MISSING VOTERS PROJECT:
Maryland 2016

Elizabeth B. Pathak, PhD

1.4 MILLION CITIZENS IN MARYLAND
did not vote on November 8, 2016

DESCRIPTION OF MISSING VOTERS

REMARKS

Missing voters were last seen across Maryland on the morning of November 8, 2016. These are civilian, non-military, non-institutionalized adults who were aged 18 years or older at the time of the election.

DETAILS

The Women's Institute for Independent Social Enquiry (WiiSE), a nonpartisan think tank, is issuing this report to alert the public to the millions of Maryland voters missing from the November 2016 elections. Concerned individuals with an interest in locating these citizens and aiding their future participation in Maryland elections are urged to share this alert widely.

Acknowledgements

How to Cite This Report

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About the Authors

Elizabeth B. Pathak, PhD is the President and Chair of the Board of WiiSE. She is a population health scientist whose research focuses on geographic, socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and gender disparities in health outcomes in the United States. She is a passionate advocate for methodologically rigorous scholarship which seeks to uncover the power relations that perpetuate socioeconomic and health inequalities.

About WiiSE

The Women's Institute for Independent Social Enquiry (WiiSE) is a nonpartisan, progressive think tank whose mission is to foster a just society through independent social science, humanities, arts, and public policy research. We believe that rigorous evidence-based research, when effectively translated for a broad spectrum of audiences, can be a catalyst for transformational social change. We champion the ideas of women by cultivating and supporting women scholars and leaders.

Connect with us!

We welcome your feedback and comments on the Missing Voters Project, as well as on other timely issues relevant to our mission. Please reach out to us online at https://www.wiise-usa.org/connect.

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Who Are Maryland's Missing Voters?

Missing voters are voting age citizens who did not vote in November 2016. Missing voters reflect the diversity of Maryland as a whole. They are men and women of all ages and races. Nonetheless, voting participation in Maryland varies considerably across specific population groups. The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed description of the characteristics of missing voters in Maryland and to inform the widespread grassroots efforts to increase voter participation in the 2018 mid-term elections and the 2020 presidential election.

What is the Missing Voters Project?

We believe that civic disengagement represents a fundamental threat to the separation of powers in our government, and to American democracy itself. Unfortunately, low rates of voter participation have persisted in the United States for many years, and a culture of complacency has ossified around this political reality. We chose the design motif of an FBI Missing Persons poster for the Missing Voters Project with the goal of eliciting feelings of unease and alarm to fracture this culture of complacency.

The purpose of the Missing Voters Project (MVP) is to present rigorous, impartial data about the demographic characteristics of missing voters in a format that can be easily accessed and used by a wide range of educational, community-based, faith-based, and worker-friendly organizations in their efforts to increase civic engagement. Missing Voters Project reports for other states and the nation can be found on our website (https://www.wiise-usa.org/mvp).

Data and Methods

The Missing Voters Project data are from a special supplement to the Current Population Survey, administered in November 2016 immediately following the election by the Bureau of the Census. This report includes statistically-weighted estimates of percentages and population counts derived from a Maryland sample of over 1,000 adult respondents. Data in response categories for which the estimated Maryland population was fewer than 75,000 citizens have been suppressed per Census Bureau recommendation.

Full technical details for the Missing Voters Project, links to the original census data, and other valuable resources are available at https://www.wiise-usa.org/mvp.

