacting the print media</i>	Contacted a newspaper or magazine to express your opinion on an issue?
<i>Contacting the broadcast media</i>	Called in to a radio or television talk show to express your opinion on a political issue, even if you did not get on the air?
<i>Protesting</i>	Taken part in a protest, march, or demonstration?
<i>E-mail petitions</i>	Signed an e-mail petition?
<i>Written petitions</i>	And have you ever signed a written petition about a political or social issue?
<i>Boycotting</i>	NOT bought something because of conditions under which the product is made, or because you dislike the conduct of the company that produces it?
<i>Buycotting</i>	Bought a certain product or service because you like the social or political values of the company that produces or provides it?
<i>Canvassing</i>	Have you worked as a canvasser - having gone door to door for a political or social group or candidate?

Source: *The Civic and Political Health of the Nation Report* by Scott Keeter, Cliff Zukin, Molly Andolina, and Krista Jenkins, CIRCLE, 2002.

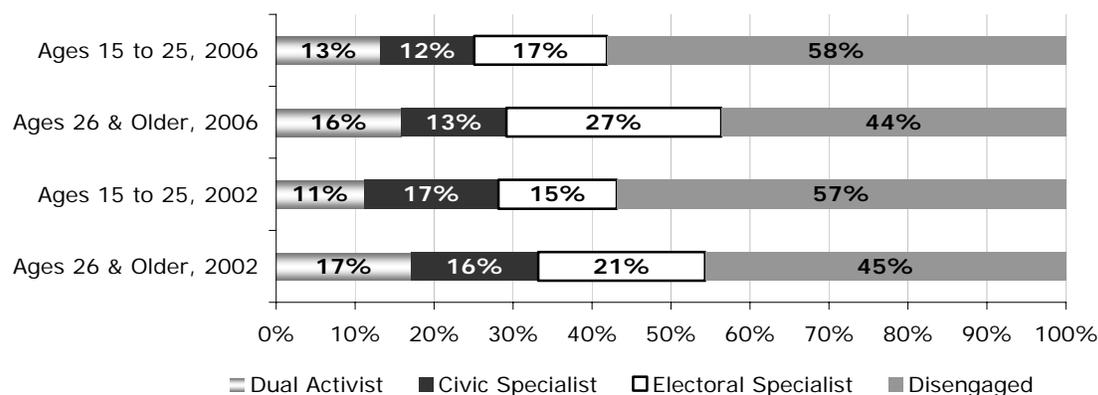
A TYPOLOGY OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Following Keeter et al. (2002) and Zukin et. al. (2006), CIRCLE classifies people into four broad categories.

- “Electoral specialists” are those who can cite at least two forms of electoral engagement that they have conducted within the past year.
- “Civic specialists” are those who have participated in at least two forms of civic engagement within the last year.
- “Dual activists” qualify as both electoral specialists and civic specialists.
- The “disengaged” do not perform two or more types of engagement in either the civic or the political category.

As figure 1 shows, more than half of young people are disengaged. About 12% are civic specialists, down significantly since 2002. About 17% are electoral specialists, up just a bit since 2002. And 13% are “dual activists,” up slightly since 2002.

Figure 1: Civic Typology 2006 and 2002



Source: Civic and Political Health of the Nation, 2006 and 2002.

In addition to the civic typology, we have generated several additional measures of civic engagement

- The “hyper-engaged”: These are individuals who report engaging in 10 or more of the 19 core activities
- The “highly disengaged”: These are individuals who report no participation in any of the 19 core activities we measure
- Average number of civic engagement activities: This is an average of the number of the 19 core activities survey respondents report.

In 2006, 7 percent of young people reported participation in 10 or more activities, and 17 percent reported no participation in the 19 civic engagement activities we measure. On average, young people reported participation in 3.7 activities in the past year.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN 2006 - THE GOOD NEWS AND THE BAD

The good news is that some forms of engagement are quite widespread among young Americans. For example:

- 72% of young Americans say they *follow what's going on* in government and public affairs at least some of the time.*
- 67% have *confronted* someone who said something that they considered offensive, such as a racist or other prejudiced comment.*
- 36% have *volunteered* within the last year. This is the activity that had the greatest percentage of young participants (see figure 2).
- 35% participate in political discussions by trying to *persuade* other people about elections.
- 30% have *boycotted* a product because of the conditions under which it was made or the values of the company that made it. Roughly the same proportion has "boycotted" a product: bought it because they approved of its values.
- 26% of those ages 20 to 25 say that they "always" *vote*.

*These are not counted among the 19 indicators of civic engagement

The most involved: Some young people are intensely involved. Thirteen percent of American youth are what we call "dual activists," engaging in at least two different forms of community engagement *and* two different forms of political participation. Almost seven percent of young Americans are *hyper-involved*, claiming 10 or more different kinds of participation. Compared to their peers who report no civic engagement activities, this hyper-engaged group is more likely to be African-American, Democratic (or leaning toward the Democrats), liberal, urban, regular church attendee, from a family with parents who volunteer, a current student (in college or high school), and from college-educated homes. Most are confident in their ability to make a difference.

The least involved: The bad news is that substantial numbers of young people are *disconnected* from politics and community life. A majority of young people (58%) is unable to cite two forms of civic or two forms of political engagement that they have done; we count them as "disengaged." Of those who are disengaged, 28% have not done *any* of the 19 forms of civic engagement that we have measured in this survey. They are "highly disengaged."

Compared to their engaged peers, members of this highly disengaged group (17% of the whole youth population) are much less confident in their own ability to make a difference, less likely to have college-educated parents or parents who volunteer, less likely to have any college experience, less aligned with either party, and more likely to be Latinos or immigrants.

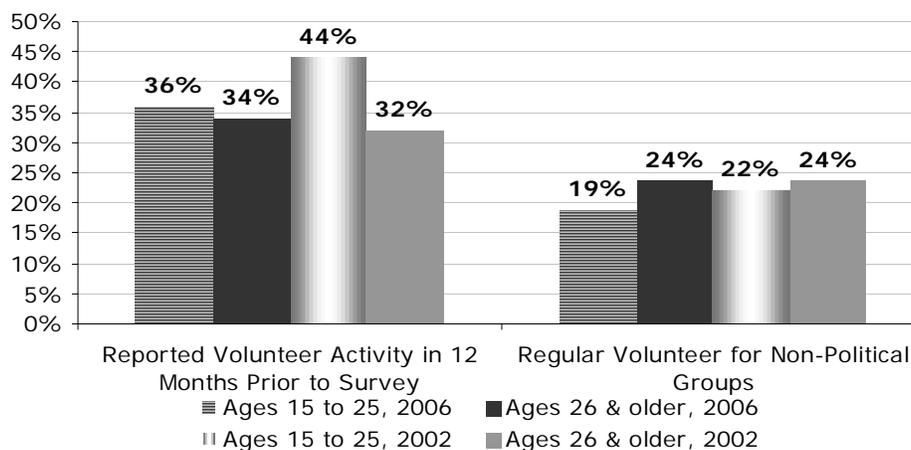
CIVIC ACTIVITIES

Patterns of Volunteering and Community Involvement

The 2006 CPHS survey shows a lower volunteering rate among young people than when we last asked the same question in 2002 (36% in 2006 vs. 44% in 2002). (See figure 2.) Youth volunteering rates were high in 2002, after a decade of growth, and likely reflected a high level of volunteering in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks. In contrast to our findings, the Census Bureau's annual survey of volunteering, which uses different questions to measure the volunteering rate, finds a modest increase between 2002 and 2005 among young Americans.³ Other surveys of young people, such as Monitoring the Future, show a slight drop after 2001 in the percentage of high school seniors, sophomores and 8th graders who report volunteering, though there has been some recovery in the last year. (See figure 3.)

Despite the drop in volunteering reported in our survey between 2002 and 2006, still over a third of young people reported being engaged in volunteer activities and they reported a higher volunteering rate than their adult counterparts (those older than 25). However, it is important to note that while adults volunteer at lower rates than young people they are more likely to be *regular* volunteers.

**Figure 2: Volunteering Among Adults
2006 and 2002**



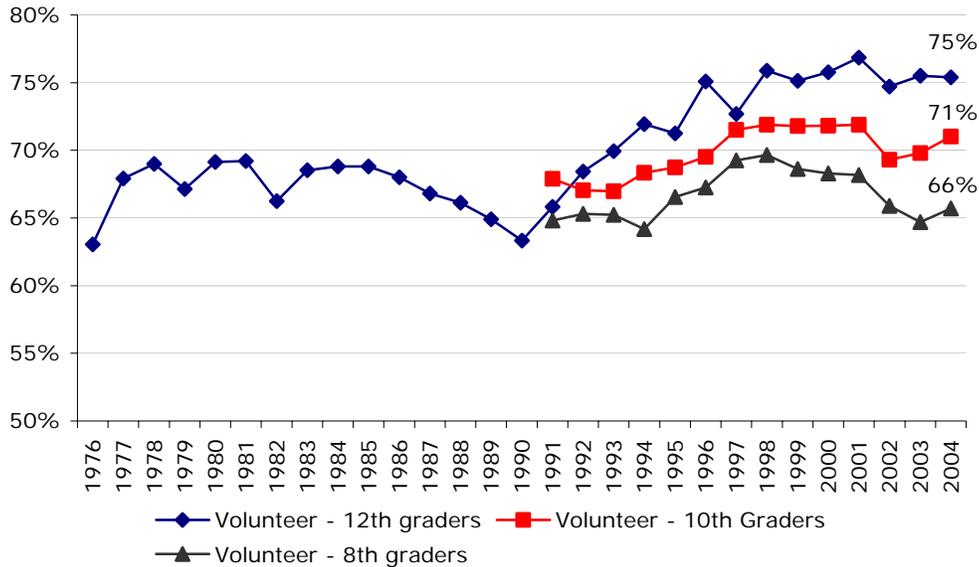
Source: Civic and Political Health of the Nation, 2006 and 2002

Compared to their counterparts who did not volunteer, young people who reported volunteering over the past year were more likely to be single (79% vs. 67%), female

³ According to the 2005 September volunteering supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS), volunteering among young people ages 16 to 18 was 33%, and for young people ages 19 to 24 was 20%. In contrast, the volunteering rate among young people from the 2002 September CPS was 30% for 16 to 18 year olds and 18% for 19 to 24 year olds. For both age groups, reported volunteering is higher. While this is not a direct comparison to our survey, it provides a good approximation. Only the 2006 September CPS Supplement will be able to provide a comparison to our survey results. That survey, while completed, is not yet publicly available.

