

Democracy North Carolina

1821 Green St., Durham NC 27705 • 919-489-1931 or 286-6000 • democracy-nc.org

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Contact: Bob Hall, 919-489-1931

ANALYSIS: WHO VOTED IN 2016 & WHO DIDN'T Women, Republicans, and Seniors Top the List

New data from the State Board of Elections show that 69% of North Carolina's 6.9 million registered voters cast ballots in the 2016 presidential election, just 1 percent behind the modern turnout record set in 2008. But an analysis by the voting rights group Democracy North Carolina reveals wide variations in who showed up and who didn't among 47 subgroups of voters.

At the top of the list: Three out of four Republican women (76%) participated in the election, a record for that group. Republican men also had a strong showing, with a turnout rate of 75%, followed by Democratic women, particularly African-American Democratic women (72%).

By contrast, Democratic men lagged 10 points behind Republican men, and more than one third of the voters who are not affiliated with any party didn't bother to cast a ballot. In fact, the number of registered unaffiliated voters who didn't vote (763,000) exceeded the number of Republican men who did (756,000).

Nearly half the registered voters in the 18-25 age group also did not vote. Their 53% turnout rate fell below the 60% achieved in 2008 and 55% level in 2012. On the other hand, a record 78% of registered voters over age 65 showed up; as a group, they cast over 1 million ballots for the first time, thanks to aging Baby Boomers.

African-American women continued to participate at the highest rates of all non-white voters, and their overall 70% turnout rate nearly matched the 72% rate for registered white women.

Overall, women outperformed men in every party and race subgroups; in fact, 515,000 more women voted in 2016 than men. That's not too surprising since women are 54% of the registered voters in the state.

The statewide turnout of 68.9% is slightly above the rate in 2012 (68.3%) and slightly below the modern record of 69.6% set in 2008, when Barack Obama carried the state.

Nationally, North Carolina had the 11th highest turnout rate for eligible citizens, the same rank it held among the 50 states in 2012. That's a big jump from ranking 37th in 2000 and 38th in 2004.

"The share of Tar Heel citizens who vote has risen dramatically in recent presidential elections, largely because of galvanizing personalities at the top of the ticket and new policies that have made voting easier," said Bob Hall of Democracy North Carolina.

"North Carolina ranked among the 15 worst states for voter turnout throughout the entire

twentieth century,” Hall noted. “It only began gaining ground with the expansion of early voting and policies like same-day registration that help infrequent voters and people who get engaged late in the election cycle.”

Hall said Donald Trump and other GOP candidates benefited from a surge of new white voters who used same-day registration during early voting at a higher rate than Democrats. Republicans were 30% of registered voters in October 2016, but 34% of the first-time voters who used same-day registration to cast a ballot.

Non-whites also disproportionately used same-day registration, but in smaller numbers than the new Republicans, which Hall thought may surprise some GOP opponents of the policy.

The number of self-identified Hispanic/Latino registered voters has steadily climbed in North Carolina, from 68,000 in 2008 to 167,000 in 2016, but their turnout rate of 58% continues to lag behind. That’s partly because they are younger voters, said Hall.

“About 30% of registered Latino voters are in the 18-to-25 age group, compared to 10% of white voters,” he pointed out.

The Democracy NC analysis shows a turnout gap between white and black registered voters of 7 percentage points (71% for whites versus 64% for blacks), which is the same gap that existed in 2004 (66% vs. 59%).

In the 2008 and 2012 elections when Barack Obama was on the ballot, turnout of African-American voters exceeded the rate of white voters and hit a modern record of 72% in 2008. (Turnout reached higher levels in the 1880s and 1890s in North Carolina before Jim Crow laws and extra-legal disenfranchisement took effect.)

“Not surprisingly, turnout among black voters in 2016 fell below the high levels of the Obama elections,” said Hall. “The good news is that it rose above the persistent low levels in the state before Obama, which were often below 60% in presidential years. Hopefully, we’ve reached a new plateau and will grow from there – unless new barriers to the ballot are put in place.”

The analysis also includes three relatively small groups of voters with participation rates below the state average: Libertarians, Native Americans and Asians.

The number of Libertarian Party members has jumped from under 4,000 in 2008 to over 32,400 in 2016, but only 57% of them bothered to vote this year, despite having Libertarian candidates on the ballot for president, US senator, and governor.

The number of registered Native Americans in North Carolina increased more slowly to 56,700 but only 51% of them voted in 2016, the lowest participation rate of any racial or ethnic classification on the registration rolls.

Finally, the number of Asian voters has climbed quickly to 81,200. Their 63% turnout rate is “fairly good considering the fact that 51% of Asian voters are age 40 or younger,” Hall said.

