



Voter Engagement in an Inequitable Outreach and Information Landscape: Strategies for the 2024 Election

Presentation of CID Research at the California Secretary of State's 2024 Research Symposium

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Today's Talk

1. Why is voter engagement needed?

2. Barriers to voting.

3. Voters' knowledge and awareness/messaging/future preferences.

4. Research recommendations.

Today's Talk: Data From New CID Research Series

- CALIFORNIA'S BALLOT TRACKING SERVICE: WHO IS USING IT AND HOW DOES IT IMPACT VOTER CONFIDENCE AND BEHAVIOR?
- VOTER MESSAGING IN CALIFORNIA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN AN INEQUITABLE ELECTION LANDSCAPE
- VOTING METHODS IN CALIFORNIA: DISPARATE USE AND REJECTION RATES
- VOTING METHODS IN CALIFORNIA: VOTER AWARENESS AND REASONS FOR DISPARATE USE
- VOTER TURNOUT IN CALIFORNIA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MOBILIZATION (forthcoming)

Data broken out by race, ethnicity, age group, and disability status.

This research is generously supported through funding from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund

Available at CID's Website:



1. Why is voter engagement needed?

**See CID Report:
Voter Turnout in California: Challenges and Opportunities for
Mobilization**

Inequitable Election Landscape

- Significant disparities in eligible voter turnout rates continue to be present in California's elections, particularly for voters of color and young voters.
- At the same time, eligible voters (adult citizens) in the state experience an inequitable outreach and information landscape.
- Non-partisan voter outreach efforts conducted by both California election officials and community organizations remain greatly under resourced for the scale of need.

Multi-Racial Democracy Requires Inclusive and Reliable Data

- Sources for voter data are limited – Current Population Survey and official voter files.
- Using the CA voter file allows for within state analysis, but race and ethnicity information are not present for most voters in the CA voter file.
- Existing self-reported race/ethnicity data that is available from registration files is not fully representative of CA's total voter population.

Multi-Racial Democracy Requires Inclusive and Reliable Data

Attempting to identify the race/ethnicity of voters in the CA voter file is challenging - requires imputation.

Common methodological approach in research – Bayesian modeling.

Identify race and ethnicity from voter records using a combination of the registrant's surname and neighborhood characteristics (geocoding with census block/tract pop data).

Commonly used to identify Latinos and Asian Americans – but is not as reliable for research on many groups in CA due to population sizes.

CID Voter Data Limitations

Reliable use can depend on the goals of the examination (e.g. campaign outreach or research) and the research questions being explored.

There are possible opportunities to expand race and ethnicity data in the voter file through self reporting during the registration process.

= Californians see a limited set of voter turnout research by subgroup.

Informing Data Conversations

- CID has worked to inform data conversations:
 - CID's Inclusive Data Advisory Committee
 - Online neighborhood data mapping tools
- Recent CID research reports using mixed data methods:
 - The Experience of Black Voters in California: 2020 General Election and Beyond
 - Californian's Formerly Incarcerated: Challenges and Opportunities in Accessing Voting Rights

Disparities in Voter Turnout Rates: 2020 General Election

Two ways to measure turnout....

1. Total Registered Voter Turnout - ?
2. Total Eligible Voter Turnout - ?

Identifying eligible voter turnout is critical to understanding the voter representation gap

Disparities in Registration Rates: 2020 General Election

White (non-Latino)* – 87.1%

Black* – 77.2%

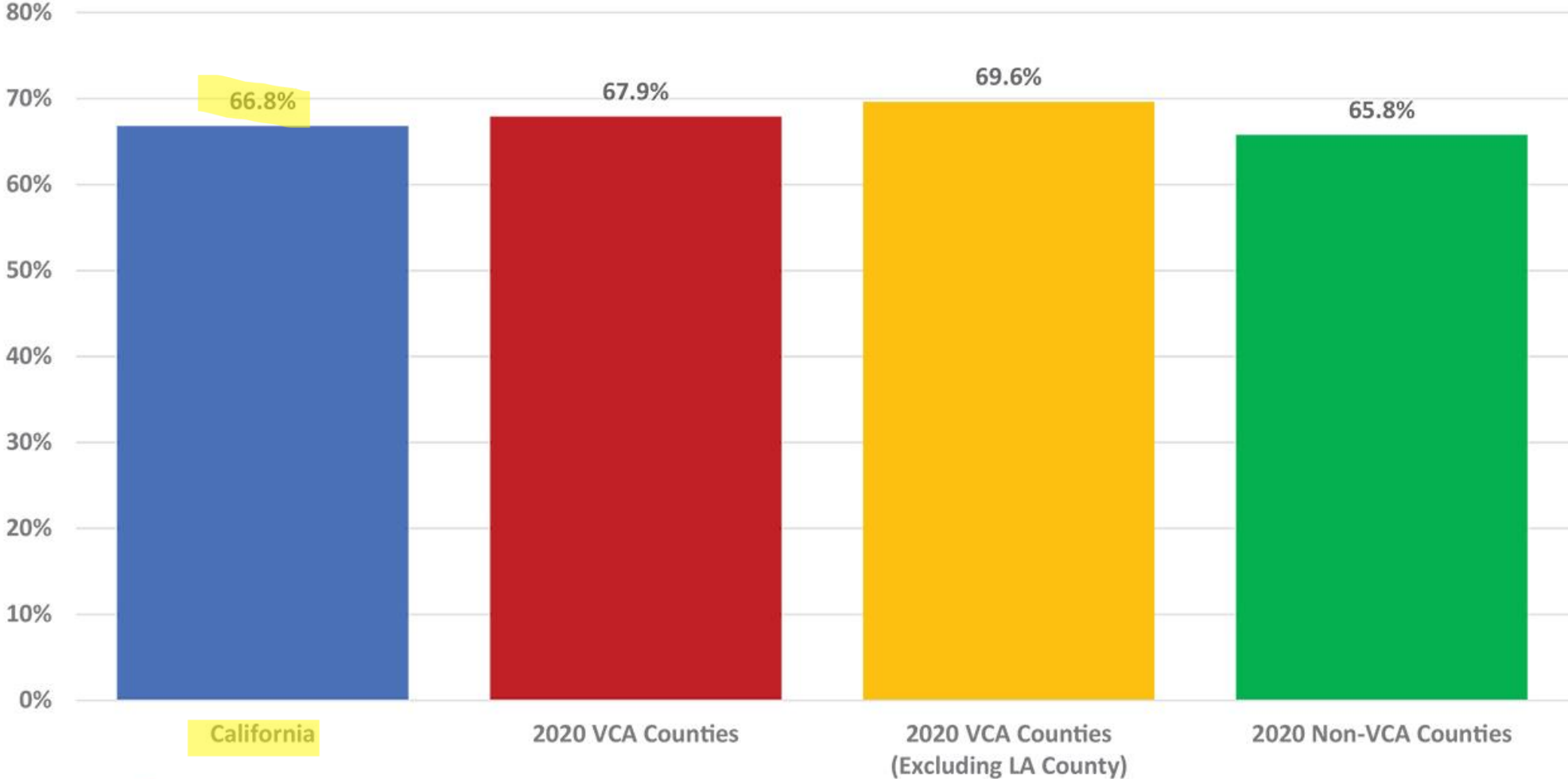
Latino – 74.1%

Asian-American – 73.3%

CA Secretary of State Voter File, CA Dept of Finance

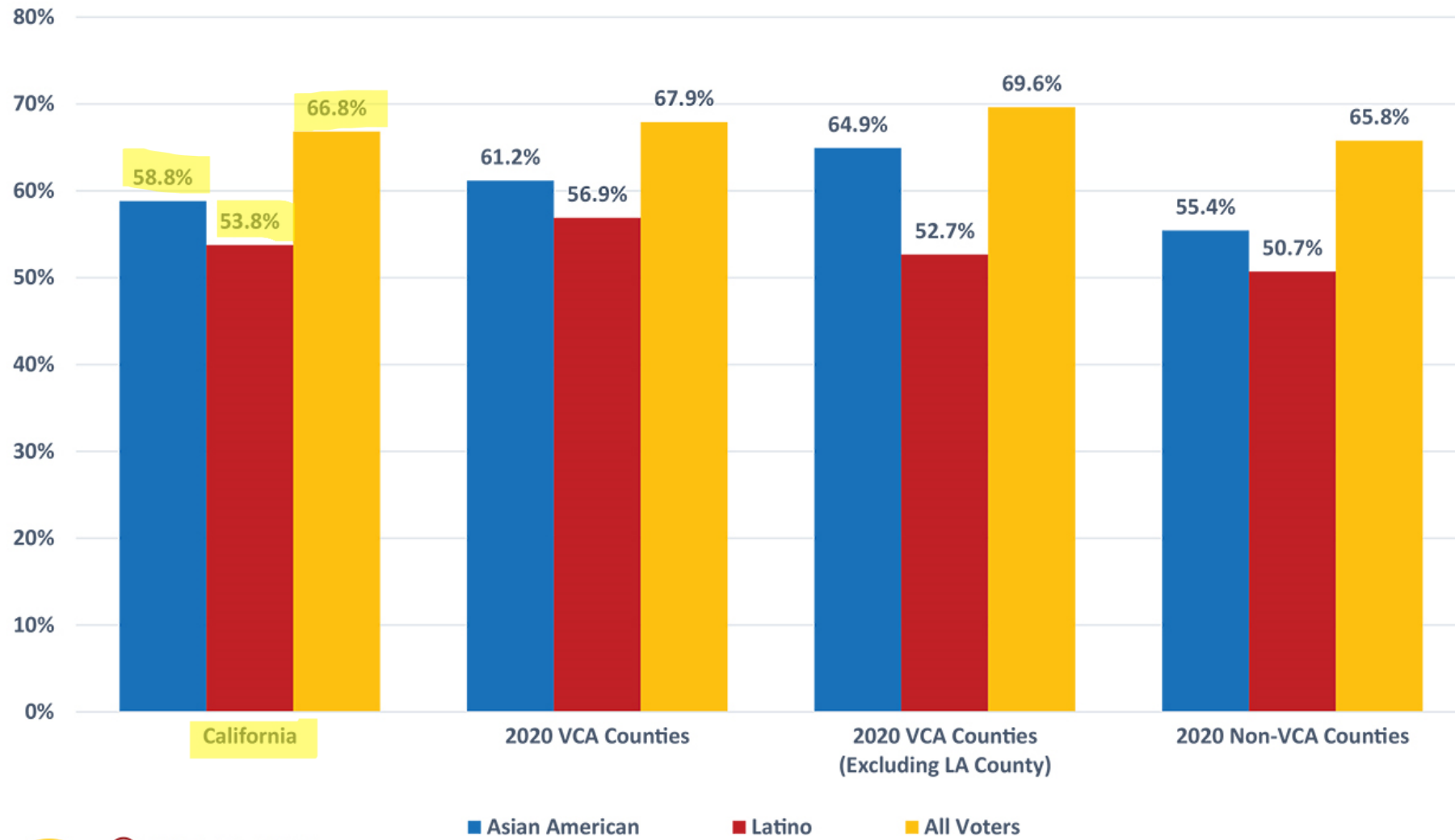
Eligible Voter Turnout CID Updated Turnout Analysis