(52% vs. 48%), enrolled in high school (44% vs. 28%) and regular church attendees (46% vs. 39%). In addition, they were more likely to say they personally felt they could make a difference in their community (64% vs. 49%).

**Figure 3: Volunteering in the Past Year
Among 8th, 10th and 12th Graders**



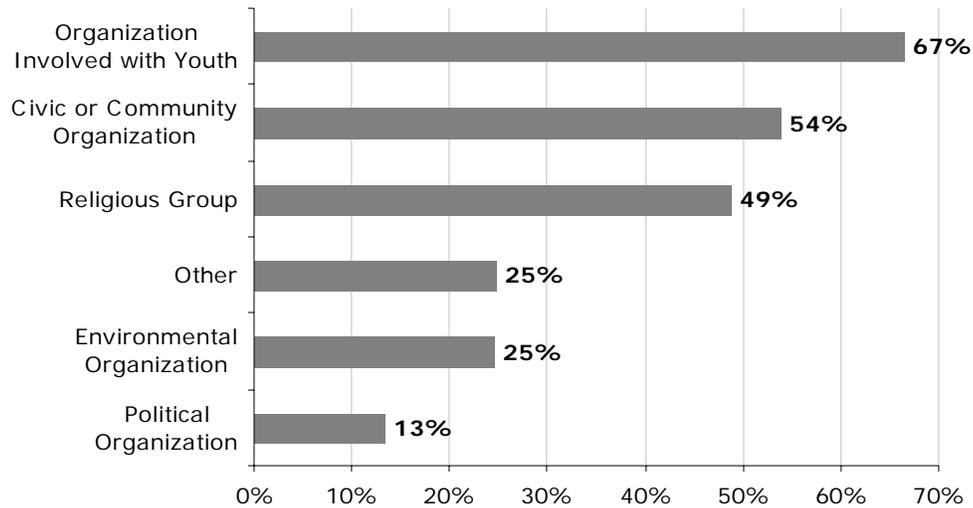
Source: Monitoring the Future, 12th grade, 10th grade and 8th grade surveys, 1976 to 2004.

The survey allows us to identify what kinds of groups are the most common settings for volunteering. Organizations involving youth (67%) draw the greatest numbers of young volunteers, followed by civic or community organizations (54%) and then religious groups (49%). Political organizations tend to draw the fewest youth volunteers (13%). This ranking of organizations is exactly the same as the rankings for young volunteers in 2002. (See figure 4.)

Most young people see volunteering as separate from political engagement or activism. In the 2006 CPHS, a large majority of young people say that they volunteer to help other people, not to address a social or political problem. However, there is a group of “activist volunteers” who *do* see their volunteering as a means to address social or political problems. This group represents six percent of youth. Because they are split between liberals and conservatives (36% vs. 30%), the issues that they address probably vary. However, activist volunteers ages 20 to 25 report that they are more likely to vote regularly (49%) compared to young people who have volunteered but not for activist reasons (32%), and compared to those who have not volunteered (23%). Also, activist volunteers report that they are more confident in their own ability to make a difference (78%) when compared to non-activist volunteers (61%) or young people who did not volunteer (49%).



Figure 4 : Types of Organizations Volunteered for by Young People, Ages 15 to 25, 2006



Source: Civic and Political Health of the Nation, 2006.

The 2006 CPHS also asked respondents about their motivations for volunteering for these types of groups and how they were recruited. Overall, young people who participated in political organizations (just 13% of the young volunteers) were most likely to be motivated by the desire to address a social or political problem. Forty-one percent of the political volunteers wanted to address a problem, and 42% wanted to help other people. Most young people who volunteered for other types of organizations wanted to help other people. For example, young people who volunteered for environmental organizations generally did so to help other people (52%), not to address a social or political problem (23%).

Political organizations were also the most likely to recruit their volunteers by reaching out to them. In the other groups, young volunteers tended to make the initial contact.

Community Problem-Solving

In a democracy, people not only influence the government, they also work directly with fellow citizens to address local issues. This can occur in two ways, either through organizations at schools or through organizations off campus. According to the 2006 CPHS, participation in school activities and clubs is fairly common, with 62% of current high school students claiming some involvement in organized clubs or groups. That still leaves more than one-third with no extracurricular involvement.

However, outside of their own schools and after they leave school, most American youth are not very involved in "public work."⁴ The 2006 CPHS finds:

⁴ Harry C. Boyte and Nancy N. Kari, *Building America: The Democratic Promise of Public Work* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

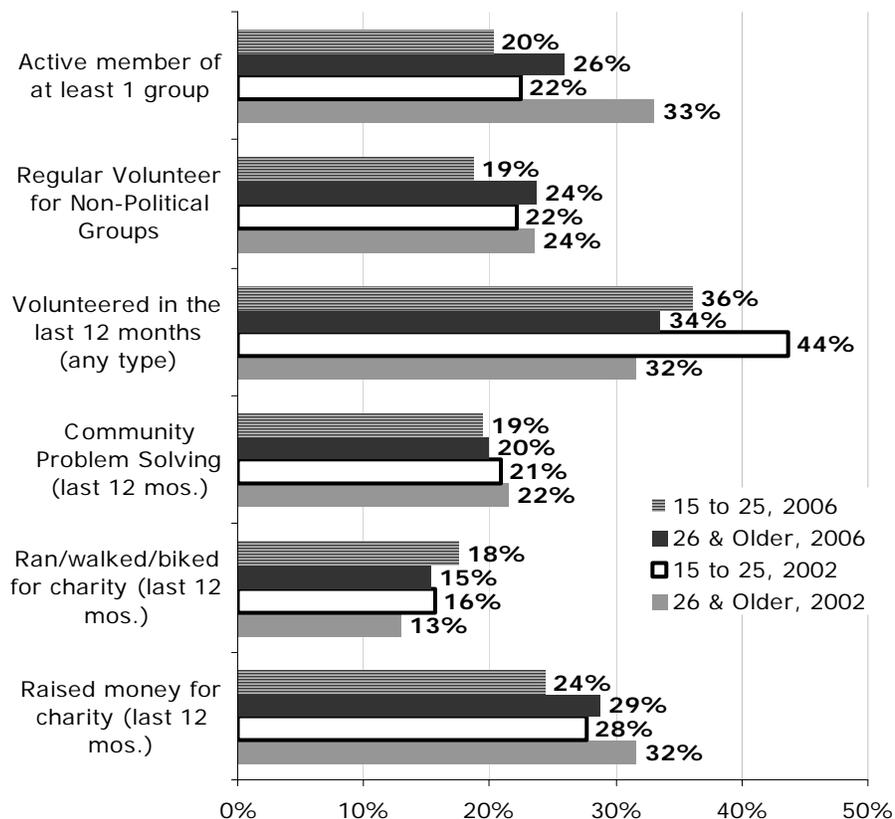
- 19% of young people have worked within the last year “informally with some one or some group to solve a problem in the community” where they live. This is about the same rate as among older people. This is the only civic activity for which young men outnumbered young women (although by a small margin 51% vs. 49%).
- Only 10% are confident that they personally can make a great deal of difference in solving community problems, although another 45% believe they can make *some* difference.
- Young people are more confident about collaborative work: 44% believe that “people working together” can make a great deal of difference in solving local problems.

Giving: Raising Money for Charities

In addition to giving their time to improve social conditions, a sizeable group (over one-fifth) of young people reported raising money for charities. Young people and adults differed somewhat in the ways that they contributed financially to charities. Young people were slightly more likely to have personally walked, run or ridden a bicycle to raise money for a charitable cause than adults (18% vs. 15%). On the other hand, adults were more likely to have raised money in other ways such as serving on boards, soliciting donations, etc. (29% vs. 24%). This pattern remained generally stable between 2002 and 2006.

Figure 5 shows the changes in the level of engagement in civic activities between 2002 and 2006 by age.

Figure 5: Civic Activities 2006 and 2002



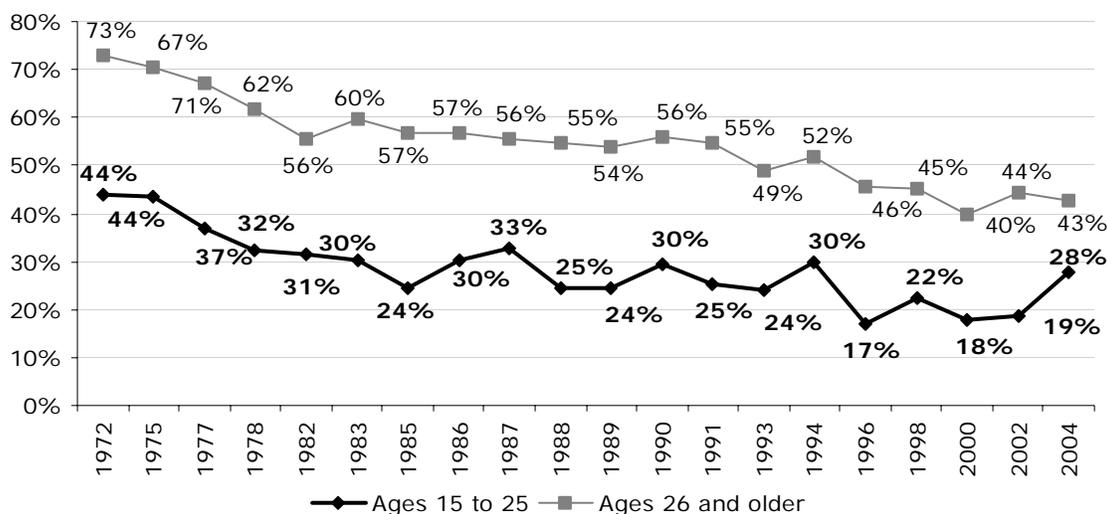
Source: Civic and Political Health of the Nation, 2006 and 2002.