*The raw data for the analysis is from the State Board of Elections’ FTP site at:
<http://dl.ncsbe.gov/index.html?prefix=ENRS/>*

Turnout of Voters By Demographic Group for 2016 General Election

	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Democrat	Republican	Libertarian	Unaffiliated
# Regis.	6,924,296	4,802,439	1,536,677	167,111	81,210	56,661	2,735,427	2,088,381	32,422	2,068,066
# Voted	4,768,079	3,433,127	987,538	96,452	51,516	29,090	1,872,593	1,571,730	18,426	1,305,330
Turnout	68.9%	71.5%	64.3%	57.7%	63.4%	51.3%	68.5%	75.3%	56.8%	63.1%

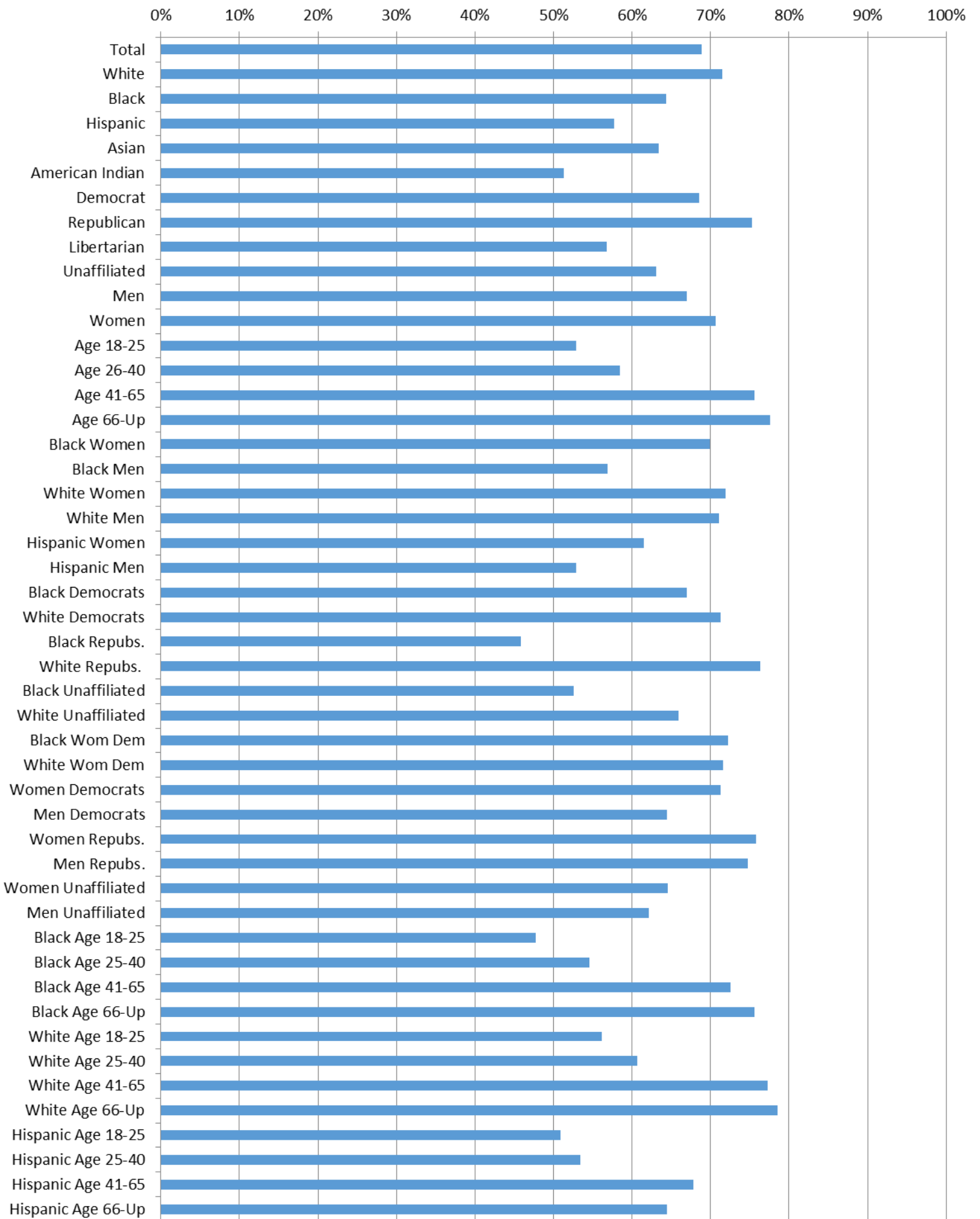
	Men	Women	Age 18-25	Age 26-40	Age 41-65	Age 66-Up	Black Women	Black Men	White Women	White Men
# Regis.	3,099,304	3,666,664	868,779	1,731,904	2,967,524	1,356,089	867,305	652,371	2,543,279	2,227,975
# Voted	2,077,205	2,592,124	459,718	1,012,711	2,242,958	1,052,691	606,499	370,951	1,827,590	1,583,317
Turnout	67.0%	70.7%	52.9%	58.5%	75.6%	77.6%	69.9%	56.9%	71.9%	71.1%