Eligible Voter Turnout
All Voters
California 2020 General Election

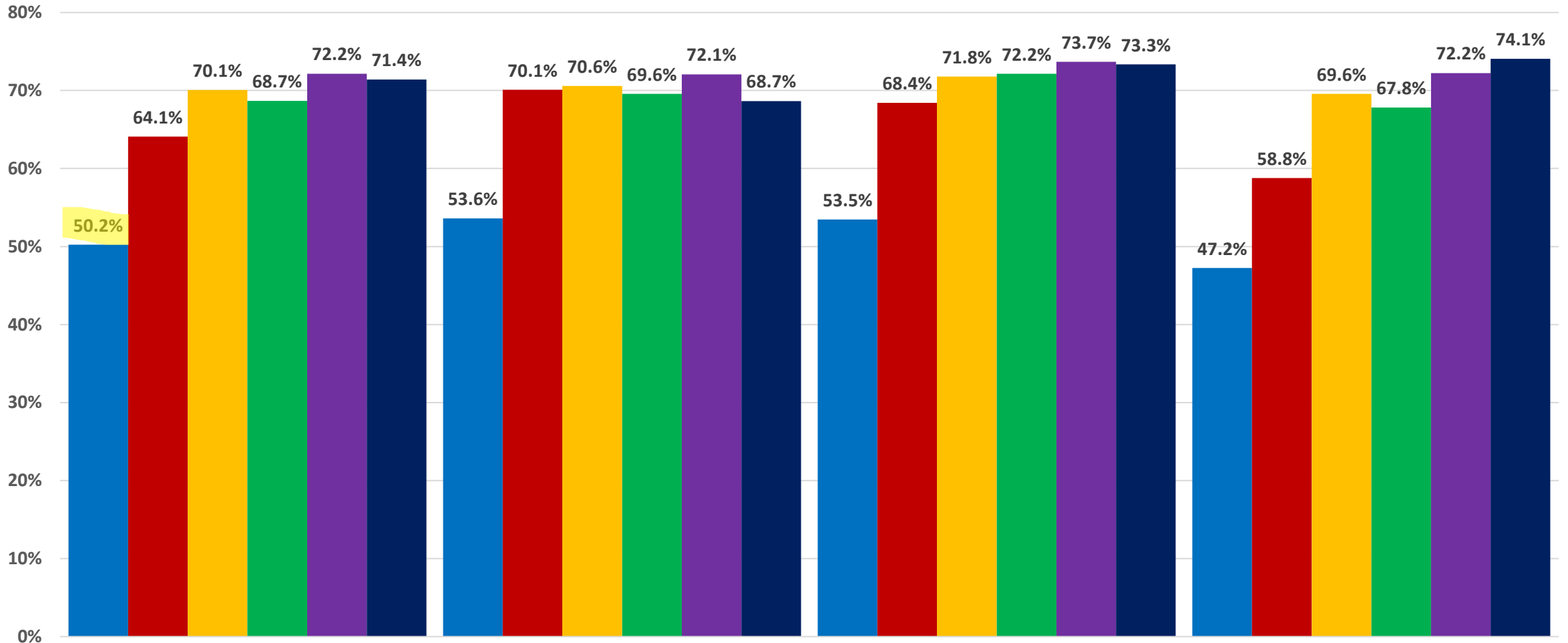


Data Source: County Voter Files. California Department of Finance

Eligible Voter Turnout Race and Ethnicity California 2020 General Election



Eligible Voter Turnout
Age Groups
California 2020 General Election



California

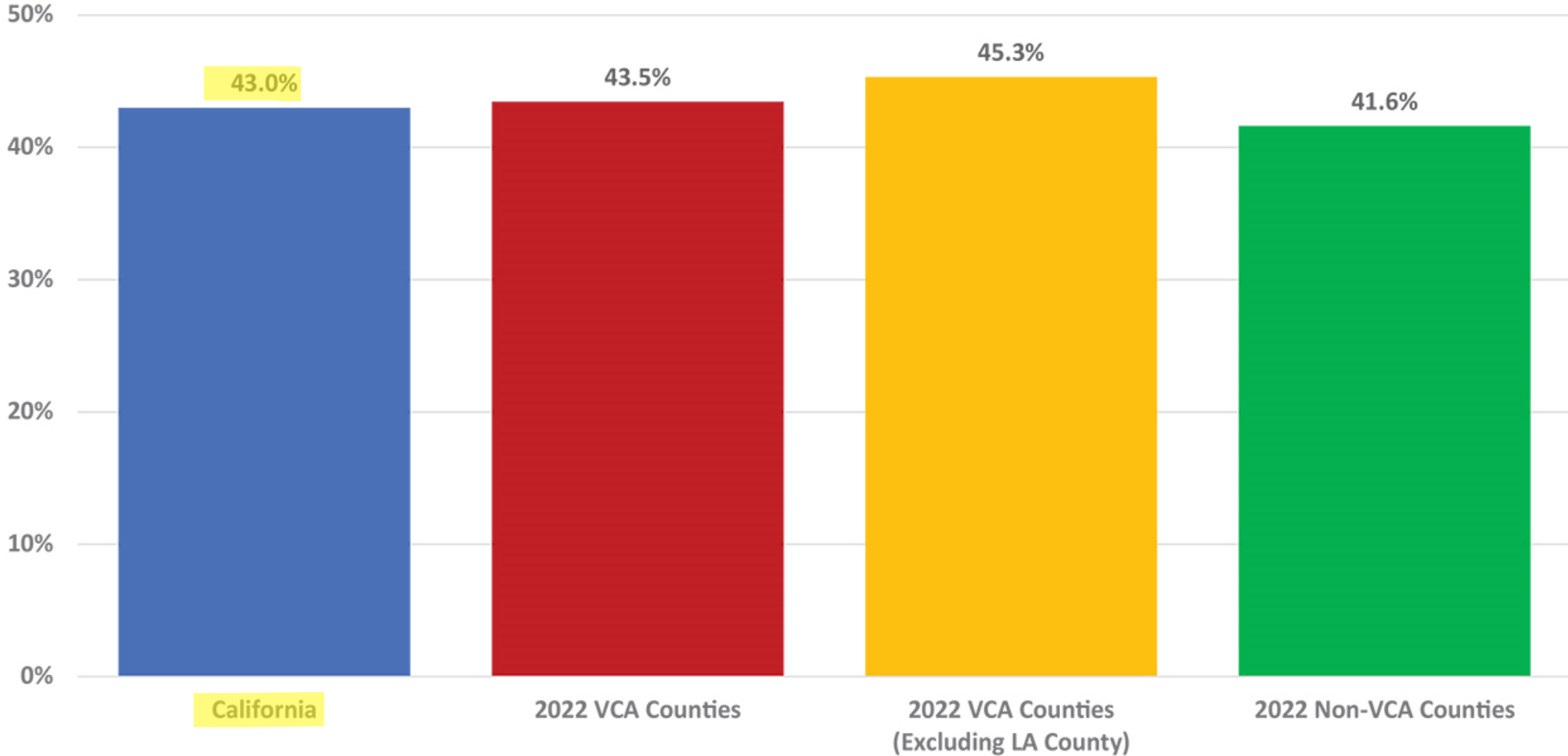
2020 VCA Counties

2020 VCA Counties (Excluding LA County)

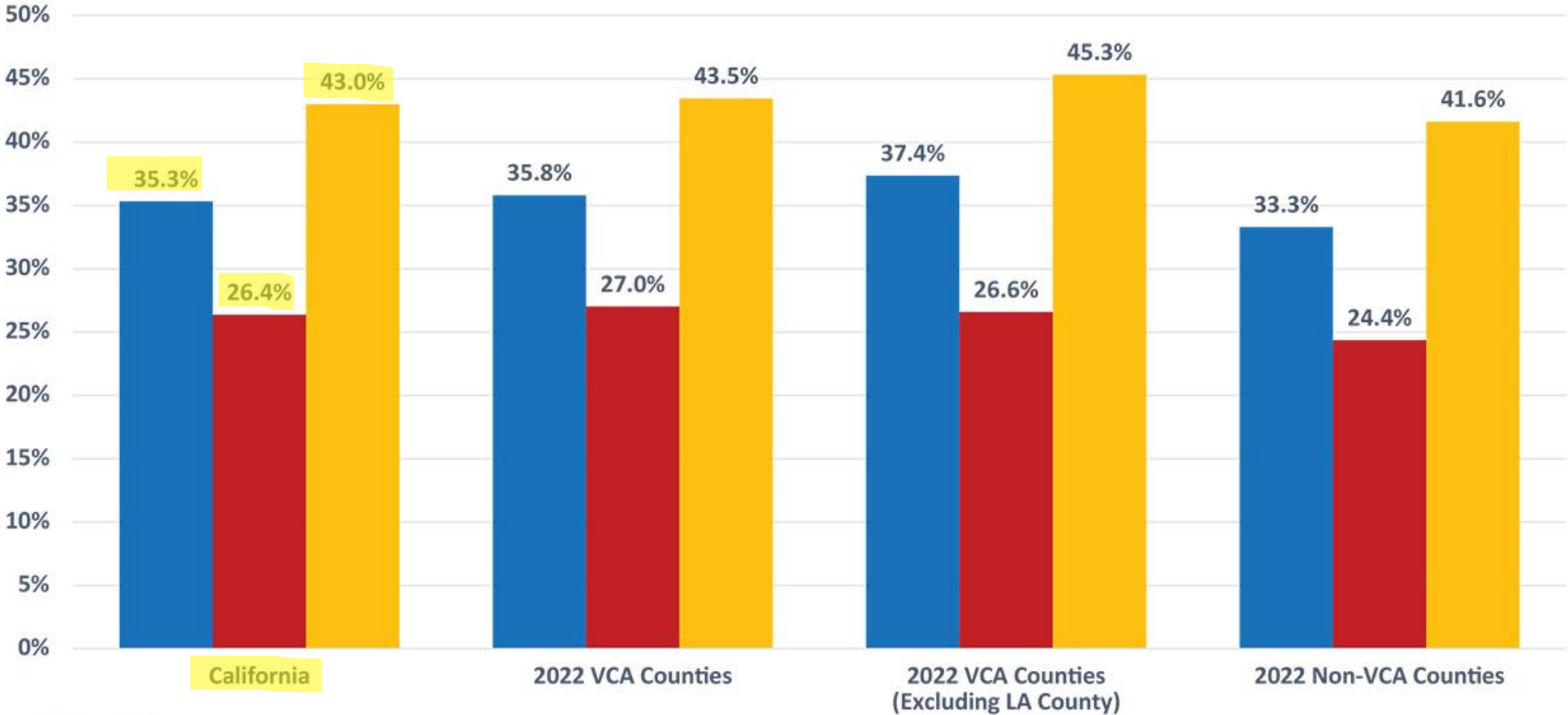
2020 Non-VCA Counties

18 to 24 25 to 34 35 to 44 45 to 54 55 to 65 65+

