

## Analysis of Voter Registration and Voter Turnout for the 2016 Presidential Election

Intro: The given analysis focuses on voter data from 2016, the most recent presidential election (assumed more people vote and register for a presidential election compared to other elections). Hence, there is more data available to analyze in 2016 with 79,820 individuals as opposed to 2018, for example, with only 73,0004 people. When looking at age, age groups were made from 18-25, 25-40, 40-60 and 60+ year olds, and generally percents were used to allow for comparisons between age groups (accounting for total counts when necessary).

### Voter Registration

Voter registration was observed through the variable 'VOREG' which describes whether an individual was newly registered to vote for the given November election. However, it assumes that individuals who voted, already registered and these individuals are deemed 'not in universe'. Overall, younger individuals have the highest percentage for registration, and the percent that register decreases with each age group (Fig.1). These trends are similar across both genders, although females tend to have slightly lower registration percentages.

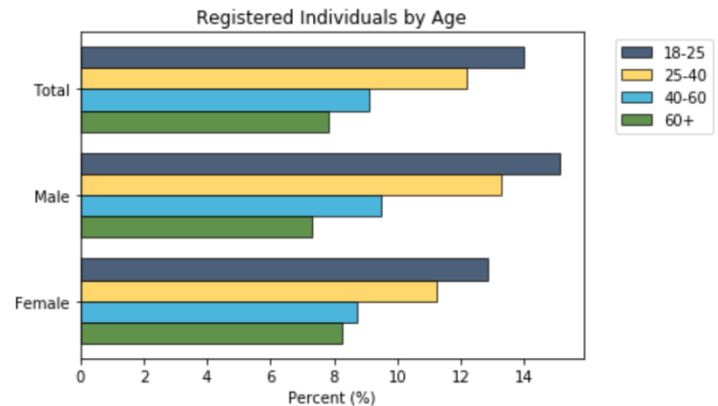


Figure 1. Registered individuals by sex and age.

Since a higher percentage of registered younger people ultimately did not vote in the election, the reasoning behind them not voting will be analyzed in the voting section. Overall, based on the variable 'VOYNOTREG' (why individuals did not register), the most common responses were people not being interested in politics or the election, 'other', or not meeting registration deadlines (Fig. 2).

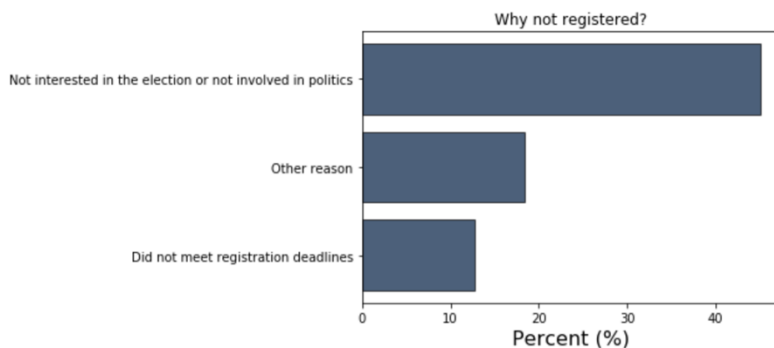


Figure 2. Why individuals were not registered for the election.

Hence, voter registration should be made easier and the deadlines clearer. Since the youngest age group also has the highest percentage of non-registration, how they registered was evaluated through 'VOREGHOW'. The majority that responded indicated they registered at the DMV or an academic institution (Fig. 3). Hence, younger individuals can be incentivized to register at these locations. The DMV could feature fliers with reminders and get young drivers to pre-register. Similarly, schools can advertise registration through clubs or reminder emails to students. Providing links to websites that simplify politics and the positions of candidates can also help overcome disinterest in the election for younger individuals.

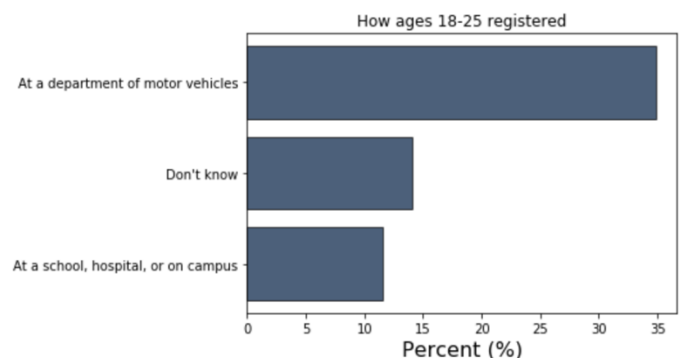


Figure 3. How individuals (18-25) registered for the election.

| Race                         | Reg (%) | Not Reg (%) | Total Ind |
|------------------------------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| White                        | 9.65    | 14.99       | 66214     |
| Black/Negro                  | 11.1    | 13.19       | 8089      |
| Asian only                   | 8.69    | 26.97       | 2959      |
| American Indian/Aleut/Eskimo | 15.88   | 29.72       | 1033      |
| White-American Indian        | 12.45   | 19.71       | 482       |

Table 1. Registration status and total counts of individuals by race.