Limitations

We recognize that there are important voting justice issues that can not be addressed directly through the data analyzed in our report. These issues include voter suppression and intimidation, purging of voter registration rolls, partisan gerrymandering, and other direct and indirect tactics that result in citizen disenfranchisement. Readers are encouraged to consult the Resources at the end of this report (pages 8-9) for links to organizations working directly on these issues.
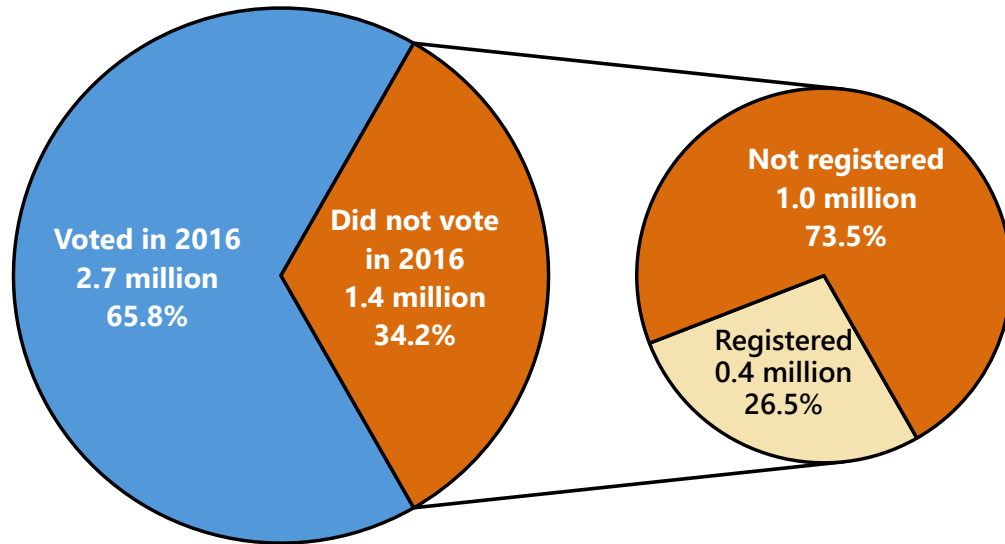
How to Use This Report

Each page of this report has been designed with a dual purpose: as an integrated part of the whole report, and as a stand-alone "Fact Sheet." Organizations working to increase voter registration can pull out individual pages to reproduce and share. On our website (https://www.wiise-usa.org/mvp), readers can download the whole report, or choose to download single page fact sheets on their topics of interest.

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MISSING VOTERS PROJECT: Maryland 2016

Figure 1: Voting in Maryland
Citizens 18+ years old in 2016
Total = 4.2 million

Voted in 2016
2.7 million
65.8%

Did not vote in 2016
1.4 million
34.2%

Not registered
1.0 million
73.5%

Registered
0.4 million
26.5%

Maryland Voting in 2016

In 2016, there were an estimated 4.2 million civilian voting age citizens in Maryland. The citizen population estimates shown in this report include only the *non-institutionalized* population. This means that prisoners, nursing home residents, and other institutionalized persons are not included in any of our reported statistics. However, voting age citizens who may be legally ineligible to vote in Maryland are still included in the estimates in this report.

The majority (65.8%) of voting age citizens in Maryland reported voting in November 2016. There were 1.4 million missing voters, 1.0 million (73.5%) of whom were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 1).
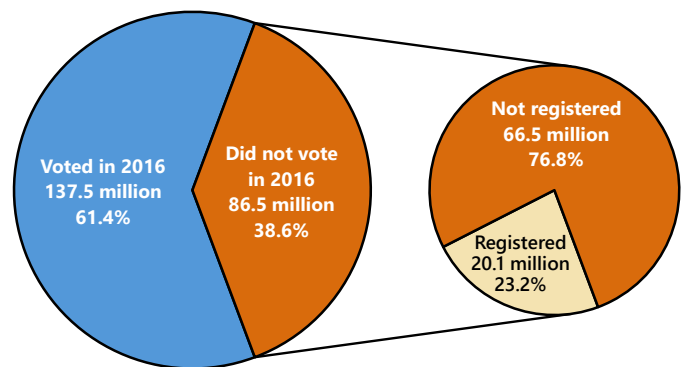
Maryland's Voting Rate Higher Than the National Average

Nationwide, 61.4% of adult citizens voted in 2016, compared with 65.8% of citizens in Maryland (Figure 2). Only a minority of missing voters nationwide were registered to vote before the election (23.2%, Figure 2); in Maryland the proportion who were registered (26.5%, Figure 1) was higher than the national average.