Eligible Voter Turnout All Voters California 2022 General Election



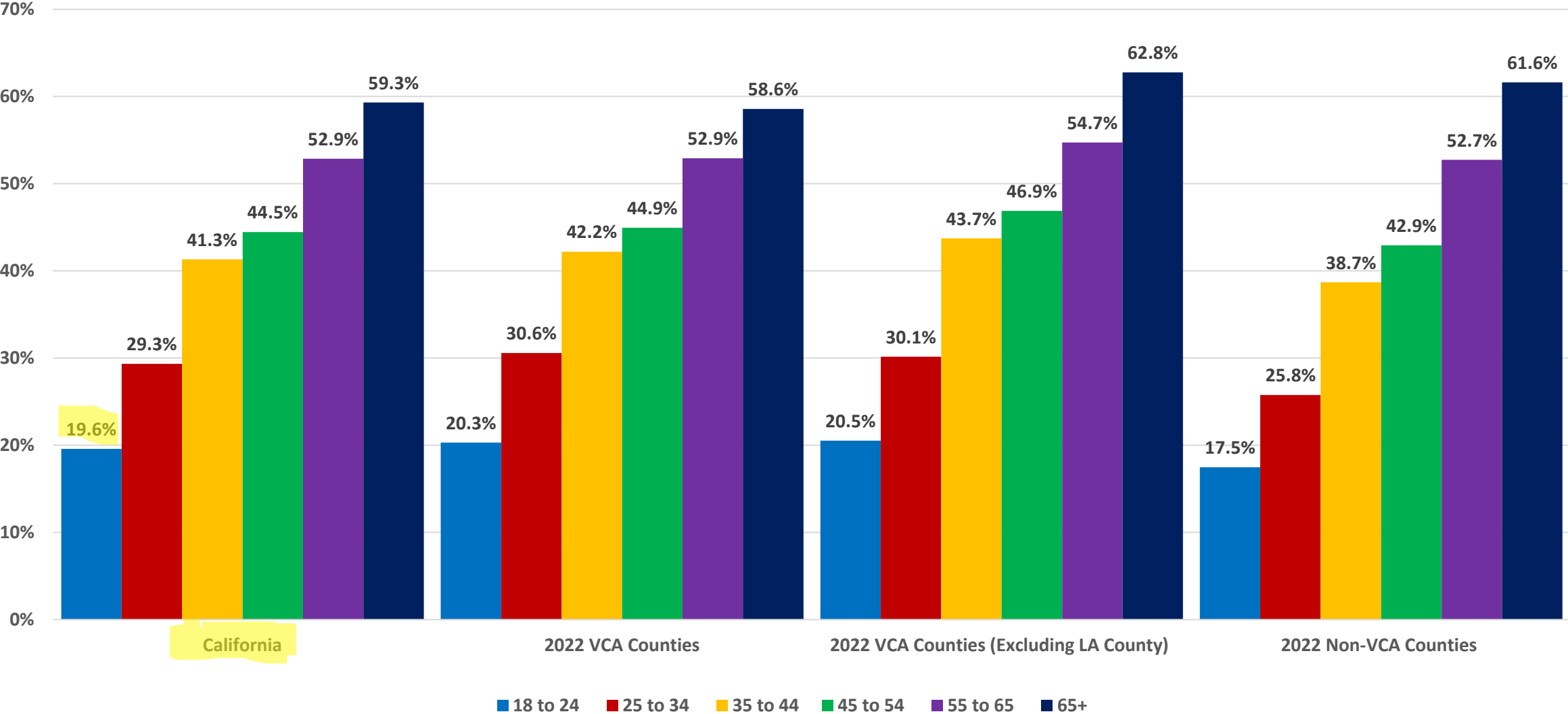
Eligible Voter Turnout Race and Ethnicity California 2022 General Election



■ Asian American ■ Latino ■ All Voters

Data Source: County Voter Files, California Department of Finance

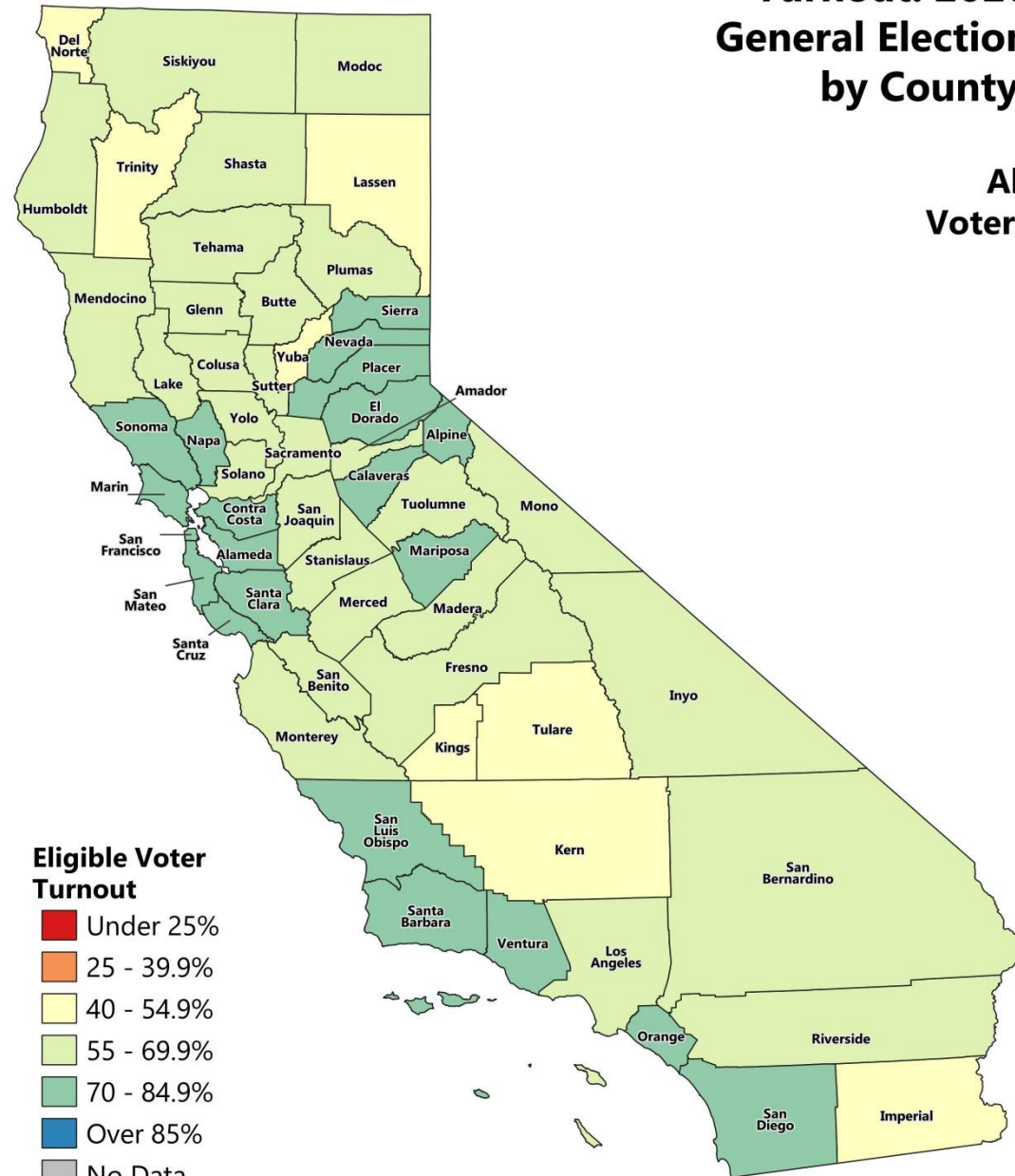
**Eligible Voter Turnout
Age Groups
California 2022 General Election**



Data Source: County Voter Files, California Department of Finance

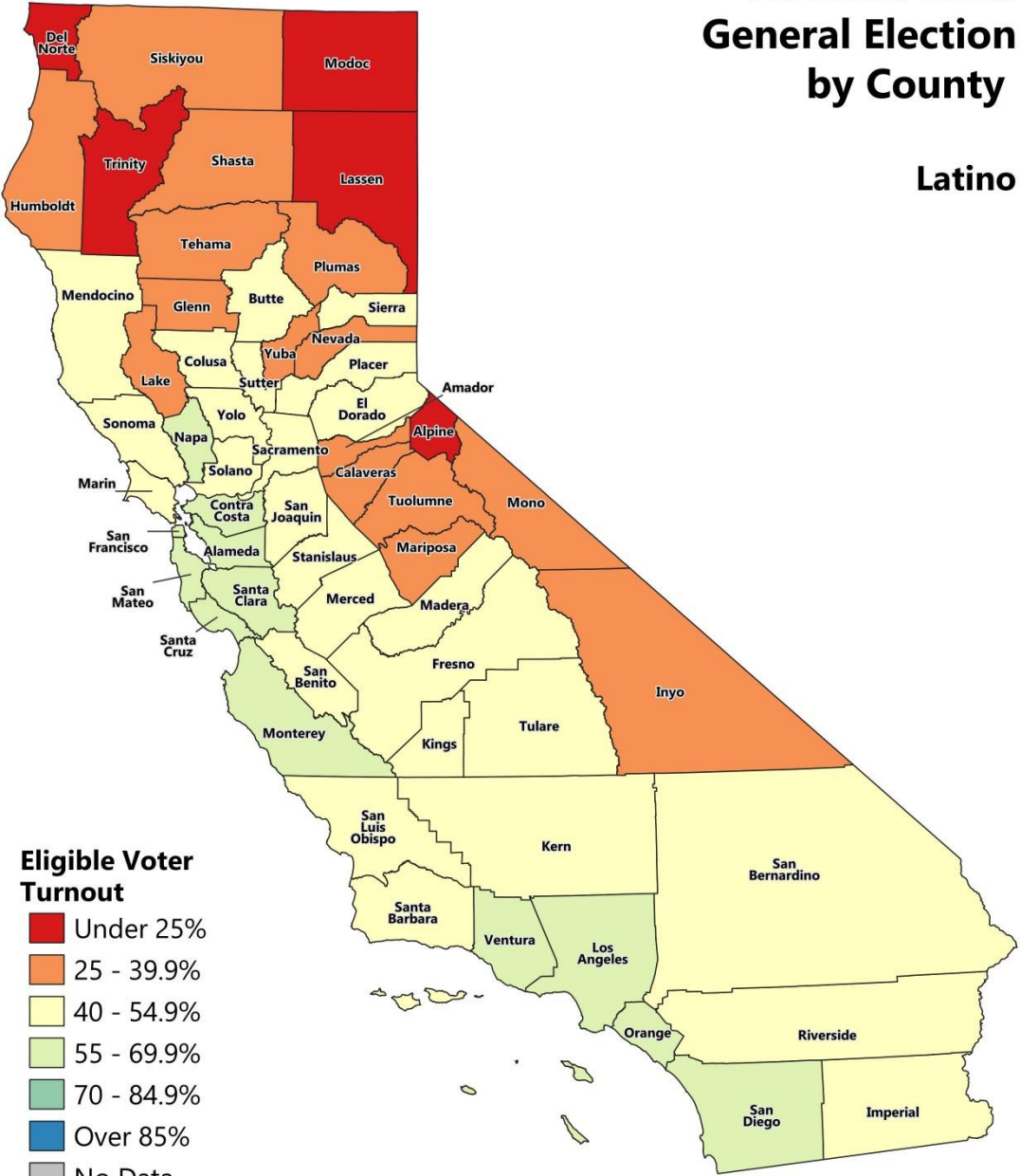
Eligible Voter Turnout: 2020 General Election by County