ELECTORAL ACTIVITIES

A Turn Back to Politics?

During the 1990s, national surveys found that young people were increasingly likely to volunteer but also increasingly alienated from politics and large-scale current events. Youth volunteering rates rose substantially while youth voting declined by about one-third, and young people, according to the General Social Survey (GSS), became dramatically less likely to say that they read a newspaper on a daily basis (see figure 6).⁵ In focus groups, many young people expressed deep skepticism about government, politics, and the news media but said that they enjoyed serving other people directly.⁶

Figure 6: Daily Newspaper Readership by Age, 1972 to 2004



Source: General Social Survey, 1972 to 2004

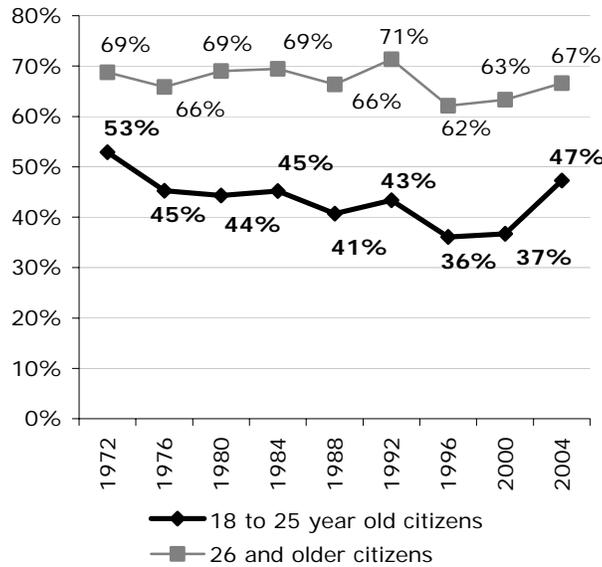
Since 2000, the gap between politics and service appears to have narrowed for younger Americans. It may be that the compelling series of news events that began on September 11, 2001 captured young people's attention and motivated them to participate in large-scale political affairs.

The most dramatic evidence is the youth turnout rate in 2004—up ten percentage points compared to the previous presidential election (for 18-to-25 year olds). (See figure 7.) The strong youth vote was accompanied by increases in political discussion and attention to news during the 2004 campaign season.

⁵ For voting, see Census data analyzed by Mark Hugo Lopez, Emily Kirby, and Jared Sagoff, "The Youth Vote 2004" (CIRCLE Fact Sheet, July 2005). For news interest, see Michael Olander, Media Use among Young People (CIRCLE Fact Sheet, July 2003). Members of the Millennial Generation (born after 1985) were about 15 percentage points more likely to volunteer than the preceding generation had been in the 1970s, according to the DDB Life Style survey.

⁶ Beem, Christopher (2005) "CIRCLE Working Paper 27: From the Horse's Mouth: A Dialogue Between Politicians and College Students."

Figure 7: Voter Turnout Among Adult Citizens in Presidential Election Years



Source: Current Population Survey November Supplements 1972 to 2004

Nevertheless, most young people did not vote in 2004, and the increase in turnout may prove temporary. We cannot predict the turnout rate in this November's midterm elections, but the new survey shows some positive "leading indicators":

- an increase in the percentage of high school age youth (ages 15 to 17) who say that politics is discussed in their homes (19% in 2006 vs. 12% in 2002)
- an increase—but small and not statistically significant—in the percentage of young people (age 20 to 25) who say they "always" vote (26% in 2006 vs. 24% in 2002)
- an increase in the percentage of 15 to 25 year olds who say they always follow the news: 27% in 2006 versus 24% in 2002.

Several indicators suggest that youth voting may be on the rise, but it is important to note that young people age 20 to 25 were much less likely than their adult counterparts (age 26 and above) to report they were regular voters (26% vs. 56%). Part of the 30 point gap may be explained by the fact that young people have had fewer opportunities to vote and thus may be less likely to identify as "regular" voters. However, in 2004 there was an almost 20 point gap in actual voting rates between 18 to 24 year olds and those above the age of 25 (see CIRCLE Fact Sheet "The Youth Vote 2004").

Getting Out the Vote

Rigorous experimental evidence shows that young people are more likely to vote when they are asked to do so.⁷ Consistent with those findings, the new survey shows that 44% of young people ages 20 to 25 who were contacted by a party or candidate are regular voters, compared to 22% of young people who were not contacted:

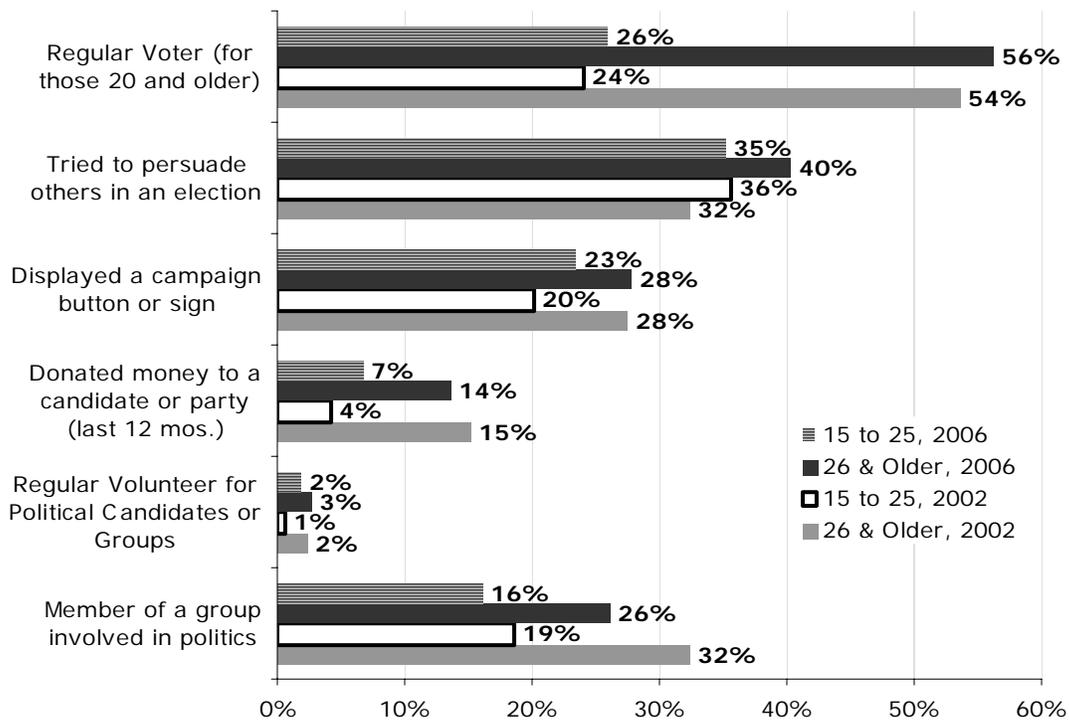
⁷ Young Voter Strategies with CIRCLE, *Young Voter Mobilization Tactics* (September 2006).

double the rate. To some extent, it may be that campaigns are contacting young people who are already on lists of regular voters. But mobilization probably turns some young people into voters since they are likely participating in one of their first elections. Of those who were contacted, 53% are Democrats 33% are Republicans, and 14% are Independents suggesting uneven competition between the major parties.

Young people are also much more likely to vote if they see voting as a duty. Of those ages 20 to 25 who say that voting is their responsibility as citizens, 41% claim *always* to vote and only eight percent say they *never* do. On the other hand, of those who say they vote when it may affect the outcome of an election, 26% rarely or never vote. That may be because they calculate that their vote will not affect the outcome in the districts where they live.

While young people lagged behind adults in the regular voter category, they were almost equally as likely as adults to participate in get-out-the-vote efforts. In 2006, over one-third of 15-to-25-year-olds reported that they had tried to persuade someone else to vote for or against one of the parties or candidates. Moreover, while there is a sizeable age gap in voting rates, there is only a five percentage point gap on this indicator.