Figure 2: Voting in the United States
Citizens 18+ years old in 2016
Total = 224 million

Voted in 2016
137.5 million
61.4%

Did not vote in 2016
86.5 million
38.6%

Not registered
66.5 million
76.8%

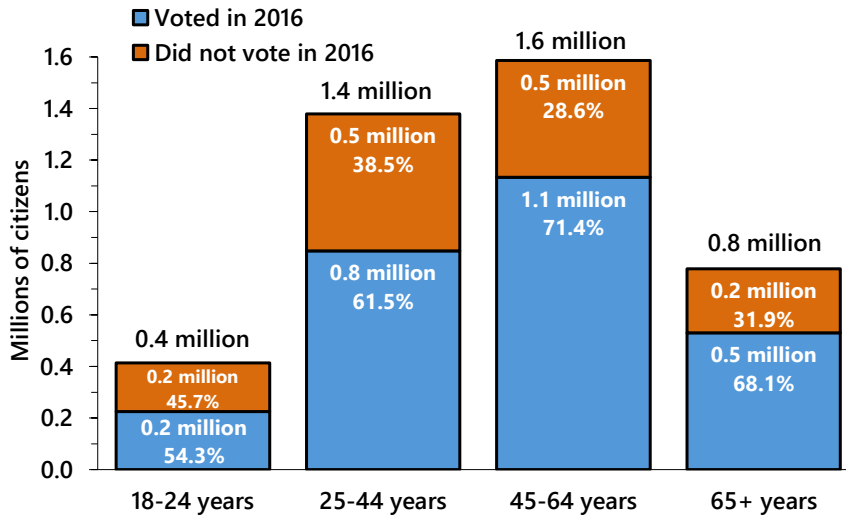Registered
20.1 million
23.2%

Notes

Please note that some numbers may appear not to add up correctly due to rounding. Voting data are from the Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey (November 2016). This report includes statistically-weighted estimates of percentages and population counts derived from a Maryland sample of over 1,000 adult respondents. Data in response categories for which the estimated Maryland population was fewer than 75,000 citizens have been suppressed per Census Bureau recommendation. Full technical details for the Missing Voters Project, links to the original census data, and other valuable resources are available at https://www.wiise-usa.org/mvp.

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Young Adults Least Likely to Vote but Majority of Missing Voters were 25+ Years Old

Voting participation varied sharply by age in Maryland in 2016. Barely half (54.3%) of young adult citizens voted, compared with 68.1% of senior citizens (Figure 3). Middle-aged adults (45 to 64 years old) were the largest group of voters (1.6 million) and most likely to vote (71.4%). For all ages, the majority of missing voters were not registered to vote prior to the 2016 election (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Voting by Age
Citizens 18+ years old in Maryland in 2016
Total = 4.2 million

Figure 4: Missing Voters by Age
Citizens 18+ years old who did not vote in Maryland in 2016
Total = 1.4 million

Young Adults

More than half (54.3%) of the 0.4 million citizens aged 18 to 24 years in Maryland voted in 2016 (Figure 3). There were 0.2 million missing voters, the majority (71.4%) of whom were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 4).
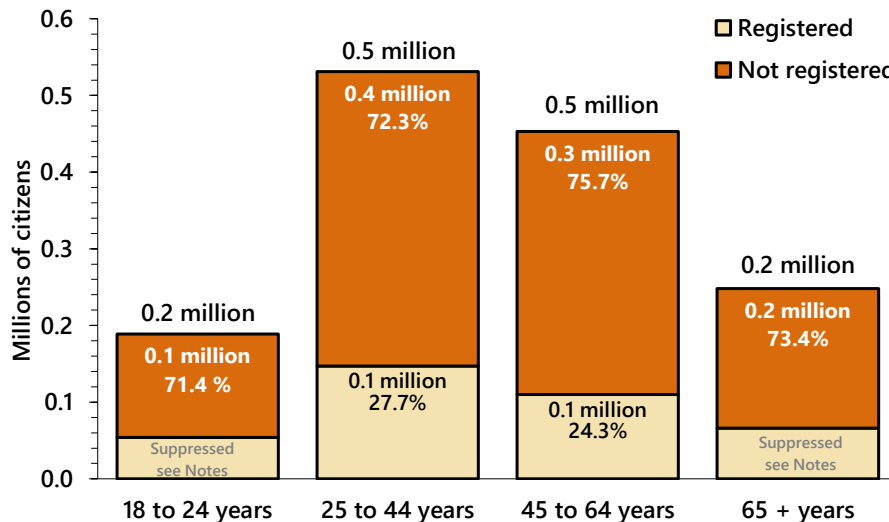
Adults 25-44 Years