All Voters



Eligible Voter Turnout: 2020 General Election by County

Latino

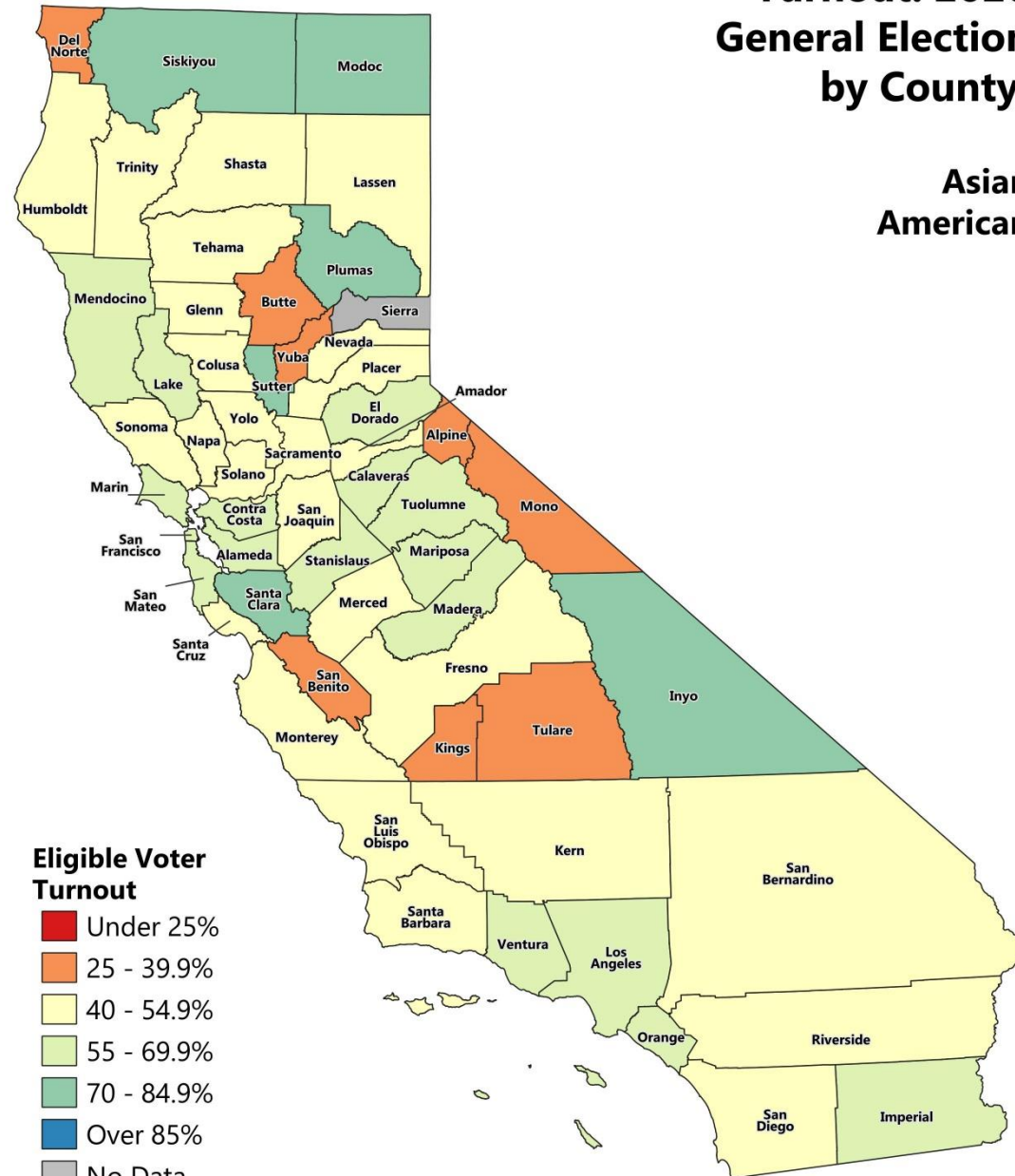


Eligible Voter Turnout

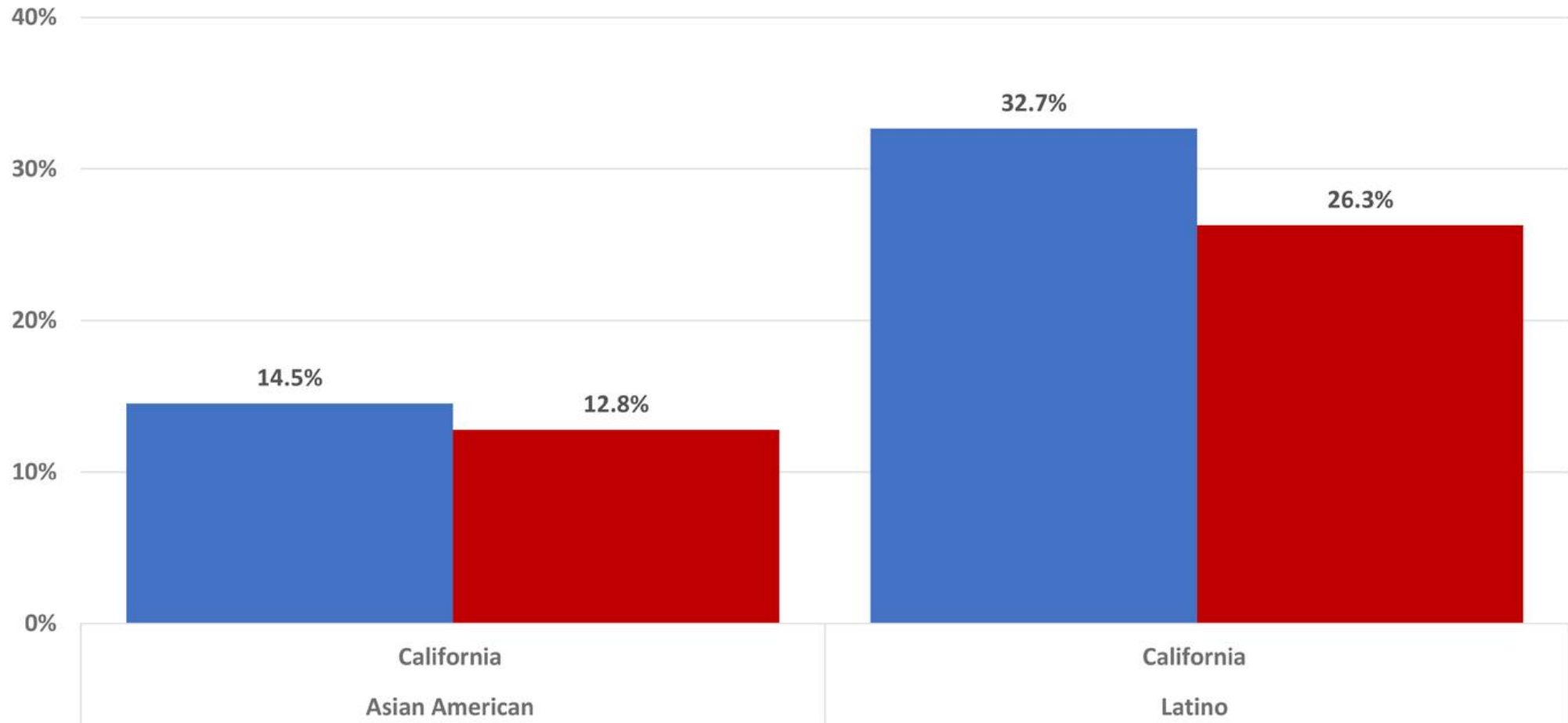
- Under 25%
- 25 - 39.9%
- 40 - 54.9%
- 55 - 69.9%
- 70 - 84.9%
- Over 85%
- No Data

Eligible Voter Turnout: 2020 General Election by County

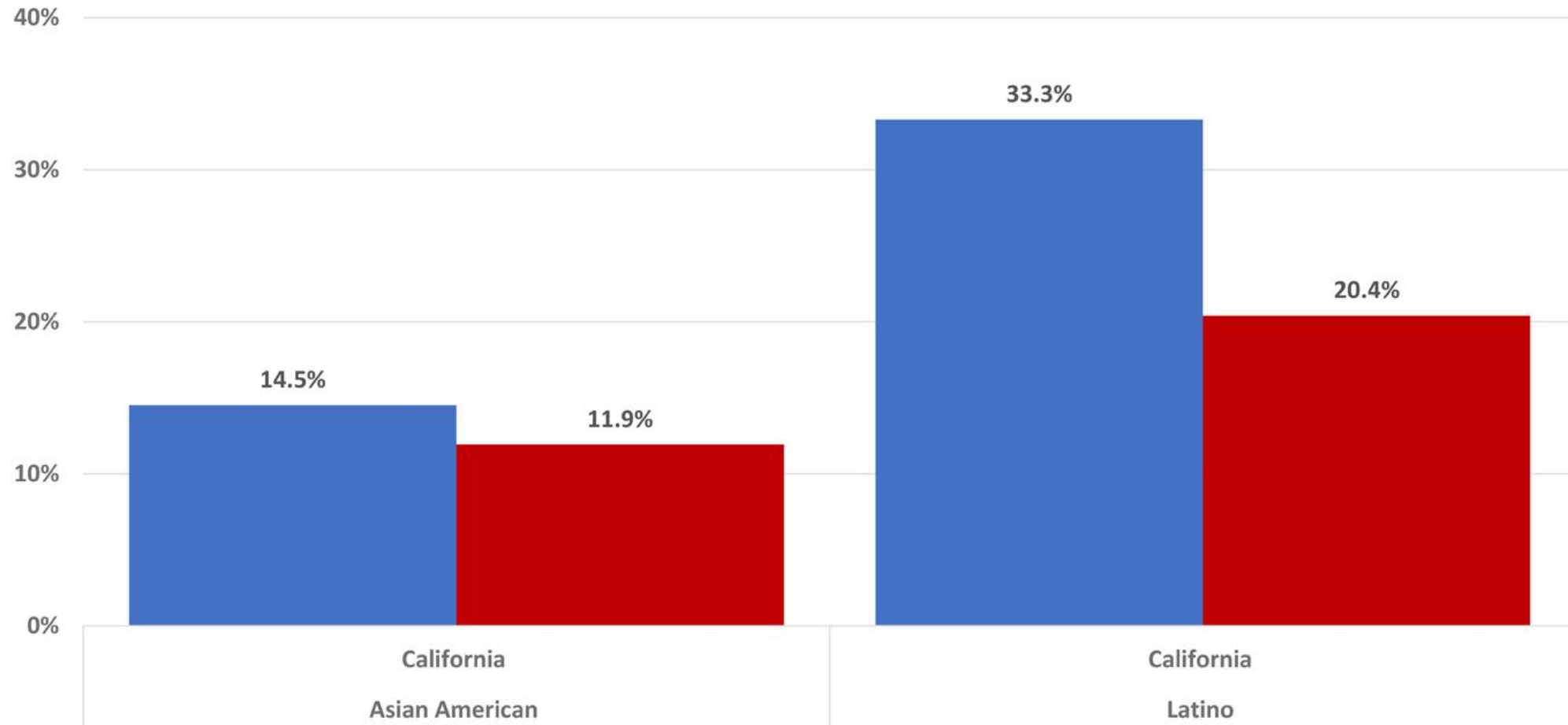
Asian American



Share of Eligible Voters versus Share of Votes Cast Race and Ethnicity 2020 General Election



Share of Eligible Voters versus Share of Votes Cast Race and Ethnicity 2022 General Election