Figure 8: Electoral Activities 2006 and 2002

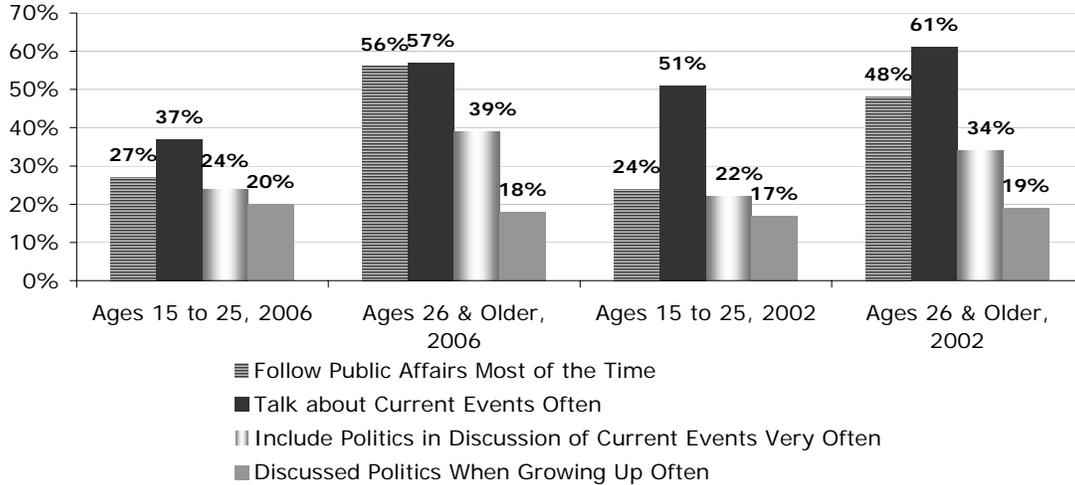


Source: Civic and Political Health of the Nation, 2006 and 2002.

Discussing Current Events and Politics

As figure 9 shows, young people are less likely in 2006 to discuss current events with their family than they were in 2002—shortly after the September 11th attacks and the invasion of Afghanistan—but they are somewhat more likely to discuss politics at home.

Figure 9: News Consumption and Discussion 2006 and 2002



POLITICAL VOICE ACTIVITIES

Expressing Political "Voice"

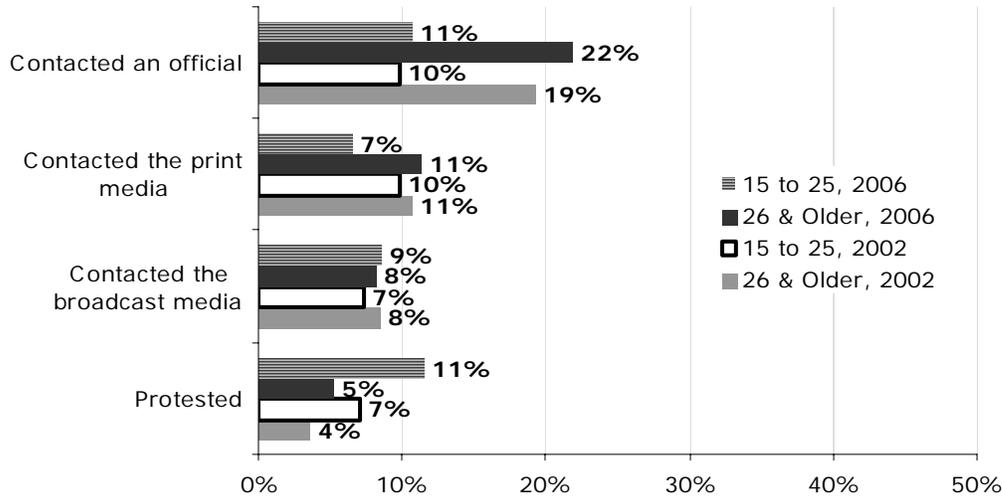
Citizens of democracies attempt to influence the government by voting and expressing their views to officials and fellow citizens. Today, Americans have extraordinarily broad options for expressing our views, including: wearing buttons and stickers, circulating email petitions, buying products that reflect the consumer's political opinions, and marching. For young people, participation in these forms of voice is relatively rare. However:

- 30% of young people have "boycotted" (refused to buy a product or service because they did not like the social or political values of the company that produced or provided it).
- 29% of young people have "buycotted" (bought a product or service because they liked the social or political values of the company that produced or provided it). This is down significantly from the 35% rate in 2002.
- 18% have signed a paper petition.
- 16% have signed an email petition.
- 11% have protested.

While the rate of political canvassing is low overall, young people outpaced their adult counterparts in 2006. Young people reported a slight increase in canvassing between

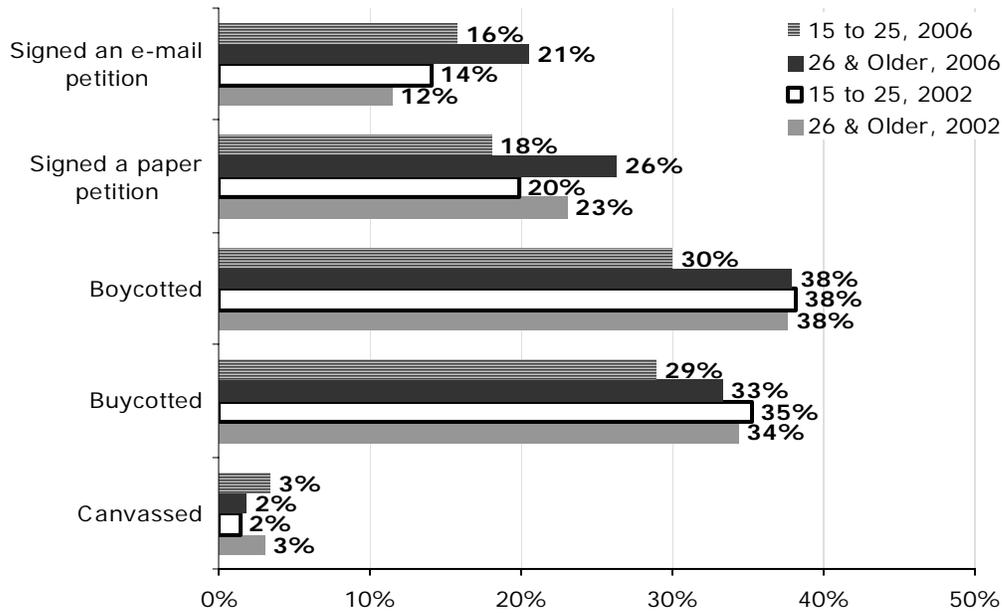
2006 and 2002 while the rate for adults fell. Figures 10 and 11 show the rate at which young people and adults participated in political voice activities in 2006.

Figure 10: Political Voice 2006 and 2002
12 months prior to survey



Source: Civic and Political Health of the Nation, 2006 and 2002

Figure 11: Political Voice Activities 2006 and 2002
12 months prior to survey

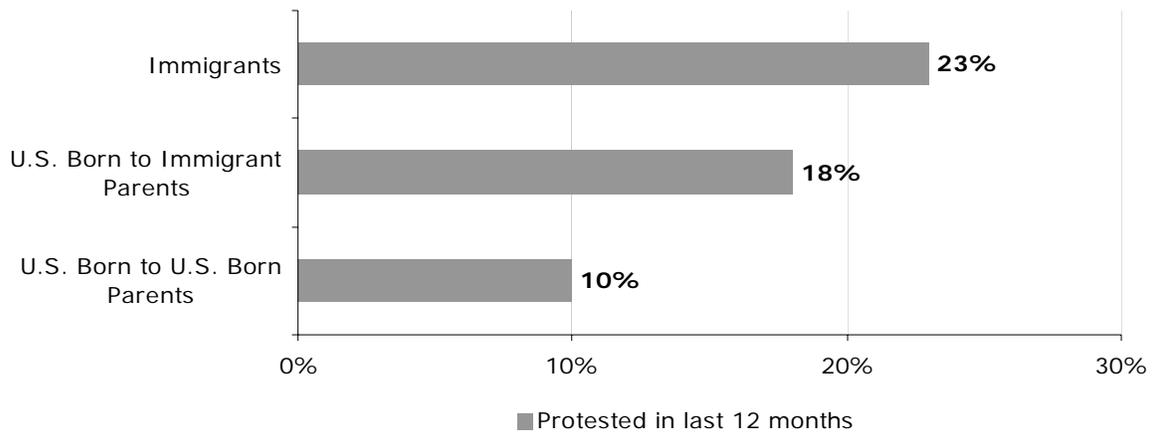


Source: Civic and Political Health of the Nation, 2006 and 2002

Immigrant Youth and the Spring 2006 Protests

The most striking finding regarding political voice is that 23% of immigrant youth and 18% of children of immigrant parents reported that they had protested in the past 12 months. In contrast, young people who were born in the U.S. to parents born in the U.S. reported a protest rate of 10%. We cannot tell how much the rate of protest has increased among immigrant youth since few reliable data sources are available from the past, but there was likely a very steep increase.⁸ (See figure 12.)

Figure 15 : Protest Rates Among 15 to 25 Year Old by Nativity, 2006



Source: Civic and Political Health of the Nation, 2006.

DISPARITIES IN ENGAGEMENT

By engaging in politics and community affairs, people get more benefits for themselves and make public institutions work better for their communities. Therefore, it is disturbing when people who are less privileged are much less engaged. The survey shows large gaps in engagement by education, race, and ethnicity—although in many respects young Whites are *not* the most engaged.

Education

College attendance—a measure of educational success, opportunities for learning, networking, and social status—correlates strongly with civic engagement. If we compare young people (age 18 to 25) who have some college experience with non-

⁸ According to the Pew Hispanic Center's 2004 Survey of Latinos, 15% of young Latino immigrants ages 18 to 29 had reported attending a public meeting or demonstration in 2004. While this result can be compared to ours, it is not a direct comparison since our immigrant sample includes non-Latino immigrants as well as Latino immigrants, and we asked whether someone had participated in a "protest, march, or demonstration," a slightly different question from that asked in the Pew Hispanic Center's survey. However, this result from the Pew Hispanic Center suggests that protesting among immigrant youth increased by roughly 8 percentage points between 2004 and 2006.

college youth, the former group is ahead on every indicator except canvassing, protesting and contacting the broadcast media.

Seventy-seven percent of young people ages 18 to 25 with no college experience claim at least one civic engagement activity, whereas 86% of people with college experience claim at least one form of civic engagement. The gap in regular voting, among young people ages 20 to 25 by college experience is similar: 29% for those with college experience vs. 20% for those with no college experience.