The majority (61.5%) of adults 25 to 44 years old voted in 2016 (Figure 3). There were 0.5 million missing voters, of whom only 27.7% were registered to vote before the election (Figure 4).

Middle-Aged Adults

There were 1.6 million middle-aged citizens in Maryland and 71.4% reported voting in 2016 (Figure 3). There were 0.5 million missing middle-aged voters, including 0.1 million who were registered but did not vote (Figure 4).

Seniors

There were 0.8 million senior citizens in Maryland in 2016 and 68.1% of them voted (Figure 3). Of the 0.2 million missing voters, the majority (73.4%) were not registered to vote prior to the 2016 election (Figure 4).

Notes

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Maryland Women Slightly Larger Share of Electorate and More Likely to Vote

In 2016, there were 2.2 million voting age women citizens in Maryland, compared with 2.0 million men. Women were more likely to vote than men (67.6% vs. 63.8%) (Figure 5). The number of missing voters was the same for women and men (0.7 million). Voter registration rates among missing voters were higher for men (28.3%) than for women (24.6%) (Figure 6).
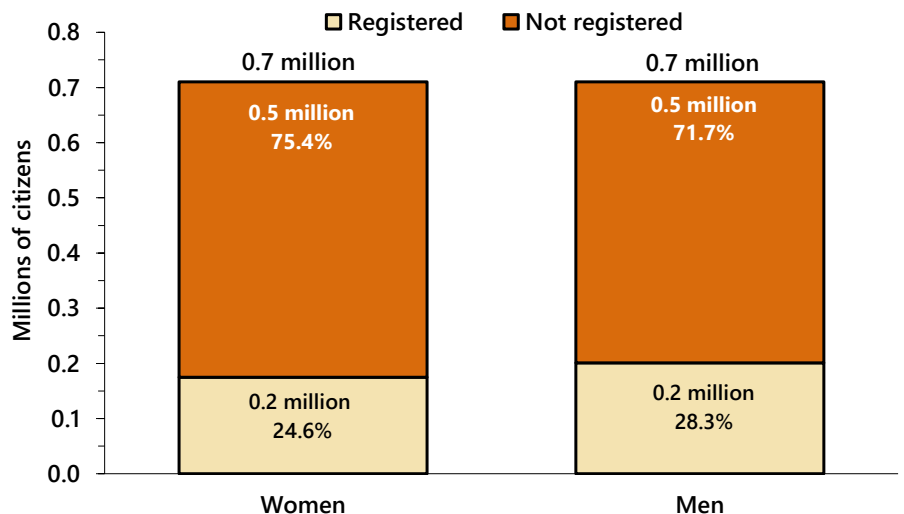
Women