## Voting

Voting trends by age, sex, and race were evaluated through the variable 'VOTED' which classified if people had voted in the most recent election. It was observed that voting percentage increased as the age groups increased, so older people tend to vote more (Fig. 4). This trend is seen across both genders, with females generally voting at slightly higher percentages than males.

Subsequently, to gain insight as to why younger individuals voted less, the variable 'VOWHYNOT' was analyzed. It was found that the main reasons why the younger age group tended not to vote was because they did not like a candidates or campaign, they were too busy, or not interested and believed their vote would not make a difference. These three top reasons for not voting were also true for the two following age groups, but not individuals of age 60 or more (Fig. 5).

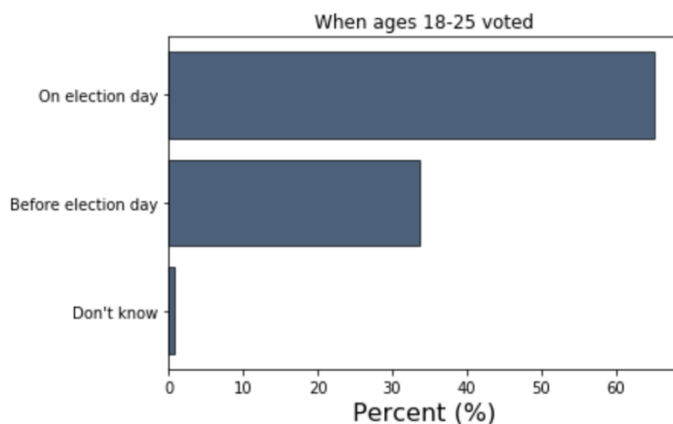


Figure 6. When people of age 18-25 voted for the election.

Voter registration by race was evaluated based on the top five largest races by count (Table 1). Of those five, non-white and non-black races had the highest percent of non-registration. However, in all cases there are about 10% or more of registered individuals that did not vote, so the reasons behind not voting will be further analyzed.

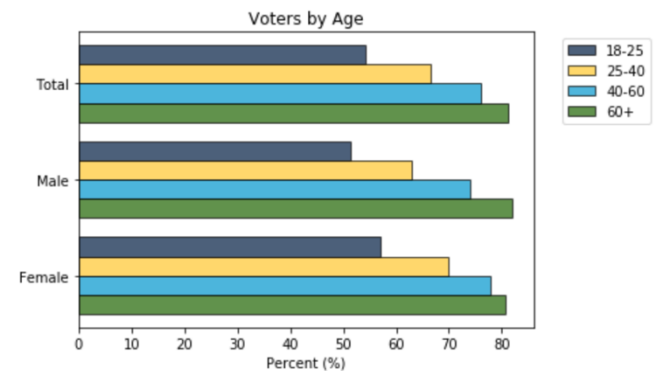


Figure 4. Individuals that voted by age and sex (%).

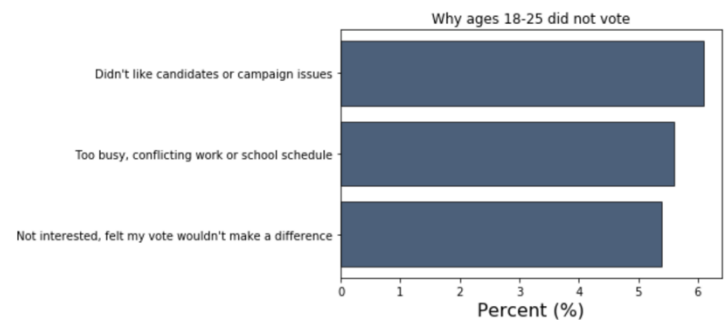


Figure 5. Why people of ages 18-25 did not vote.

Ultimately, since the younger age groups vote the least, 'VOTEWHEN' (whether individuals voted on or before election day) was evaluated. The majority of the youngest age group vote on election day (Fig. 6). This was also true for all other age groups (not shown). Hence, since a majority of people vote on election day, election day should be made a national holiday so individuals can go out and exercise their right to vote. This could help increase the percent of young voters voting since a main reason they don't vote is being too busy or having conflicts at work or school. Also, because this age group also does not like the candidates and believes their vote won't count, they should be

reminded, potentially through social media or social influencers (fast and easy), that they should still vote and their vote does count.

|  | RACE                         | NOT VOTED | VOTED | TOTAL |
|--|------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|
|  | White                        | 17052     | 49162 | 66214 |
|  | Black/Negro                  | 2062      | 6027  | 8089  |
|  | Asian only                   | 1114      | 1845  | 2959  |
|  | American Indian/Aleut/Eskimo | 486       | 547   | 1033  |
|  | White-American Indian        | 170       | 312   | 482   |

Table 2. Voting status by race with total counts.