California Black Eligible Voter Turnout

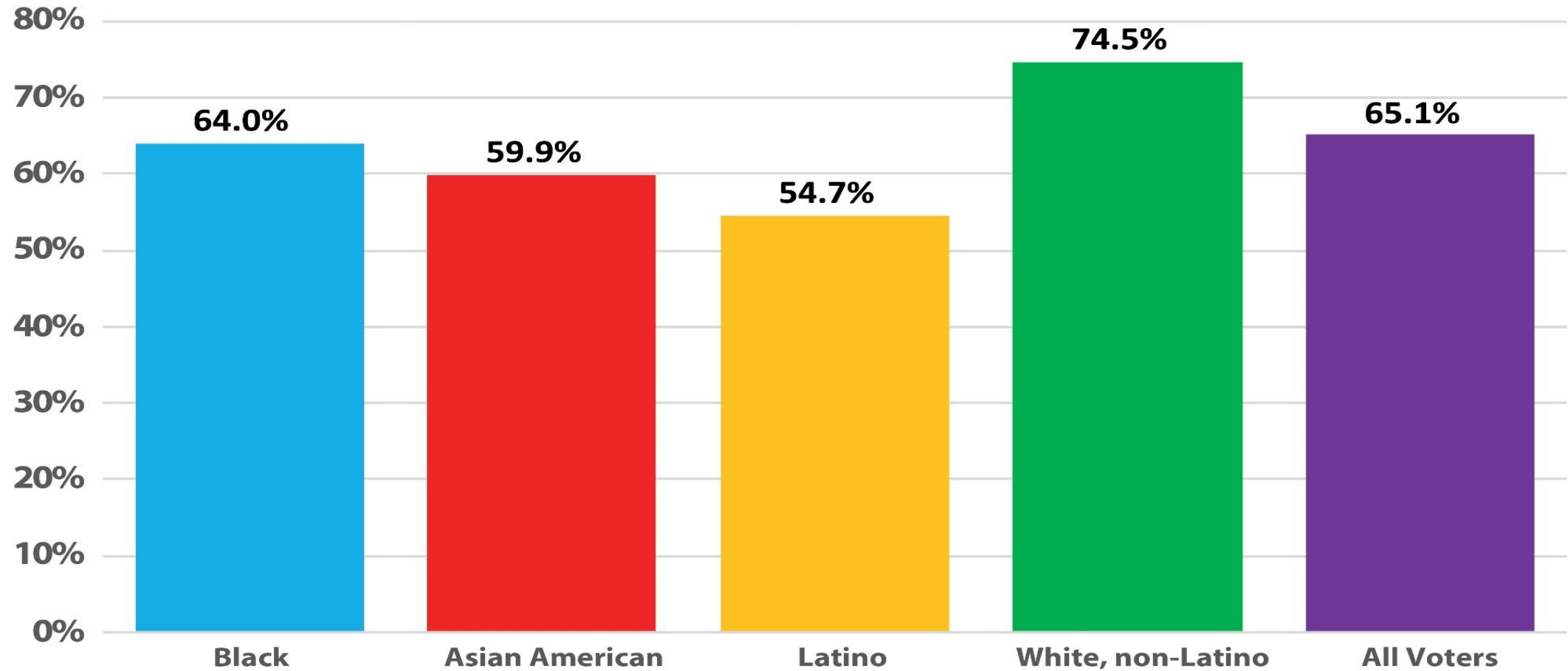
Turnout Gap Between Black and White, non-Latino Voters has been Widening in CA

According to the Current Population Survey (CPS):

- In the 2020 general election, 64.0% of Black eligible voters (adult citizens) cast a ballot.
- 74.5% of white, non-Latino eligible voters cast a ballot.
- There was a 10.5 percentage point turnout gap between Black and white, non-Latino eligible voters. This turnout gap has increased in recent general elections.

Eligible Voter Turnout - Race and Ethnicity

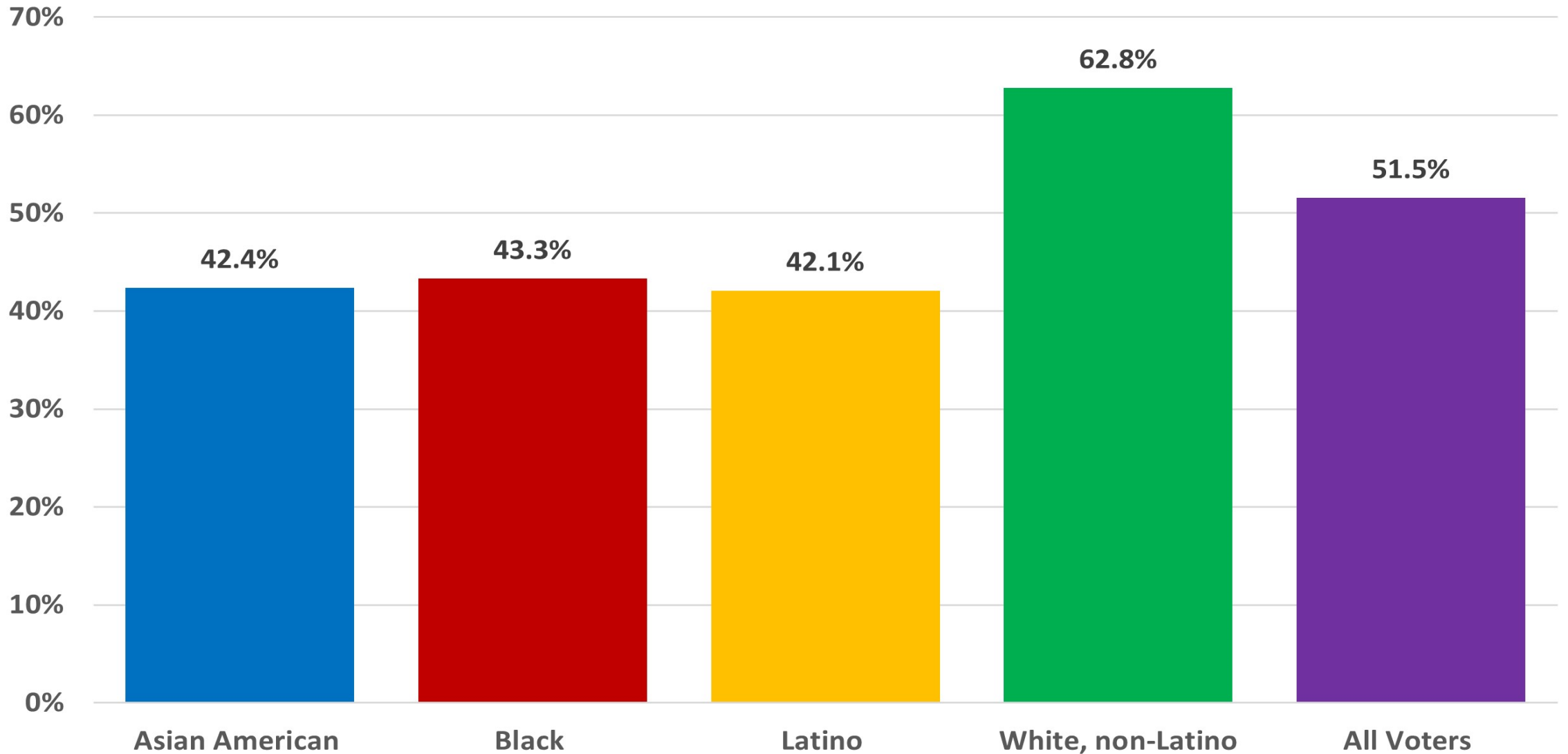
California 2020 General Elections



Data Source: Current Population Survey

Eligible Voter Turnout - Race and Ethnicity

California 2022 General Election



Data Source: Current Population Survey

Disparities and Opportunities

- **Disparities in Voter Turnout in the 2020 and 2022 General Elections**

In the 2020 and 2022 general elections, eligible turnout rates varied across racial and ethnic groups.

- **Persistent Voter Representation Gaps**

Historical underrepresentation for voters of color remains in California elections.

- **Opportunities for Voter Mobilization**

Millions of eligible voters of color did not cast ballots in recent California elections.

Opportunities for Voter Mobilization

Millions of eligible voters of color did not cast ballots in recent California elections.

- Over 40% of Asian-American and Latino eligible voters did not vote in the 2020 general election and over 60% did not vote in the 2022 general election.
- These high proportions of non-voters represent a combined total over 5.4 million Asian Americans and Latinos in 2020 and over 8.6 million in 2022 – Higher when combining all eligible voters of color.
- 1.7 million eligible California Black voters (voters and non-voters).
- Efforts to strengthen voter participation must look to these potential voters to identify the barriers to voting and they experience – meet eligible voters where they are.



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Why so low?

What can be done?

Reasons for Lower Turnout

Historical and Current Barriers to Voting:

- Disparities in outreach and mobilization resources – political campaigns and candidates much less likely to reach out to historically underrepresented groups
- Disparities in registration rates
- Historical and current disconnection from the political process
- Demographic membership

Even with these barriers, voters of color turn out in numbers that give them significant power (regardless of political party) in CA.

How to increase engagement?

1. Make It Easier for People to Vote
2. Make People Want to Vote

2. POSSIBLE VOTING BARRIERS

See CID Reports:

Voter Messaging in California: Challenges and Opportunities in an Inequitable Election Landscape

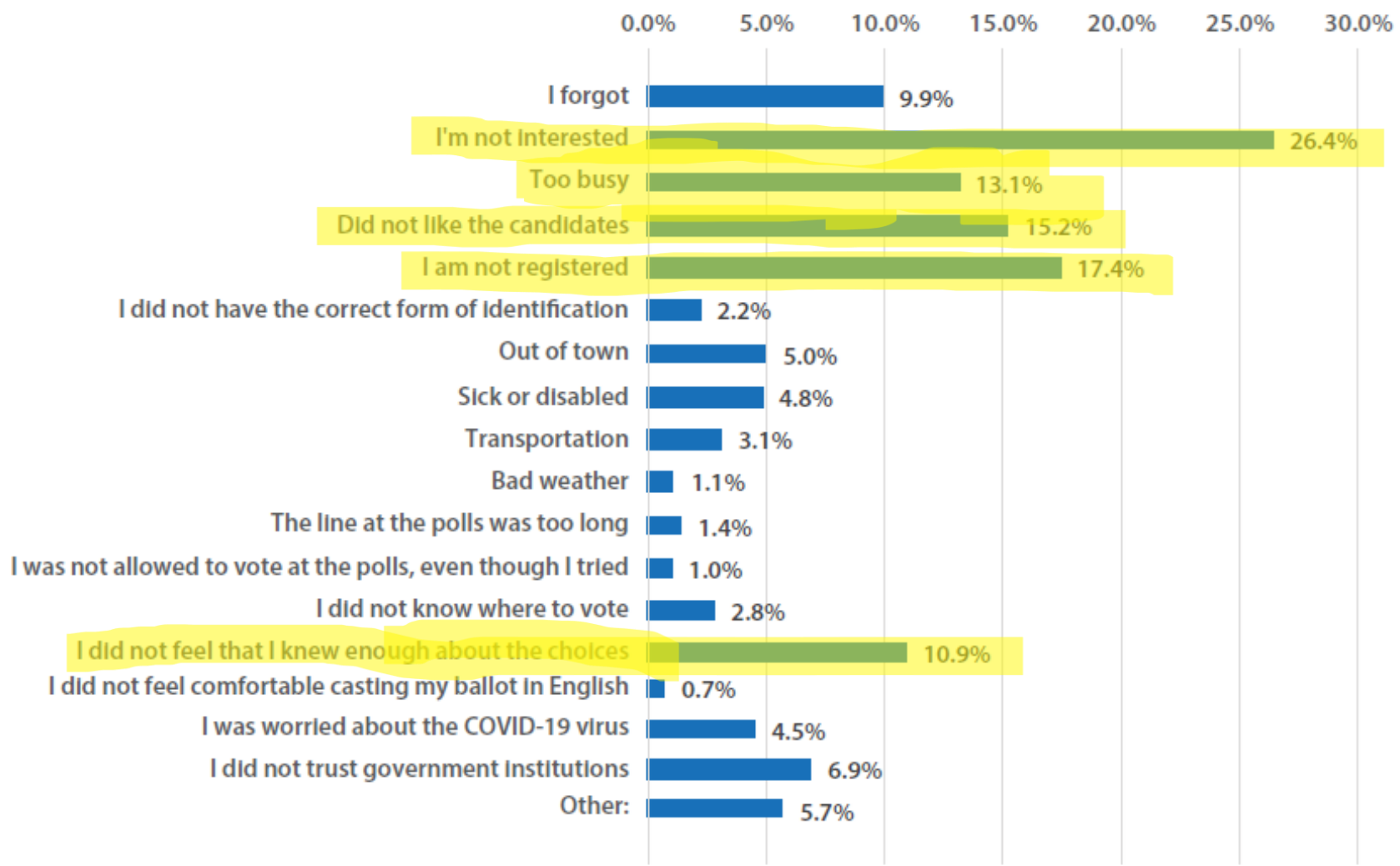
Voting Methods in California: Voter Awareness and Reasons for Disparate Use Rates

CID 2024 California Voter Experience Survey

- Examines the experiences of eligible voters (adult citizens) in California.
- Fielded from January 10, 2024 to February 07, 2024.
- Large representative sample - 11,827 - of eligible voters (adult citizens) in the state.
- Conducted online in both English and Spanish.
- Data tables available for survey respondents residing only in Los Angeles County (due to the county's large sample in the survey).