There were 2.2 million voting age women citizens in Maryland in 2016. The majority (67.6%) of them voted (Figure 5). There were 0.7 million missing women voters, and the majority (75.4%) were not registered before the election (Figure 6). There were 0.2 million women who reported being registered but who did not vote.
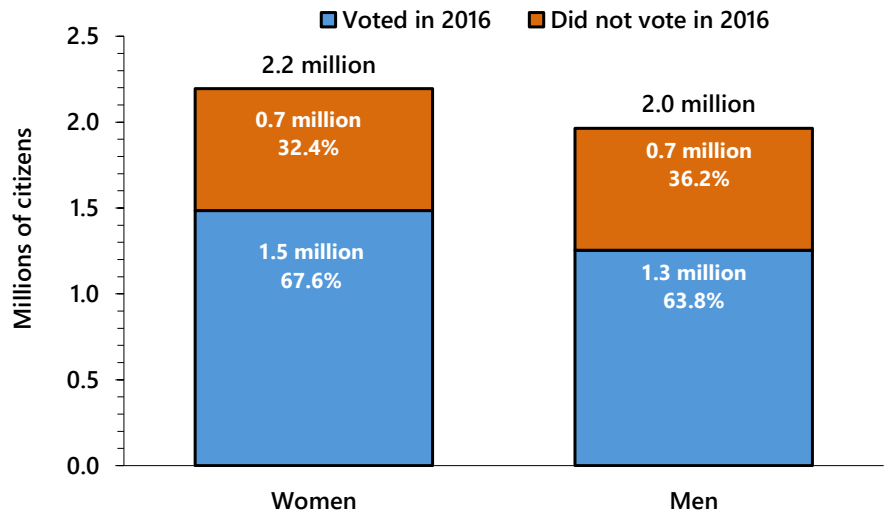
Men

There were 2.0 million voting age men citizens in Maryland in 2016, and the majority (63.8%) voted (Figure 5). There were 0.7 million missing men voters, and 71.7% (0.5 million) of them were not registered to vote before the election (Figure 6). There were 0.2 million men who reported being registered but who did not vote.

Figure 5: Voting by Gender
Citizens 18+ years old in Maryland in 2016
Total = 4.2 million

Figure 6: Missing Voters by Gender
Citizens 18+ years old who did not vote in Maryland in 2016
Total = 1.4 million

Notes

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Race and Hispanic Origin

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Asians Least Likely to Vote; Majority of Missing Voters were Non-Hispanic White

Voting participation varied by race and Hispanic ethnicity in Maryland in 2016. Non-Hispanic white citizens had the highest rate of voting participation (67.1%), slightly higher than the rate for Blacks (66.8%). Voting rates for Hispanics (59.2%) and Asians (54.9%) were lower (Figure 7). The majority of missing voters were white (0.8 million). Across all groups, the majority of missing voters were not registered to vote before the election in 2016 (Figure 8).

Figure 7: Voting by Race and Hispanic Origin
Citizens 18+ years old in Maryland in 2016
Total = 4.2 million