	Hispanic Women	Hispanic Men	Black Democrats	White Democrats	Black Repubs.	White Repubs.	Black Unaffiliated	White Unaffiliated	Black Wom Dem	White Wom Dem
# Regis.	90,252	74,023	1,260,641	1,259,185	37,651	1,963,145	235,624	1,554,395	735,247	746,031
# Voted	55,460	39,158	845,077	897,170	17,296	1,497,045	123,916	1,023,896	530,729	534,428
Turnout	61.5%	52.9%	67.0%	71.3%	45.9%	76.3%	52.6%	65.9%	72.2%	71.6%

	Women Democrats	Men Democrats	Women Repubs.	Men Repubs.	Women Unaffiliated	Men Unaffiliated	Black Age 18-25	Black Age 25-40	Black Age 41-65	Black Age 66-Up
# Regis.	1,593,726	1,099,150	1,050,982	1,012,623	1,008,570	969,249	229,189	428,781	658,954	219,753
# Voted	1,136,169	708,680	796,895	756,155	651,705	601,799	109,409	234,046	478,029	166,054
Turnout	71.3%	64.5%	75.8%	74.7%	64.6%	62.1%	47.7%	54.6%	72.5%	75.6%

	White Age 18-25	White Age 25-40	White Age 41-65	White Age 66-Up	Hispanic Age 18-25	Hispanic Age 25-40	Hispanic Age 41-65	Hispanic Age 66-Up
# Regis.	498,014	1,117,400	2,101,803	1,085,222	49,184	57,216	51,588	9,123
# Voted	279,195	677,945	1,623,652	852,335	25,033	30,549	34,985	5,885
Turnout	56.1%	60.7%	77.3%	78.5%	50.9%	53.4%	67.8%	64.5%

NC 2016 Turnout by Demographic Subgroup



NC VOTER REG, VOTES CAST, AND TURNOUT FOR 2008, 2012, 2016

<i>Prepared by Democracy NC</i>	Voter Registration			Votes Cast			Turnout = #Votes/#Reg		
	Nov. 2008	Nov. 2012	Nov. 2016	Nov. 2008	Nov. 2012	Nov. 2016	% Turnout 2008	% Turnout 2012	% Turnout 2016
TOTAL	6,259,312	6,649,188	6,924,296	4,354,571	4,542,488	4,768,079	69.6%	68.3%	68.9%
DEMOCRATS	2,861,858	2,870,693	2,735,427	2,060,058	2,007,139	1,872,593	72.0%	69.9%	68.5%
- Dem White Women	908,893	836,141	746,031	646,866	576,222	534,428	71.2%	68.9%	71.6%
- Dem Black Women	687,952	739,433	735,247	526,596	564,752	530,729	76.5%	76.4%	72.2%
- Dem Women	1,671,037	1,672,747	1,593,726	1,222,257	1,201,164	1,136,169	73.1%	71.8%	71.3%
- Dem White Men	648,305	581,795	505,486	460,774	398,629	357,279	71.1%	68.5%	70.7%
REPUBLICANS	2,002,808	2,052,250	2,088,381	1,432,280	1,494,643	1,571,730	71.5%	72.8%	75.3%
- Rep Women	1,016,268	1,040,397	1,050,982	734,787	764,095	796,895	72.3%	73.4%	75.8%
- Rep Men	977,831	998,699	1,012,623	691,028	720,834	756,155	70.7%	72.2%	74.7%
LIBERTARIAN	3,950	19,321	32,422	3,322	12,086	18,426	84.1%	62.6%	56.8%
UNAFFILIATED	1,391,262	1,706,924	2,068,066	864,821	1,028,620	1,305,330	62.2%	60.3%	63.1%
- Unaffil Women	701,363	851,064	1,008,570	440,758	518,750	651,705	62.8%	61.0%	64.6%
BLACK	1,349,008	1,492,831	1,536,677	970,351	1,048,187	987,538	71.9%	70.2%	64.3%
WHITE	4,599,286	4,728,843	4,802,439	3,192,691	3,244,099	3,433,127	69.4%	68.6%	71.5%
HISPANIC	68,053	113,782	167,111	40,260	61,795	96,452	59.2%	54.3%	57.7%
WOMEN	3,391,427	3,573,312	3,666,664	2,395,860	2,488,973	2,592,124	70.6%	69.7%	70.7%
MEN	2,822,503	3,000,187	3,099,304	1,926,010	2,003,367	2,077,205	68.2%	66.8%	67.0%
AGE 18-25	752,238	846,890	868,779	453,534	467,029	459,718	60.3%	55.1%	52.9%
AGE 26-40	1,686,045	1,695,253	1,731,904	1,056,093	985,673	1,012,711	62.6%	58.1%	58.5%
AGE 41-65	2,770,570	2,947,751	2,967,524	2,084,036	2,201,493	2,242,958	75.2%	74.7%	75.6%
AGE OVER 65	1,050,365	1,159,293	1,356,089	760,907	888,293	1,052,691	72.4%	76.6%	77.6%

Based on raw data posted after each election to the NC State Board of Elections FTP site.