FIGURE 1

What was the reason you did not vote in the November 2022 general election? (select all that apply)



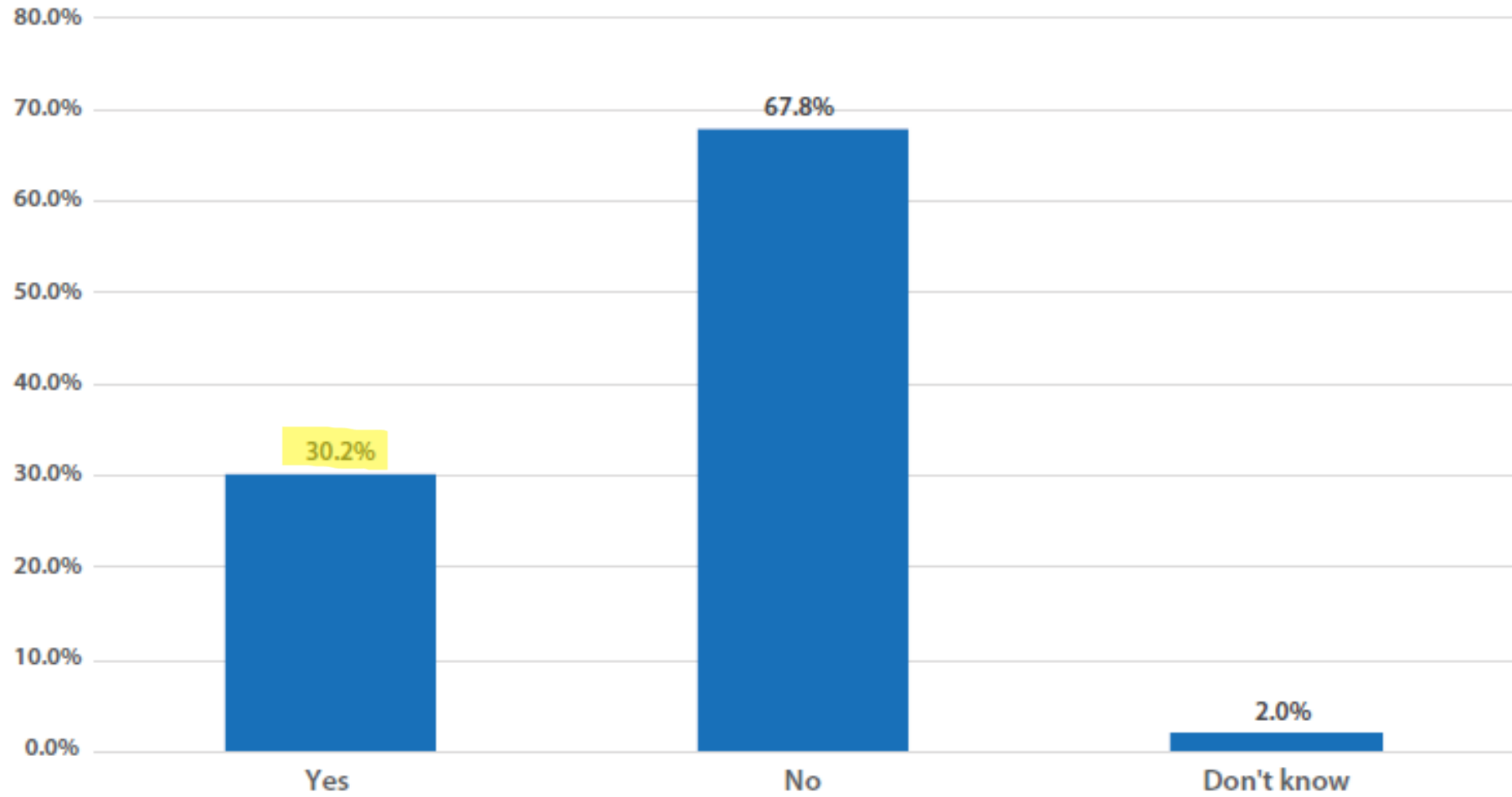
Data source: CID California Voter Experience Survey, 2024.
Survey Population: Eligible Voters (adult citizens)

Table 1a - What was the reason you did not vote in the November 2022 general election? (select all that apply)

	Black	Latino (Hispanic)	White (Not Latino/Hispanic)	AAPI	All Eligible Voters
I forgot	12.7%	9.6%	10.1%	5.4%	9.9%
I'm not interested	33.9%	24.8%	24.8%	29.0%	26.4%
Too busy	16.7%	13.5%	11.3%	14.6%	13.1%
Did not like the candidates	16.3%	14.1%	17.5%	15.0%	15.2%
I am not registered	10.4%	16.3%	16.9%	28.2%	17.4%
I did not have the correct form of identification	1.8%	1.8%	1.5%	3.5%	2.2%
Out of town	4.5%	4.5%	5.4%	6.2%	5.0%
Sick or disabled	3.2%	5.8%	5.8%	3.5%	4.8%
Transportation	3.6%	2.6%	3.8%	3.1%	3.1%
Bad weather	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%	2.3%	1.1%
The line at the polls was too long	2.3%	1.9%	0.6%	1.5%	1.4%
I was not allowed to vote at the polls, even though I tried	0.5%	1.2%	1.0%	1.5%	1.0%
I did not know where to vote	1.8%	3.8%	2.8%	3.1%	2.8%
I did not feel that I knew enough about the choices	8.1%	9.5%	12.4%	11.2%	10.9%
I did not feel comfortable casting my ballot in English	0.9%	0.8%	0.2%	2.3%	0.7%
I was worried about the COVID-19 virus	3.6%	4.3%	4.1%	6.6%	4.5%
I did not trust government institutions	6.3%	6.2%	9.1%	5.8%	6.9%
Other	4.5%	4.3%	7.0%	4.7%	5.7%

FIGURE 2

Do you have any concerns when it comes to casting your ballot in the November 2024 general election?



Data source: CID California Voter Experience Survey, 2024.
Survey Population: Eligible Voters (adult citizens)

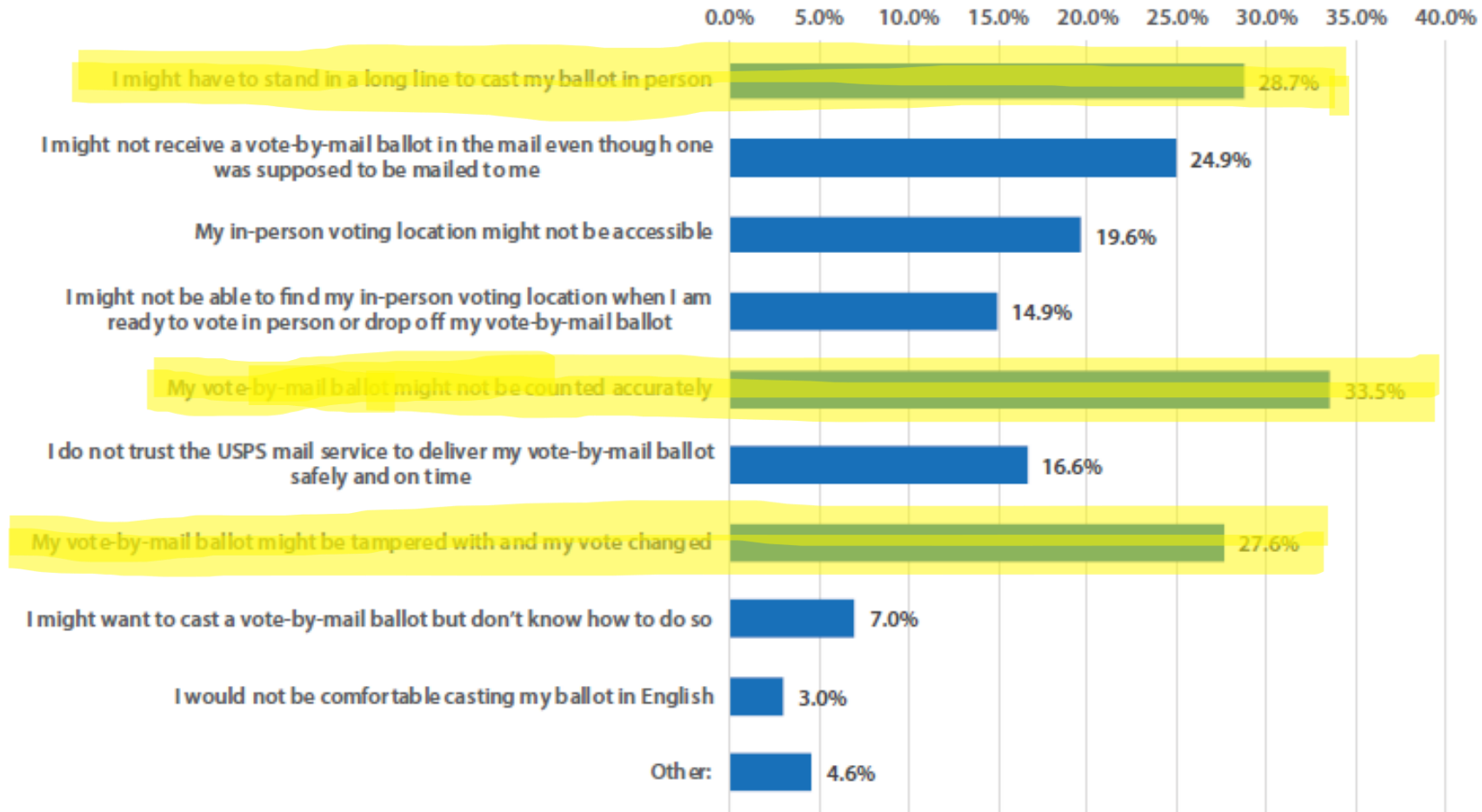
Table 2a - Do you have any concerns when it comes to casting your ballot in the November 2024 general election?