Figure 8: Missing Voters by Race and Hispanic Origin
Citizens 18+ years old who did not vote in Maryland in 2016
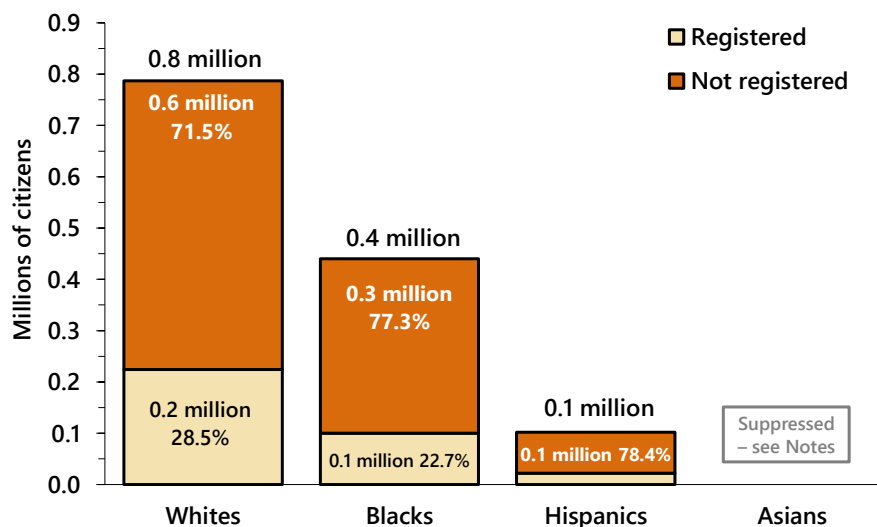**Total = 1.4 million**
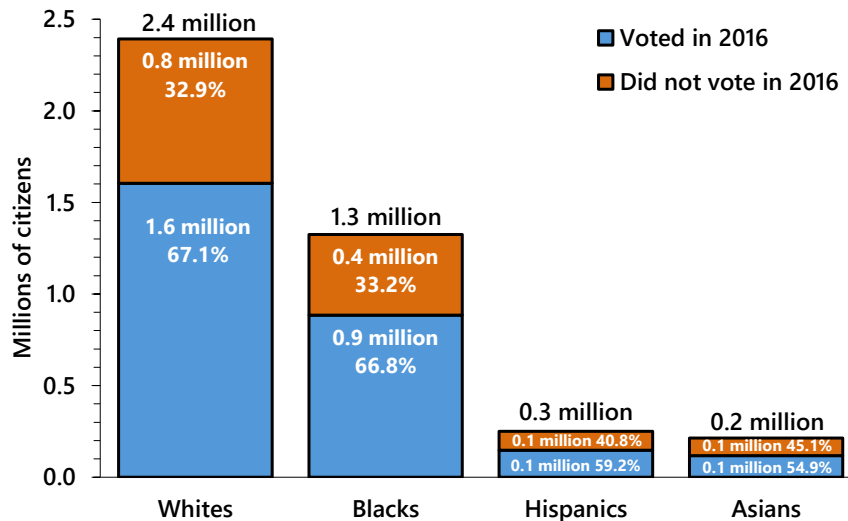
Whites

Non-Hispanic whites were the largest group of citizens in Maryland (2.4 million) and the majority (67.1%) voted in 2016 (Figure 7). There were 0.8 million missing voters, including 0.6 million (71.5%) who were not registered to vote prior to the election (Figure 8).

Blacks

The majority (66.8%) of Maryland's 1.3 million Black citizens voted in 2016 (Figure 7). There were 0.4 million missing Black voters, most (77.3%) of whom were not registered prior to the 2016 election (Figure 8).

Hispanics

There were 0.3 million voting age Hispanic citizens in Maryland, and more than half (59.2%) voted (Figure 7). The majority (78.4%) of the 0.1 million missing Hispanic voters were not registered to vote (Figure 8).

Asians

More than half (54.9%) of Asian citizens in Maryland voted in 2016 (Figure 7). There were 0.1 million missing voters. Results for registration status were suppressed for this group (see Notes).

Notes

Whites are non-Hispanic, and *Hispanics* may be of any race. *Blacks* and *Asians* include multiracial individuals. Data are not shown for American Indians who were <1% of Maryland's population. Please note that some numbers may appear not to add up correctly due to rounding. Voting data are from the Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey (November 2016). This report includes statistically-weighted estimates of percentages and population counts derived from a Maryland sample of over 1,000 adult respondents. Data in response categories for which the estimated Maryland population was fewer than 75,000 citizens have been suppressed per Census Bureau recommendation. Full technical details for the Missing Voters Project, links to the original census data, and other valuable resources are available at https://www.wiise-usa.org/mvp.

Figure 9: Where did Citizens Register to Vote?
Citizens 18+ years old who were registered to vote in Maryland, 2016
Total = 3.1 million

	Percent
1. At department of motor vehicles	40.5
2. By mail	8.3
3. At a local government office	7.3
4. Other place/way	5.7
5. Using the internet or online	5.4
6. At a school, hospital, or campus	4.8
7. At a registration drive	2.6
8. At the polls (on primary or election day)	Suppressed – see Notes
9. At a public assistance agency	Suppressed – see Notes
10. Don't know/refused	22.8

Percent axis: 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45

What Does this Chart Show About Where Citizens Registered to Vote?