Race and Ethnicity

- **Young African-Americans are politically engaged:** Consistent with previous research, African-Americans are generally the most *politically* engaged racial/ethnic group. Compared to young Latinos, Whites, and Asian-Americans, young African-Americans are the most likely to vote regularly, belong to groups involved with politics, donate money to candidates or parties, display buttons or signs, canvass, and contact the broadcast media or print media. They are also the most likely to raise money for charity (tied with Asian Americans). Census voting data (which provides a longer trendline from 1972 to the present) shows that since 1984 African-American youth have voted at about the same rate as Whites, and at higher rates in some elections in some states and metropolitan areas.⁹
- **Asian-Americans are heavily engaged:** Asian-Americans have rarely been surveyed about their civic engagement in substantial numbers, but the 2006 CPHS has an adequate sample (184 young Asian-American respondents) and finds that they are quite engaged. They are the most likely to work on community problems, volunteer regularly, boycott, sign petitions, raise money for charity (tied with African-Americans), persuade others about an election, contact officials, and regularly volunteer for a party or candidate (note: political volunteering is rare for all groups, and only four percent of Asian-Americans report participation in this activity).
- **Many Latinos are left out of politics and civic organizations, but many have protested:** Young Latinos are the least likely to volunteer, work with others on community problems, buy or refuse to buy products for political or ethical reasons, sign paper or email petitions, contact officials, and belong to groups involved with politics. Latinos have the highest rate of “disengaged” young people, at 67%. This high level of disengagement may be a function of barriers to engagement, such as acquiring citizenship, that many Latinos face. For example, only U.S. citizens can vote in federal elections. Since a large proportion of young Latinos are not U.S. citizens (34% according to the March 2006 Current Population Survey), they may report lower levels of electoral engagement than their counterparts who do not face the same citizenship barriers. However, the survey found that fully one-quarter of young Latinos had protested, more than double the rate for any other racial/ethnic group. The slogan of many marches was “*¡Hoy marchamos!* [Today we march]—*¡Mañana votamos!* [Tomorrow we vote].” While the protests are suggestive of greater engagement in the future, it remains to be seen whether many young Latinos will turn out to vote in large numbers in November.

⁹ For more information on these comparisons, see the CIRCLE Fact Sheet “The Youth Vote 2004” by Mark Hugo Lopez, Emily Kirby, and Jared Sagoff, July 2005.

- **Young Whites present a mixed picture:** Whites are the most likely to run, walk, or ride a bike for charity and to be active members of a group. They are the least likely to protest, donate money to a party or candidate, or persuade others about an election. Their average number of civic activities and their percentage of highly engaged and highly disengaged people place them close to the norm for the whole youth population.

Gender

Overall, the similarities in civic engagement between young men and young women are more striking than the differences.¹⁰ Women and men are equally likely to be found at the two ends of the civic spectrum—the dual activist category is made up of 48% women and 52% men and the disengaged category is comprised of 50% women and 50% men. However, civic specialists are much more likely to be female while electoral specialists are more likely to be male. In 2006, women made up 61% of civic specialists while men made up 61% of the electoral specialists.

More women participate in the following activities than men:

- raising money for charity (27% for women vs. 22% for men)
- regular volunteering for non-political groups (21% vs. 16%)
- active group membership (22% vs. 18%)
- membership in political groups (17% vs. 15%)
- participating in a run/walk/ride for charity (20% vs. 15%)

Young men are more likely to participate in the following activities:

- regular voting (ages 20 to 25) (28% for men vs. 25% for women)
- persuading others to vote (39% vs. 31%)
- donating money for a political campaign (9% vs. 5%)
- regular volunteering for a political group (2.4% vs. 1.3%)

LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT

When this survey was last conducted in 2002, young Americans appeared to be highly favorable toward government. About two-thirds of people between the ages of 15 and 25 felt that government should do more to solve problems; that governmental regulation of business was necessary, not harmful; and that government deserved more credit than it usually got. Young people held substantially more favorable attitudes toward the government than their elders.

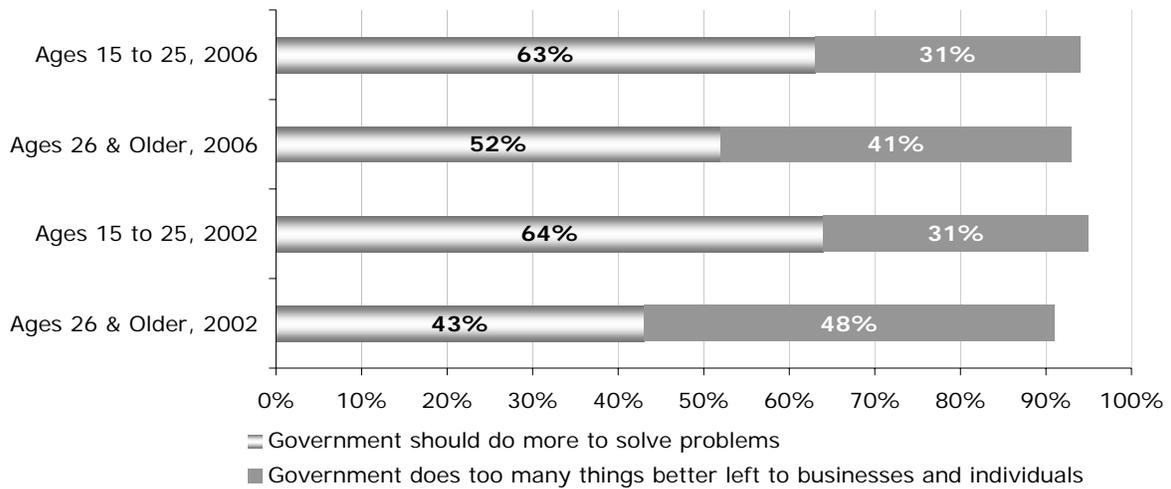
In 2006, about the same proportion of young people—63%—still believe that the government should do more to solve problems. Just 31% believe that “Government does too many things better left to businesses and individuals.” However, young people are significantly less likely in 2006 to favor government regulation of business, and more likely to say that government is “almost always wasteful and inefficient” than to say that it “often does a better job than people give it credit for” (47% vs. 45%). Even though trust in government has dropped among young people,

¹⁰ Krista Jenkins, “Gender and Civic Engagement: Secondary Analysis of Survey Data,” CIRCLE Working Paper #41 (June 2005).

they are still more likely to be trusting of government than their adult counterparts. (See figures 13 to 15.)

The 2006 CPHS cannot definitively explain this change in opinion, but the main news headlines in 2002 involved an attack on the United States and the invasion of Afghanistan. Four years later, the news was dominated by Hurricane Katrina and the

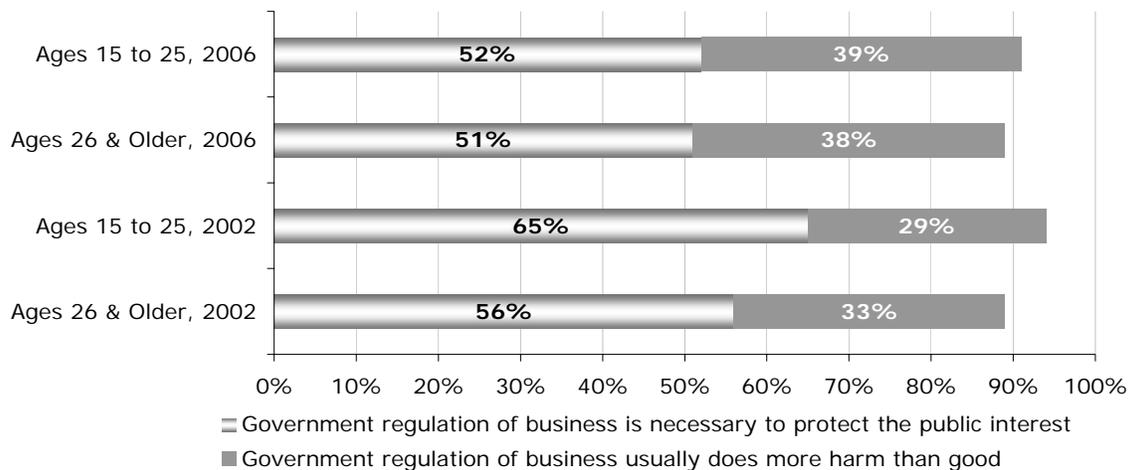
Figure 13: View of Role of Government 2006 and 2002



Source: Civic and Political Health of the Nation, 2006 and 2002.

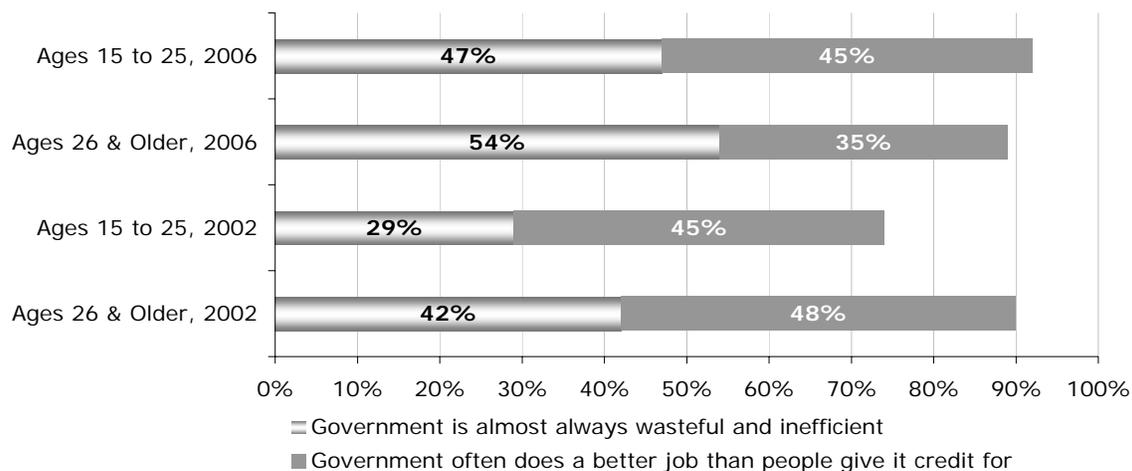
federal response and by the war in Iraq. Most young people seem to want the government to address problems but doubt that it is effective at doing so.