White individuals responded that they did not vote because they don't like the candidate or campaign, they feel like their vote has no effect, or they are too busy (Fig. 8). Thus, voters should be reminded that even if they don't like the candidates, not voting does not help, and ultimately their vote does count. People can be reminded of democratic power and their individual voting power by social media influencers or celebrities of their same race, allowing potential voters to look up to them and be more motivated to vote. Voting should also be made easier and more accessible (a national holiday) so that busy individuals can make it a priority to vote.

Next, race was again evaluated based on the largest raw race counts but based on voting and not voting responses (Table 2). Overall, for the five largest races shown, the percent of individuals voting was greater than the percent of those not voting. Also, the two largest race groups of White and Black individuals have very similar voter turnout, but a substantial percent are still not voting (Fig. 7).

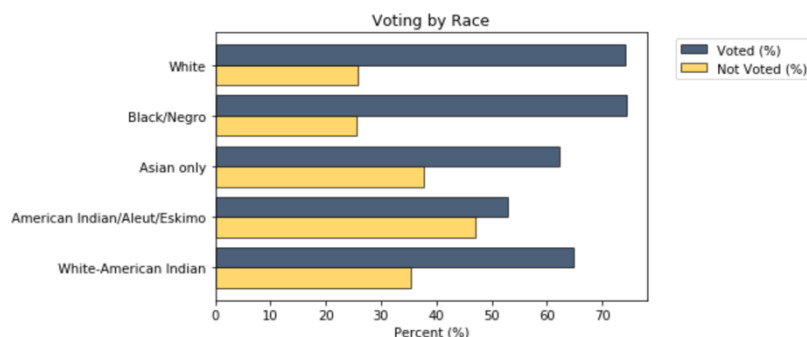


Figure 7. Percent of voters and non voters by race.

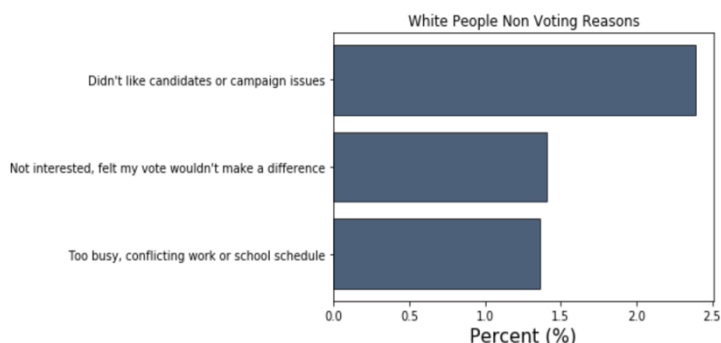


Figure 8. Why White individuals did not vote.

## Education

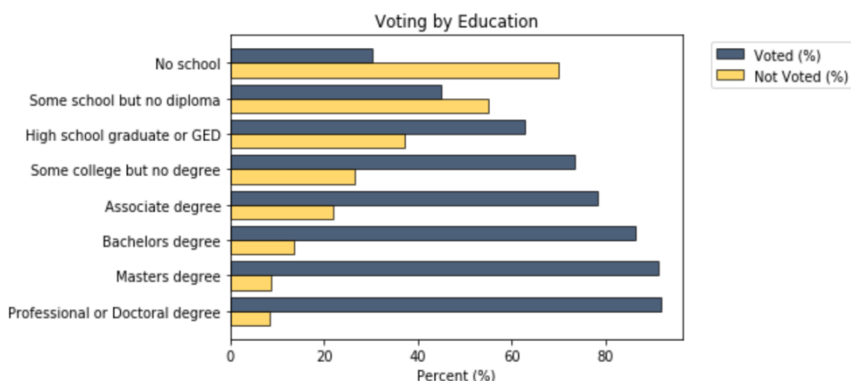


Figure 9. Percent of individuals voting given their education.

To investigate how education (educational attainment) affects voting, the variable 'EDUSIMPLE' was utilized in combination with determining which individuals voted and which did not. A strong positive correlation was found between a higher education level and the percentage of individuals voting (Fig. 9). This means a higher percentage of highly educated individuals vote, so in order to improve voting it is necessary to investigate non voting in less educated individuals.