Respondents to the Voting Supplement of the Current Population Survey were asked in November 2016 about the method and location of their most recent registration to vote. Only people who said that they were currently registered were asked this question. Over one-fifth (22.8%) of registered citizens in Maryland did not know or remember how they had registered to vote (Figure 9). It is possible that citizens who had been continuously registered at the same residential address for several years were less likely to remember their method of registration.

Local Government Offices

Taken together, registration at department of motor vehicles (40.5%) and local government offices (7.3%) accounted for 47.8% of voter registrations prior to the November 2016 elections. In addition, 8.3% of registered citizens reported that they mailed their voter registration form to a government election office (Figure 9).

Voter Outreach Efforts

In total, 7.3% of registered citizens reported registering as a result of voter outreach efforts at a school, hospital, or campus (4.8%) or registration drive (2.6%) (Figure 9).

Internet

The internet was a less common method of voter registration in Maryland. In November 2016, 5.4% of registered citizens reported that they had registered online (Figure 9).

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Figure 10: Reasons for Not Registering
Citizens 18+ years old who were not registered in Maryland, 2016
Total = 0.5 million

1. Not interested in election or politics . . — 44.1
2. Not eligible to vote . . . . — 16.1
3. Other reason . . . . — Suppressed – see Notes
4. My vote would not make a difference . — Suppressed – see Notes
5. Permanent illness or disability . . . . . — Suppressed – see Notes
6. Did not meet registration deadlines . . — Suppressed – see Notes
7. Did not meet residency requirements . — Suppressed – see Notes
8. Did not know where or how to register — Suppressed – see Notes
9. Difficulty with English . . . . — Suppressed – see Notes
10. Don't know/refused . . . . — Suppressed – see Notes

Percent (0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45)

What Does this Chart Show About Reasons for Not Registering to Vote?

Non-voting respondents to the November 2016 Current Population Survey were asked if they had registered to vote. Respondents who replied "no" were asked their reason for not registering. Self-reported reasons are shown in descending order by frequency in Figure 10.

Readers should be aware that respondents who refused to state whether or not they had registered were not asked about their reasons. Therefore, the respondent universe for this question (0.5 million adults) is smaller than the total number who were not registered (1.0 million) as shown in Figure 1. We classified people who refused to say whether or not they were registered as unregistered citizens.

Lack of Interest

The single largest reason (44.1%) that citizens in Maryland stated for not registering was that they were *not interested in the election or they were not involved in politics* (Figure 10).

Not Eligible

Nearly one-sixth (16.1%) of unregistered citizens in Maryland stated that they were *not eligible to vote* (Figure 10). Maryland ranks highest in the nation on this measure. While felony disenfranchisement is a common cause of ineligibility, since March 2016 in Maryland, voting rights for citizens with felony convictions have been restored automatically after their release from prison, and not taken away from those on probation. It is possible that some respondents to this question were unaware that they were legally eligible to vote.

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Community-based, faith-based, and worker-friendly local organizations can use the resources listed below to aid in efforts to motivate citizen involvement, expand voter registration, combat voter suppression, eliminate election day logistical barriers to voting, and monitor local election procedures.

The webpage links in the listings below were active as of October 2018. Please visit our website for an expanded resources list with current links: https://www.wiise-usa.org/mvp-resources.

Maryland Voting Rights Organizations

ACLU of Maryland
https://www.aclu-md.org/
The Maryland ACLU works to ensure that all people in the state of Maryland are free to think and speak as they choose and can lead their lives free from discrimination and unwarranted government intrusion. They are guided by the United States Bill of Rights and the Maryland Declaration of Rights.

Baltimore Votes
https://www.baltimorevotes.org/
#BaltimoreVotes is a growing group of leaders, dedicated to providing everyone in Baltimore, without prejudice or bias the accurate information and motivation needed to engage in every election confidently.