Figure 14: View of Role of Government 2006 and 2002



Source: Civic and Political Health of the Nation, 2006 and 2002.

Figure 15: View of Role of Government 2006 and 2002



Source: Civic and Political Health of the Nation, 2006 and 2002.

Differences in Views of Government

Views of government, while generally uniform across all groups of young people, do differ across some groups. Specifically:

- Young Republicans are less likely to say that government “should do more to solve problems” than their Democratic and Independent counterparts (56% compared to 65% and 64% respectively). However, young Republicans are less likely to see the government as “wasteful or inefficient,” compared to Democrats and Independents (39% compared to 50% and 49% respectively). Since 2002, for all three groups, there has been an increase in the view that the government is wasteful and inefficient.
- Those who are classified as civic specialists or dual activists are more likely to say that “government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest” when compared to electoral specialists and the disengaged. The rates are 66% for civic specialists, 61% for dual activists, 49% for electoral specialists, and 49% for the disengaged.
- Asian-American youth (71%) are the most likely to say that “government should do more to solve problems.” Additionally, young African-Americans and Latinos are more likely to value government than their White counterparts. Sixty-nine percent of African-Americans and 65% of Latinos say “government should do more,” while 60% of Whites say the same.
- African-American youth are the most likely to say that “government is almost always wasteful and inefficient” (54%). This number is up 20 points since 2002. Similarly, 47% of young Whites (up 19 points over 2002), 44% of young Latinos (up 13 points over 2002), and 47% of young Asian-Americans say “government is almost always wasteful and inefficient.”

POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE

People need information in order to participate in civic life. (For example, you have to know that there is an election before you can vote.) Furthermore, people need high-quality information in order to act wisely.

In this survey we asked six questions about the political knowledge of young people. The results show distressing gaps in political knowledge:

- 54% of young people (but an even higher proportion of older people) believe that the federal government spends more on foreign aid than Social Security. In reality, the federal government spends *64 times more money* on Social Security than the United States Agency for International Development, which is responsible for non-military foreign aid.¹¹
- 53% are unable to name the Republican Party as the more conservative party.
- 56% are unaware that only citizens can vote in federal elections.
- 30% can correctly name at least one member of the President’s Cabinet. Of those who could name a cabinet member, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was by far the most common cabinet member named (82%).
- 34% know that the United States has a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council—compared to 27% who know that France has a seat. (Older people are twice as likely to know about the US seat.)

While overall youth political knowledge is low, there are important differences between groups of young people that are evident from our survey.

Political Knowledge and Civic Engagement

Young people who are more engaged in their communities also have higher levels of political knowledge. For example, youth who are classified as “disengaged” were the most likely to not answer any of the political knowledge questions correctly. (See Table 2.) “Dual activists” and “electoral specialists” were more likely to have answered the political knowledge questions correctly.

Table 2: Political Knowledge by Levels of Civic Engagement

	Dual Activist	Civic Specialist	Electoral Specialist	Dis-engaged
Low Knowledge (0 political knowledge questions correct)	5%	9%	10%	21%
Medium Knowledge (1-5 political knowledge questions correct)	90%	89%	86%	77%
High Knowledge (all 6 political knowledge questions correct)	5%	2%	4%	2%

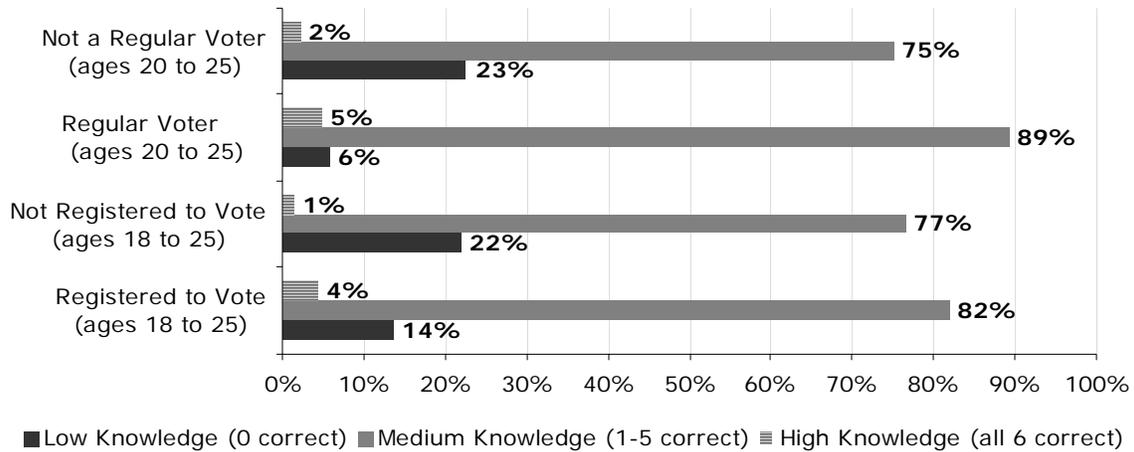
Source: Authors’ tabulations from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey.

Similarly, youth who are registered to vote are more informed than their non-registered peers. Eighty-six percent of young registered voters answered at least one

¹¹ Our estimate is based on the President’s budget request for Social Security and Foreign Aid for the fiscal year 2006.

of the political knowledge questions correctly as opposed to 78% of youth who are not registered to vote. (See figure 16.)

Figure 16 : Political Knowledge by Electoral Engagement



Source: Civic and Political Health of the Nation, 2006 and 2002.

Political Knowledge and Differences among Groups of Young People

Generally, education correlates with political knowledge. Among 18-to-25-year-olds with no college experience, 23% were unable to answer any political knowledge questions correctly. Among those with college experience, only 13% were unable to answer any questions correctly.

Political party identification plays a small role in political knowledge. Youth who identified as Independents are less informed (31% of Independents ages 18 to 25 who do not lean toward either political party answered all of the knowledge questions incorrectly). Overall, there is very little difference between Democrats and Republicans. Only 12% of 18 to 25 year olds who identify or lean Democrat and 13% of 18 to 25 year olds who identify or lean Republican failed to answer any political knowledge questions correctly.

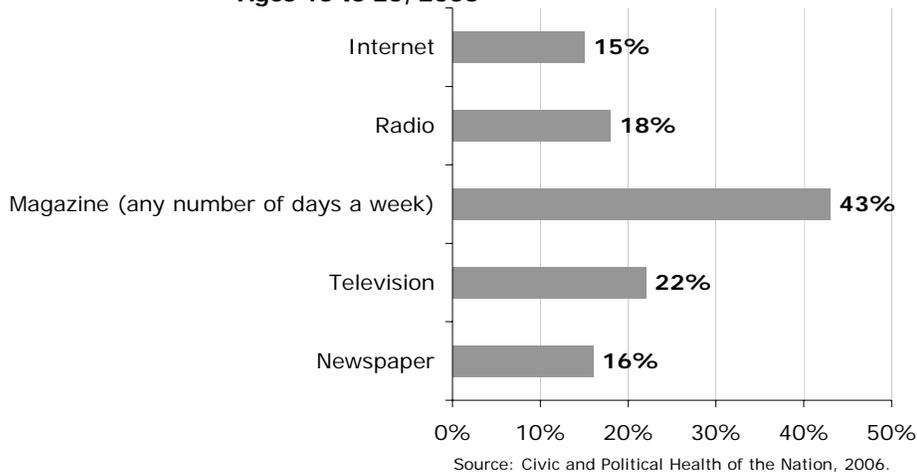
THE IMPORTANCE OF FOLLOWING THE NEWS FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Our survey also asked about utilization of five sources of news and information: newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and the Internet. See figure 17 for everyday media use rates among young people from the 2006 CPHS. For *all* news sources and *all* 19 indicators, the pattern of utilization and civic engagement was the same. Those who regularly follow the news in any medium are more involved than those who do not use the news media.

For the most part, these relationships are strong. For example, for young people:

- 31% percent of those who read a newspaper daily worked on a community problem within the last year, compared to 13% of non-readers.
- 38% of those who sometimes read magazines say they are regular voters, compared to 25% of people who never read magazines.
- 26% of those who watch the TV news daily are active members of groups, compared to 15% of those who never watch TV news.
- 20% of those who listen to radio news daily are members of political groups, compared to 11% of those who never listen to radio news.

Figure 17 : Everyday Media Use Among Young People for News and Information Ages 15 to 25, 2006



Internet Use and Civic Engagement

We separately asked about the frequency with which people go online, whether for news or other purposes. According to our survey, 69% of young people reported using the Internet at least a few times per week, and 41% reported using it daily. In general, those who use the Internet at least a few times per week are more engaged than those who never use it, while those who use it daily are the most engaged. For example, among those who do not use the Internet regularly, 72% are disengaged, and 23% have not participated in any civic engagement activities we measure. In contrast, among those who use the Internet daily, only 49% are disengaged, and only 10% have not engaged in any civic activities. That remains true even when we take into account the effects of education.