The largest raw number of people with a lower education are individuals that are high school graduates/received a GED (Table 3).

| EDUCATION                       | NOT VOTED | VOTED | TOTAL |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| High school graduate or GED     | 8672      | 14664 | 23336 |
| Bachelors degree                | 2266      | 14427 | 16693 |
| Some college but no degree      | 4125      | 11376 | 15501 |
| Associate degree                | 1826      | 6524  | 8350  |
| Masters degree                  | 613       | 6360  | 6973  |
| Some school but no diploma      | 3503      | 2855  | 6358  |
| Professional or Doctoral degree | 208       | 2295  | 2503  |
| No school                       | 74        | 32    | 106   |

Table 3. Raw counts of non voter, voters, and the total based on education.

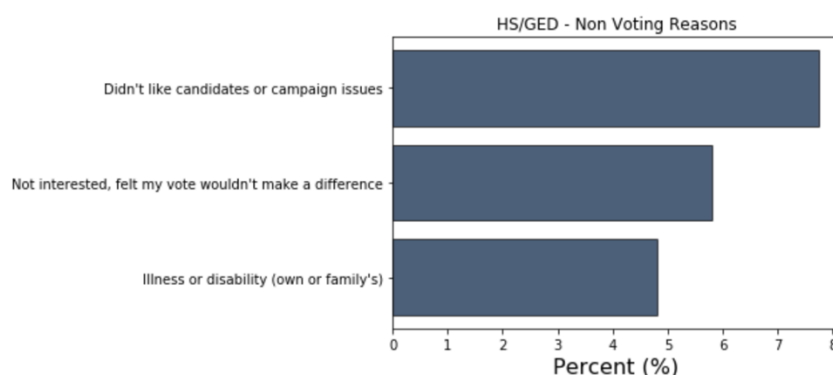


Figure 10. Why individuals with a HS diploma/GED did not vote.

These individuals reported that they did not vote because they didn't like the campaign issues or the candidates, they felt their vote had no effect, or they or someone in their family was ill or had a disability (Fig. 10). The last reason could be a factor regarding the lower education level, and ultimately, voting could be made more accessible for people with these circumstances. This could be done by motivating these individuals to cast in their ballots through mail prior to the election by sending online reminders to sign up for a mail-in ballot. Voting could also be increased by creating simple and comprehensible websites, positing links on Facebook or Instagram, or showing advertisements that remind people that their vote makes a difference, and just because one doesn't like the candidates, by not voting, they are defeating the purpose of democracy.

## State

State registration and voting trends were observed, taking the top seven states with the highest percentages of registered people who did not vote (Fig.11) and the highest percentages of not voting people (Fig. 12). The states are similar in both charts. More importantly, all of these states have voted for the same party in the last four elections (2004-2016)<sup>1</sup>, hence this could result in a lower voter registration and voter turnout since people may believe their vote does not make a difference given that their state has not voted differently through consecutive elections. These voters could be reminded online by influencers or celebrities that their vote does indeed count.

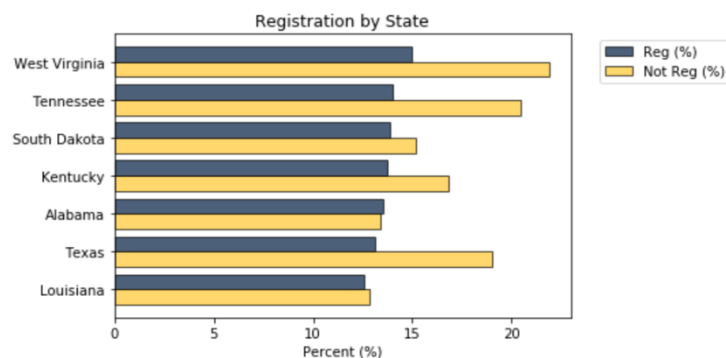


Figure 11. States with the highest percents of registered non voters.

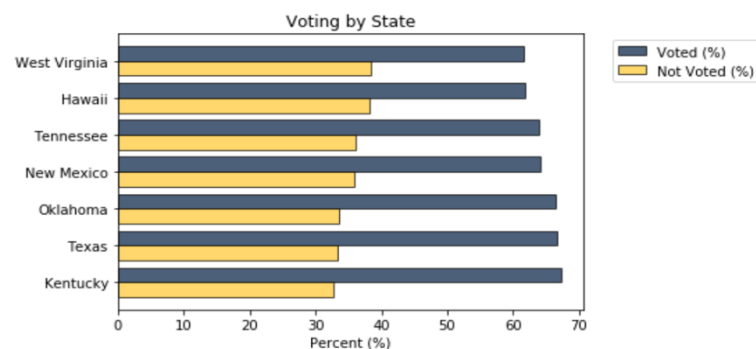


Figure 12. States with the highest percents of non voters.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.270towin.com/same-since-electoral-maps/>