	Black	Latino (Hispanic)	White (Not Latino/ Hispanic)	AAPI	All Eligible Voters
Yes	36.7%	25.2%	32.0%	24.3%	30.2%
No	61.3%	72.8%	66.6%	74.1%	67.8%
Don't know	2.1%	2.0%	1.5%	1.6%	2.0%

Data source: CID California Voter Experience Survey, 2024.
Survey Population: Eligible Voters (adult citizens)

FIGURE 3

What kinds of concerns do you have when it comes to casting your ballot in the November 2024 general election? (select all that apply)



Data source: CID California Voter Experience Survey, 2024.
Survey Population: Eligible Voters (adult citizens)

Table 3a - What kinds of concerns do you have when it comes to casting your ballot in the November 2024 general election? (select all that apply)

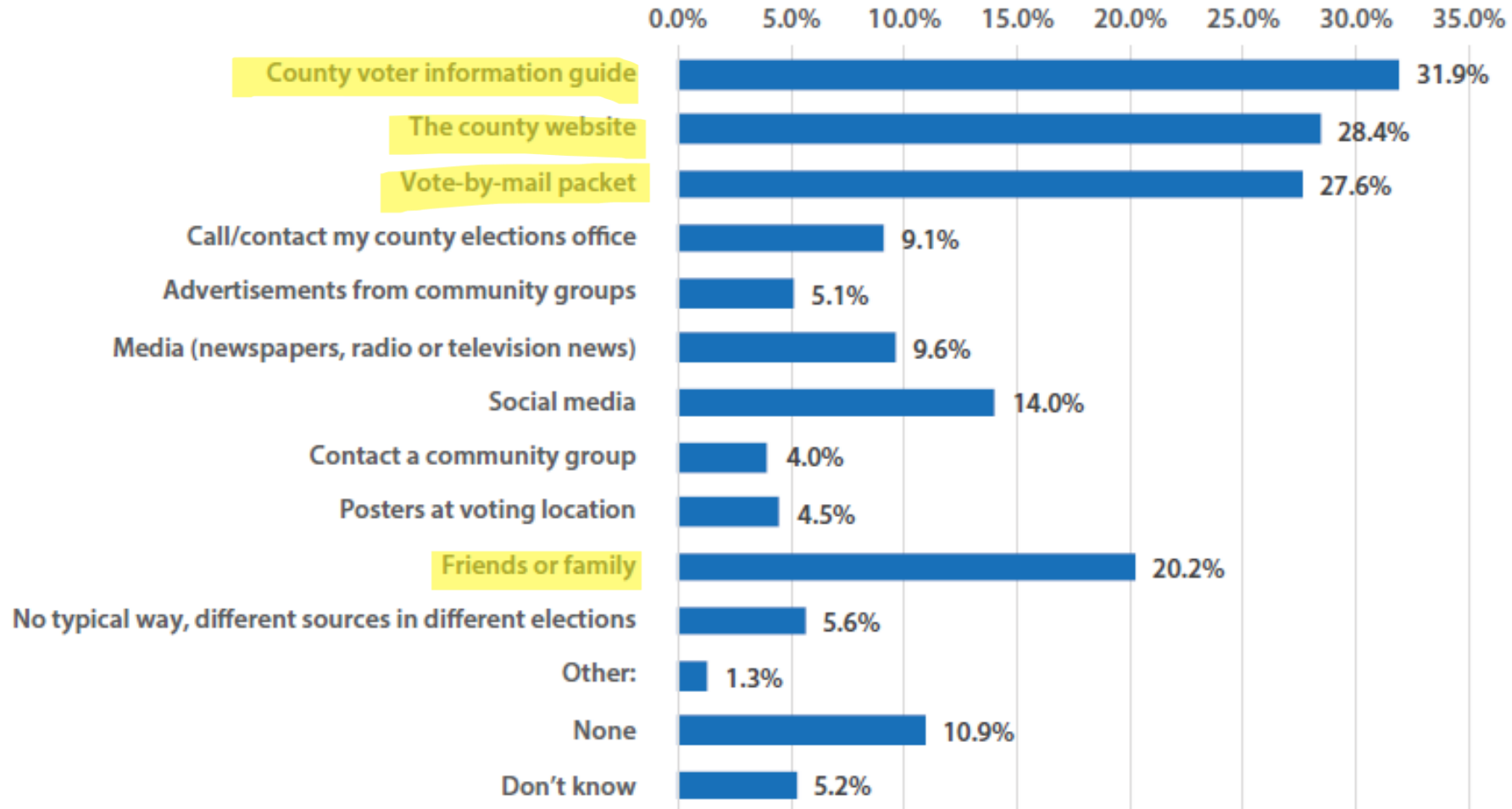
	Black	Latino (Hispanic)	White (Not Latino/ Hispanic)	AAPI	All Eligible Voters
I might have to stand in a long line to cast my ballot in person	29.8%	25.3%	30.1%	30.6%	28.7%
I might not receive a vote-by-mail ballot in the mail even though one was supposed to be mailed to me	24.2%	24.1%	25.9%	20.2%	24.9%
My in-person voting location might not be accessible	23.0%	22.3%	18.8%	20.9%	19.6%
I might not be able to find my in-person voting location when I am ready to vote in person or drop off my vote-by-mail ballot	20.5%	15.7%	15.5%	12.1%	14.9%
My vote-by-mail ballot might not be counted accurately	21.7%	29.2%	37.8%	30.7%	33.5%
I do not trust the USPS mail service to deliver my vote-by-mail ballot safely and on time	18.6%	16.0%	17.3%	12.9%	16.6%
My vote-by-mail ballot might be tampered with and my vote changed	23.0%	22.0%	31.2%	18.5%	27.6%
I might want to cast a vote-by-mail ballot but don't know how to do so	7.5%	9.0%	6.9%	6.4%	7.0%
I would not be comfortable casting my ballot in English	3.7%	4.2%	2.1%	4.8%	3.0%
Other	3.7%	2.7%	5.0%	5.6%	4.6%

Data source: CID California Voter Experience Survey, 2024.

Survey Population: Eligible Voters (adult citizens)

FIGURE 6

Where do you typically turn to for help with questions about registration or voting procedures, or important election dates? (select all that apply)



Data source: CID California Voter Experience Survey, 2024.
Survey Population: Eligible Voters (adult citizens)

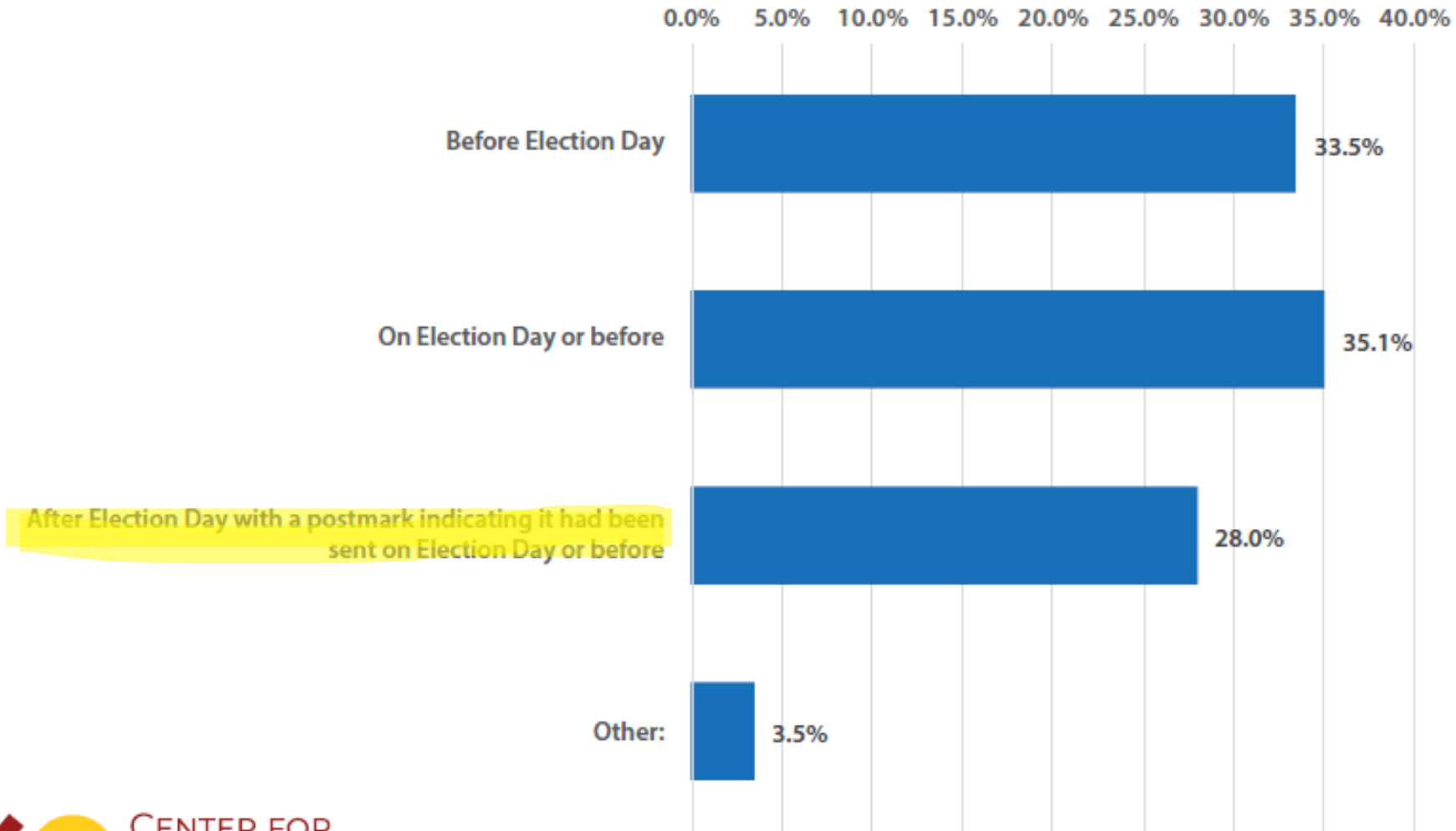
Table 6a - Where do you typically turn to for help with questions about registration or voting procedures, or important election dates? (select all that apply)

	Black	Latino (Hispanic)	White (Not Latino/Hispanic)	AAPI	All Eligible Voters
County voter information guide	26.4%	23.5%	38.3%	30.5%	31.9%
The county website	25.8%	27.9%	29.5%	29.8%	28.4%
Vote-by-mail packet	26.5%	24.7%	28.9%	33.4%	27.6%
Call/contact my county elections office	10.7%	8.9%	9.5%	7.4%	9.1%
Advertisements from community groups	7.2%	4.3%	5.4%	4.4%	5.1%
Media (newspapers, radio or television news)	8.7%	8.7%	10.4%	7.5%	9.6%
Social media	16.3%	15.2%	13.3%	12.3%	14.0%
Contact a community group	5.9%	3.2%	4.4%	3.8%	4.0%
Posters at voting location	4.3%	4.2%	4.8%	4.5%	4.5%
Friends or family	18.8%	20.9%	20.7%	16.7%	20.2%
No typical way, different sources in different elections	4.3%	4.8%	6.2%	5.1%	5.6%
None	13.3%	10.5%	10.0%	11.0%	10.9%
Don't know	5.0%	7.4%	3.7%	6.2%	5.2%
Other	2.1%	1.0%	1.3%	1.0%	1.3%

Data source: CID California Voter Experience Survey, 2024.
 Survey Population: Eligible Voters (adult citizens)

FIGURE 8

To your knowledge, in California, when does a vote-by-mail ballot have to arrive at the local elections office to be counted?



Data source: CID California Voter Experience Survey, 2024.
Survey Population: Eligible Voters (adult citizens)

Table 8a - To your knowledge, in California, when does a vote-by-mail ballot have to arrive at the local elections office to be counted?