VIEWS OF POLITICS AND ELECTIONS

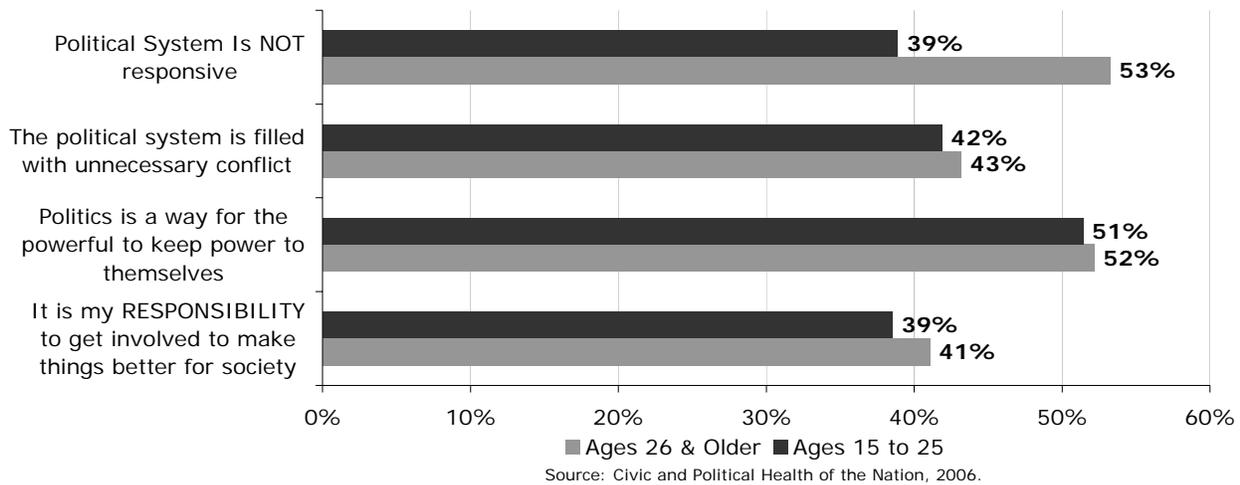
Recent elections and controversies about voting technology and equipment have suggested that the public is increasingly frustrated with the politics and elections. In the 2006 CPHS we asked several questions about views of politics and elections, including the following:

- It is your responsibility (or your choice) to get involved to make things better for society?

- Is the political system filled with unnecessary conflict? (Or are there are so many competing groups in politics that conflict is unavoidable)?
- Is politics a way for the powerful to keep power to themselves or is it a way for the less powerful to compete on equal footing with the powerful?
- On the whole, would you say the political system in this country IS or is NOT responsive to the genuine needs of the public?

In general, we expect people to participate in electoral activities more if they think participation is an obligation, if they believe that conflict is inevitable, if they see politics as a way for the less powerful to compete, and if they consider the political system responsive.

Figure 18: Views on Politics 2006



Overall, young people and adults hold similar views of these matters. Both groups say “the political system is filled with unnecessary conflict” (43% of adults and 42% of young people), and “politics is a way for the powerful to keep power for themselves” (52% and 51% respectively). Young people, however, are less likely to view the political system as unresponsive (39% compared to 53% of older people). (See Figure 18.)

Differences in Views of Politics and Elections by Demographic Groups

African-Americans (52%) are most likely to view the political system as unresponsive to the genuine needs of the public; in contrast, Asian-Americans (32%) are most likely to say the system is responsive.

Young immigrants are more likely to view getting involved in society as their responsibility, instead of their choice (49% vs. 36% for native-born). However, a majority of young people born to immigrant parents (52%) say that the political system is not responsive.

Education is closely related to young people’s views of elections. High school students with no plans to attend college view getting involved as a responsibility (54%), politics as a way for the powerful to keep power (69%), and the political system as filled with unnecessary conflict (51%). High school students with college

plans have different views: they think it is their choice (56%) to get involved, politics as a way for the less powerful to compete on an equal footing with the powerful (48%), and that conflict in politics is unavoidable (51%). Regardless of college plans, a plurality of high school students agree that the political system is not responsive, with the students with no college plans strongly holding that view (47%).

Regardless of party identification, most young people view getting involved as their choice and conflict in politics as unavoidable. Differences emerge in their views about politics and power, and the responsiveness of the political system, however. Democrats and Independents are more likely to view “politics as a way for the powerful to keep power to themselves” (59% and 53% respectively compared to 46% for Republicans), while Republicans are most likely to view conflict in politics as unavoidable (58% compared to 51% and 50% for Democrats and Independents respectively). Last, Democrats are most likely to say that the political system is not responsive to the genuine needs of the public (46%) compared to Republicans (31%) and Independents (37%).

OTHER IMPORTANT FINDINGS FROM THE 2006 CPHS

Generational Identity Seems Weaker

We ask people of all ages to say whether “my age group is unique and distinct from other generations,” or whether “there is nothing particularly unique or distinct about my age group.” In 2002, young people stood out. They were most likely to say that their age group was “unique”: 69% compared to 42% of GenXers, 50% of Baby Boomers, and 51% of the pre-Boomers. At the time, there was some speculation that members of the Millennial or Dot-Net generation had a strong sense of solidarity and distinctiveness that might color their civic engagement.

However, fewer young people today see their generation as unique, compared to four years ago. Sixty percent of people between the ages of 15 and 25 in 2006 say their generation is “unique.” This is down 9 percentage points from 2002. Among young people who are 19-to-29 today (and were 15 to 25 in 2002), 56% say their generation is unique today. This is down 13 points from 2002. It may be that the pattern found in 2002 was a reflection of the impact of the events of September 11th. Having recently experienced a major national trauma, young people may have felt that their generation was unique; it seems that this feeling has dissipated somewhat.

Political Partisanship among Young People

Young Americans (ages 18 to 25) are leaning toward the Democrats today as much as they did in 2002, though slightly fewer identify with the Republican Party. In the spring of 2002, 47% of 18-to-25-year-olds identified as Democrats or leaned Democrat, and 31% identified as Republicans or leaned Republican—a 16 percentage point gap. However, in 2006, the gap had increased slightly to 19 points (47% to 28%).

Table 3 - Partisanship in 2006 and 2002

	2006		2002	
	18 to 25 Year Olds	Adults 26 and Older	18 to 25 Year Olds	Adults 26 and Older
Democrat	30%	32%	27%	35%
Independent who leans Democrat	17%	13%	20%	12%
Independent (no leaning)	24%	19%	22%	16%
Independent who leans Republican	9%	9%	9%	10%
Republican	19%	26%	22%	27%

Source: Authors' Tabulations from the 2006 and 2002 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Surveys. Note that percentages do not sum to 100% since some survey respondents did not identify with a political party or as an Independent.

Some important differences in party identification are evident between young people who are engaged in their communities and those who are not.

- Those who are most active in their communities are more likely to identify with a political party, and less likely to identify as Independents than those who are disengaged or report no civic engagement activities in the last year. See table 4.
- Over 50% of dual activists and electoral specialists ages 18 to 25 identify as Democrats or lean toward the Democratic Party.
- Young people ages 20 to 25 who say they are regular voters are more likely to identify with a political party than all youth: 54% identify as Democrats or lean Democratic, 33% identify as Republican or lean Republican, and 13% identify as Independents.
- Young people ages 18 to 25 who report that they have volunteered in the last year are also more likely to identify with a political party than youth who did not volunteer. Among those who volunteered, 50% identified as Democrat or leaned Democrat, 34% identified as Republican or leaned Republican, and 16% identified as Independents with no party leaning.
- Young people ages 18 to 25 who reported protesting in the last year are more likely to identify with the Democratic Party, or lean Democrat, than their counterparts who did not protest. Sixty-one percent of this group identified as Democrat or leaned Democrat, while 18% identified or leaned Republican, and 21% identified as Independents.

Among some important demographic groups, differences in political partisanship are also evident.

- Young men ages 18 to 25 are more likely to identify or lean Republican than young women ages 18 to 25 (31% vs. 25%), yet young women are more likely to identify as Independent than young men (27% vs. 22%). Both groups, however, are most likely to identify or lean Democrat (48% for women and 47% for men).
- Young African-Americans ages 18 to 25 overwhelmingly identify or lean Democrat (70%). In contrast, young Latinos are the most likely to identify as Independent (36%).
- Young people ages 18 to 25 with college experience are more likely than their counterparts with no college experience to identify or lean toward a political party. Among those with college experience, 50% identify or lean Democrat, 32% identify or lean Republican, and 18% identify as Independent. Among

those with no college experience, 44% identify or lean Democrat, 22% identify or lean Republican, and 33% identify as Independents.

Table 4 – Partisanship by Civic Engagement Among 18 to 25 Year Olds

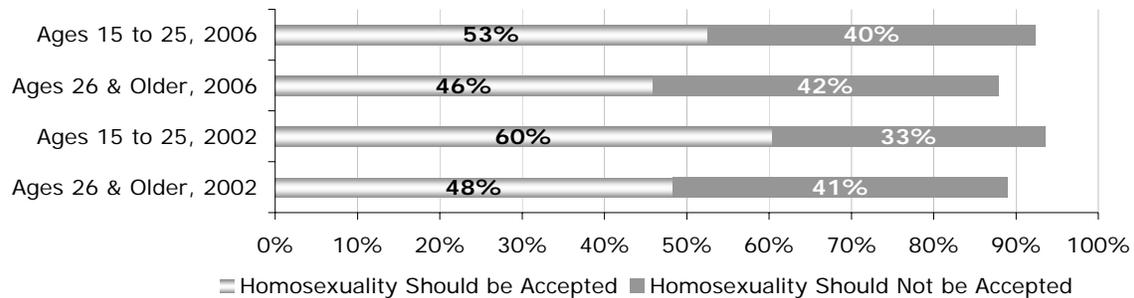
	Dual Activists	Electoral Specialists	Civic Specialists	Dis-engaged	No Civic Engagement Activities
Identify or Lean Democrat	51%	50%	46%	46%	40%
Identify or Lean Republican	36%	38%	32%	23%	20%
Identify as Independent	12%	11%	22%	31%	40%

Source: Authors' tabulations from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey.