League of Women Voters of Maryland
https://www.lwvmd.org/
The LWV encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Maryland League of Conservation Voters
http://www.mdlcv.org/
MD LCV ensures that environmental values are reflected in the state's budget priorities. During elections they run strategic campaigns aimed at electing pro-conservation candidates, mobilize volunteers, educate voters, and elevate environmental issues.

FREE Resources for Local Organizations

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
https://naacp.org/campaigns/fighting-for-democracy/
The NAACP's Civic Engagement focus, Turn Out 2018, is a voter registration and mobilization program designed to reach voters and convey the message "Defeat Hate. Vote!" Extensive FREE resources for local organizations and individuals are available for download.

Vote411.org
http://www.vote411.org/
VOTE411.org is a FREE "one-stop-shop" for election related information. It provides state-specific nonpartisan information to the public. An important and very popular component of VOTE411.org is the polling place locator, which enables users to type in their street address and retrieve their poll location.

National Voting Rights Organizations

Advancement Project
https://advancementproject.org/issues/voting-rights/
Advancement Project is a next generation, multi-racial civil rights organization. Advancement Project is deeply involved in movement-based work aimed at blocking barriers to the ballot for voters of color and expanding access to the vote before Election Day.

Common Cause
https://www.commoncause.org
Common Cause is a nonpartisan grassroots organization with chapters in 35 states that works to promote government transparency, equal voting opportunities and fair representation in the political process.

Demos
https://www.demos.org/issue/voting-rights-voter-registration
Demos ("the people") is a public policy organization working to reduce political and economic inequality and to guarantee the freedom to vote, through research, advocacy, litigation, and strategic communications.

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Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)
https://www.splcenter.org/our-issues/voting-rights
The SPLC is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society, using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy for equal opportunity.

UNIDOS US
https://www.unidosus.org/issues/voting/
UNIDOS US (formerly National Council of La Raza) and its network of nearly 300 affiliates serve the Hispanic community through research, policy analysis, and state and national advocacy, and community programs.

Voter Participation Center
https://www.voterparticipation.org/
The Voter Participation Center's mission is to increase civic engagement among the Rising American Electorate: unmarried women, people of color, and millennials.

Voto Latino
http://votolatino.org/election-center/election-center/
Voto Latino is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to civic engagement, issue advocacy, and leadership development. They provide extensive resources to promote voter participation among young Latinos.

Youth Organizations

Alliance for Youth Action
https://www.allianceforyouthaction.org/campaign/democracy-done-right/
Alliance for Youth Action is a nationwide network of organizations building political power of young people. The Democracy Done Right campaign supports automatic voter registration for all citizens.

March for Our Lives
https://marchforourlives.com/vote-for-our-lives/
Created by, inspired by, and led by the students of Parkland High School, the mission of March For Our Lives is to assure that no special interest group or political agenda is more critical than the timely passage of legislation to effectively address the gun violence issues that are rampant in our country.

Rock the Vote
https://www.rockthevote.org/voting-information/
Rock the Vote is a nonpartisan nonprofit dedicated to using pop culture, music, art, and technology to engage young people in politics. They provide extensive state-level information on voting requirements.

Disability Organizations

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)
https://www.aapd.com/advocacy/voting/
The AAPD advocates for policies that allow people with disabilities to fully participate in the political process, including accessibility of polling locations and voting technology.

National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
http://www.ndrn.org/en/public-policy/voting.html
The NDRN provides legal advocacy services for individuals with disabilities including access to voting, throughi the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy Systems and the Client Assistance Programs.

Education Organizations

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
https://www.aft.org
The AFT is a union of professionals who champion fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for students, their families and communities.

National Education Association (NEA) Education Votes
https://educationvotes.nea.org/who-we-are/
The NEA's Education Votes informs public education advocates on the issues, and supports the mission of providing every student—regardless of their ZIP code—with the strong public schools they need to succeed.

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