Acceptance of Gays and Immigrants

While young people remain more favorable toward immigrants and gays than their adult counterparts, they exhibit a decline in acceptance of these two groups, as compared to 2002. As shown in figure 19, in 2006 over half of young people (53%) felt that homosexuality is a way of life that should be accepted—this is a seven point decline since 2002 when 60% of young people approved of homosexuality. Adults are less accepting of homosexuality than young people are. In 2006, less than half (46%) of adults said they approve of homosexuality—a slight drop of two percentage points from 2002.

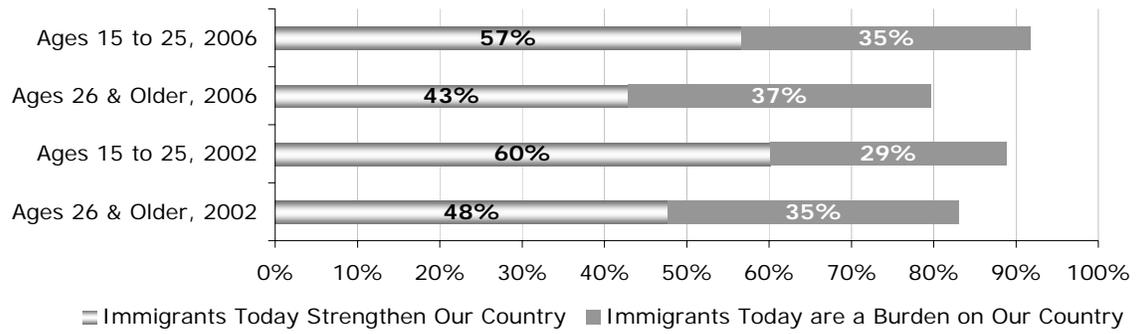
Figure 19: Views of Homosexuality 2006 and 2002



Source: Civic and Political Health of the Nation, 2006 and 2002.

Similarly, although young Americans continue to be more likely to consider immigrants one of America's strengths rather than one of its burdens, the gap between the two camps has narrowed slightly since 2002 (see figure 20). In 2002, those who thought immigrants comprised an American strength outnumbered those who thought they were a burden by more than two to one. In 2006, however, the number of young people who think that immigrants burden the country by taking jobs, housing and health care increased by six percentage points.

Figure 20: Views of Immigration 2006 and 2002



Source: Civic and Political Health of the Nation, 2006 and 2002.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Pew Charitable Trusts graciously made this report possible and has supported CIRCLE's work since 2001. Several people helped in the development of this report. First, we thank Jared Sagoff, Katherine Howard, Anthony Flemming, Sean L. Conner, and Rafael Nieto for excellent research assistance. We also thank William Galston, Scott Keeter, Jane Junn, and Connie Flanagan for comments on preliminary findings from this survey, and for thoughts on its design and implementation. Scott Keeter helped extensively in shortening the survey, and pointing to the pitfalls that he and his colleagues encountered in 2002. Last, we thank Henry Milner for his assistance in crafting the questions in the political knowledge section of our survey.

REFERENCES

- Bada, X., Fox, J., and Selee, A. (2006) *Invisible no more*. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.
- Beem, C. (2005) "From the Horse's Mouth: A Dialogue Between Politicians and College Students," CIRCLE Working Paper #27.
http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/Working_Papers/WP27Beem.pdf
- Boyte, H. and Kari, N. (1996) *Building America: The Democratic Promise of Public Work*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Jenkins, K. (2005) "Gender and Civic Engagement: Secondary Analysis of Survey Data," CIRCLE Working Paper #41.
http://www.civicyouth.org/research/products/working_papers.htm
- Ketter, S., Zukin, C., Andolina, M., and Jenkins, K. (2002) "The Civic and Political Health of a Nation: A Generational Portrait." CIRCLE and The Pew Charitable Trusts.
http://www.civicyouth.org/research/products/youth_index.htm
- Lopez, M.H., Kirby, E, and Sagoff, J. (2005) "CIRCLE Fact Sheet: The Youth Vote 2004."
http://www.civicyouth.org/research/products/fact_sheets.htm
- Olander, M. (2003) "CIRCLE Fact Sheet: Media Use among Young People."
http://www.civicyouth.org/research/products/fact_sheets.htm
- Young Voter Strategies and CIRCLE (2006) "Young Voter Mobilization Tactics"
http://www.civicyouth.org/quick/youth_voting.htm
- Zukin, C., Keeter, S., Andolina, M., Jenkins, K., Delli Carpini, M.X., (2006) *A New Engagement? Political Participation, Civic Life, and the Changing American Citizen*, Oxford University Press.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The Civic and Political Health Survey, sponsored by CIRCLE, obtained telephone and web interviews with a nationally representative sample of 2,232 people ages 15 and older living in the continental United States. Interviewing includes over-samples of African-Americans, Latinos and Asian-Americans ages 15 to 25. The survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research International. Data collection was done via telephone and web by Braun Research, Inc. from April 27 to June 11, 2006. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is ± 3.5 percentage points. The margin of error for the youth sample (n=1,658) is ± 2.5 percentage points.

Details on the design, execution and analysis of the survey are discussed in the companion document "2006 National Civic and Political Health Survey Questionnaire and Complete Tabulations." We provide a brief discussion of design below.

Sample Design

The sample was designed to represent all people ages 15 and older in the continental United States and includes over-samples of young African-Americans, Latinos and Asian-Americans. Two samples were used to collect the data – a telephone sample and a web sample.

The telephone sample was provided by Survey Sampling International, LLC (SSI) according to PSRAI specifications. The sample was drawn using standard *list-assisted random digit dialing* (RDD) methodology. *Active blocks* of telephone numbers (area code + exchange + two-digit block number) that contained three or more residential directory listings were selected with probabilities in proportion to their share of listed telephone households; after selection two more digits were added randomly to complete the number. This method guarantees coverage of every assigned phone number regardless of whether that number is directory listed, purposely unlisted, or too new to be listed. After selection, the numbers were compared against business directories and matching numbers purged.

To supplement the RDD interviews an additional 467 interviews were completed online with African-Americans, Latinos and Asian-Americans aged 15 to 25. Sampling was provided by Survey Sampling International (SSI). The SSI SurveySpot panel, a premium source of sample for online surveys, was used to recruit respondents. The SurveySpot panel recruits panelists from many sources; including banner ads, online recruitment methods, and RDD telephone recruitment. Unsolicited email or "spam" is not used. The panel is continually growing and currently covers about 4.5 million household members and 1.5 million panelists. Panelists are continuously monitored to prevent under-surveying and over-surveying in an effort to maintain their interest in participating. Panelists are offered rewards with each survey invitation, increasing their likelihood of participation.

Contact Procedures

Interviews were conducted from April 27 to June 11, 2006. As many as seven attempts were made to complete an interview at every sampled telephone number. Sample was released for interviewing in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger sample. Using replicates to control the release of the sample ensures that complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample.

Calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chance of making contact with potential respondents. Each household received at least one daytime call in an attempt to find someone at home. In each contacted household, interviewers asked to speak with a randomly selected eligible household member.

The telephone interviewing over-sampled 15-to-25-year-olds by setting a maximum quota for respondents 26 and older. After that quota was filled, all remaining interviews were conducted with 15-to-25-year-olds. Households with no residents ages 15 to 26 were deemed ineligible and screened-out. Interviews were conducted with 15 year olds only after getting parental consent.

APPENDIX

Appendix Table 1: Civic Engagement in 2006 and 2002

	<i>Core Indicators of Civic Engagement</i>	<i>2006</i>		<i>2002</i>	
		<i>15-25</i>	<i>26 and older</i>	<i>15-25</i>	<i>26 and older</i>
Civic Indicators	Active member of at least 1 group	20%	26%	22%	33%
	Regular Volunteer for Non-Political Groups	19%	24%	22%	24%
	Volunteered in the last 12 months (any type)*	36%	34%	44%	32%
	Community Problem Solving (last 12 mos.)	19%	20%	21%	22%
	Ran/walked/biked for charity (last 12 mos.)	18%	15%	16%	13%
	Raised money for charity (last 12 mos.)	24%	29%	28%	32%
Electoral Indicators	Regular Voter (for those 20 and older)	26%	56%	32%	54%
	Tried to persuade others in an election	35%	40%	36%	32%
	Displayed a campaign button or sign	23%	28%	20%	28%
	Donated money to a candidate or party (last 12 mos.)	7%	14%	4%	15%
	Regular Volunteer for Political Candidates or Groups	2%	3%	1%	2%
	Member of a group involved in politics*	16%	26%	19%	32%
Political Voice Indicators	Contacted an official (last 12 mos.)	11%	22%	10%	19%
	Contacted the print media (last 12 mos.)	7%	11%	10%	11%
	Contacted the broadcast media (last 12 mos.)	9%	8%	7%	8%
	Protested (last 12 mos.)	11%	5%	7%	4%
	Signed an e-mail petition (last 12 mos.)	16%	21%	14%	12%
	Signed a paper petition (last 12 mos.)	18%	26%	20%	23%
	Boycotted (last 12 mos.)	30%	38%	38%	38%
	Canvassed (last 12 mos.)	3%	2%	2%	3%

Source: Authors' tabulations from the 2006 National Civic and Political Health Survey. "*" indicates measures that are not part of the 19 core indicators of civic engagement.