	Black	Latino (Hispanic)	White (Not Latino/ Hispanic)	AAPI	All Eligible Voters
Before Election Day	46.2%	39.1%	28.5%	31.1%	33.5%
On Election Day or before	32.1%	35.0%	36.3%	35.5%	35.1%
After Election Day with a postmark indicating it had been sent on Election Day or before	18.2%	21.8%	32.2%	31.8%	28.0%
Other	3.5%	4.1%	3.0%	1.7%	3.5%

Data source: CID California Voter Experience Survey, 2024.

Survey Population: Eligible Voters (adult citizens)

Voter Messaging Experiment

In each election cycle since 2020, CID's California Voter Experience Survey has found that an overwhelming majority of California eligible voters were not aware of the changes that were made to how and where they could cast their ballot.

For this report, we tested four messages with survey respondents that convey information about the options that eligible voters in California now have in casting their ballot.

The focus of this approach was to identify any impact of the messages on the likelihood of voting in the 2024 general election.

Voting Options Message

In California, you can vote early and have options to vote. Every registered voter in California will receive a ballot in the mail about a month before the election. There are three ways you can cast your ballot. You can return your ballot by mail, or drop it off at an official location, or you can vote in person at a voting location.

Voting Options Message: Safety – Prohibit Voter Fraud

In California, you can vote early and have options to vote. Every registered voter in California will receive a ballot in the mail about a month before the election. There are three ways you can cast your ballot. You can return your ballot by mail, or drop it off at an official location, or you can vote in person at a voting location. California's election officials have worked to ensure that all of these voting options are secure and safe with protections in place to prohibit voter fraud.

Voting Options Message: Safety – Vote Counted

In California, you can vote early and have options to vote. Every registered voter in California will receive a ballot in the mail about a month before the election. There are three ways you can cast your ballot. You can return your ballot by mail, or drop it off at an official location, or you can vote in person at a voting location. California's election officials have worked to ensure that all of these voting options are secure and safe with protections in place to ensure your vote is counted.

Voting Options Message – Community Empowerment

*In California, you can vote early and have options to vote. Every registered voter in California will receive a ballot in the mail about a month before the election. There are three ways you can cast your ballot. You can return your ballot by mail, or drop it off at an official location, or you can vote in person at a voting location. **California's civil rights organizations urge people to make their voices heard by voting in their communities.***

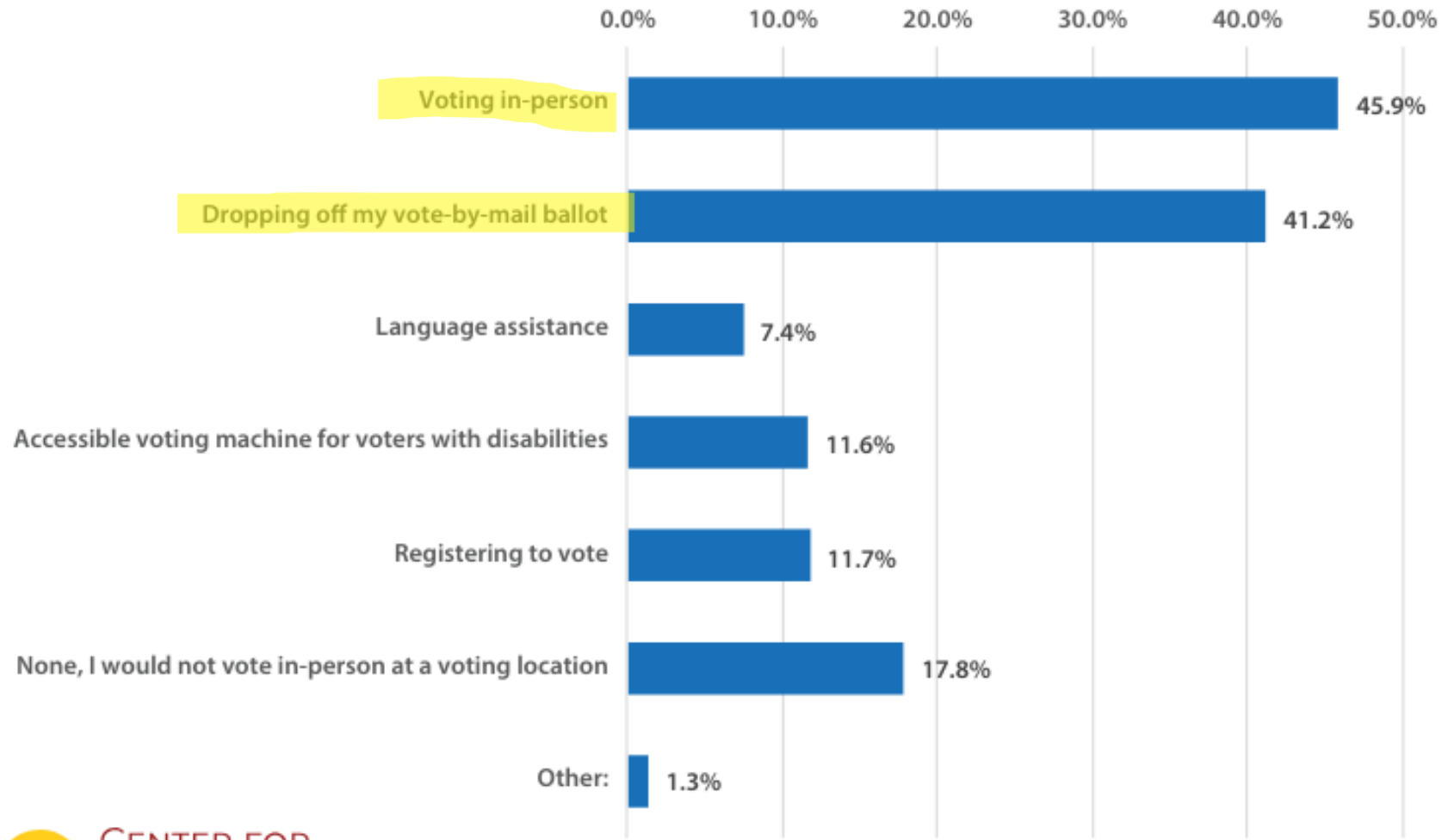
Message Testing Summary

- Survey respondents were overall most responsive to the voting options message with community empowerment language and highly responsive to the voting options message citing ballot safety and prohibiting voter fraud.
- AAPI and Black survey respondents responded the most positively to all voter messages tested.

Voters' preferences on how and where to vote in the 2024 general election and beyond

FIGURE 18

In the future, what features would you likely use if you vote at an in-person voting location? (select all that apply)



Data source: CID California Voter Experience Survey, 2024.
Survey Population: Eligible Voters (adult citizens)

Table 47 - In the future, what features would you likely use if you vote at an in-person voting location? (select all that apply)

	Black	Latino (Hispanic)	White (Not Latino/ Hispanic)	AAPI	All Eligible Voters
Voting in-person	45.9%	46.5%	47.2%	38.0%	45.9%
Dropping off my vote-by-mail ballot	35.5%	40.4%	41.5%	49.6%	41.2%
Language assistance	8.9%	9.1%	6.3%	9.4%	7.4%
Accessible voting machine for voters with disabilities	14.1%	11.7%	11.4%	9.6%	11.6%
Registering to vote	12.6%	10.9%	11.5%	13.6%	11.7%
None, I would not vote in-person at a voting location	17.0%	15.8%	18.7%	16.4%	17.8%
Other	1.3%	1.2%	1.3%	0.9%	1.3%

Data source: CID California Voter Experience Survey, 2024.
 Survey Population: Eligible Voters (adult citizens)

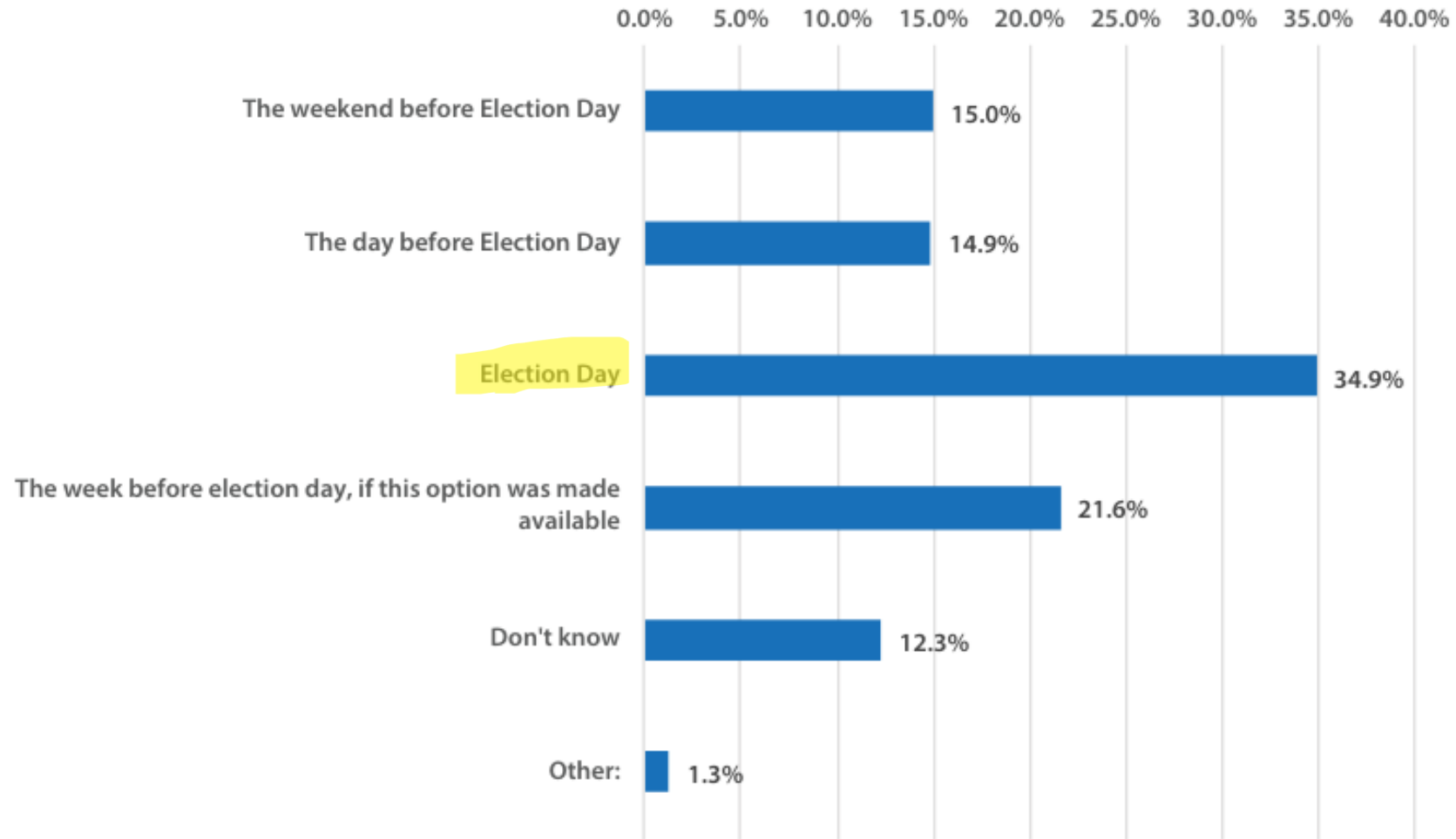
Table 44 - Thinking ahead to future elections, what would be your most preferred way to cast a ballot?

	Black	Latino (Hispanic)	White (Not Latino/Hispanic)	AAPI	All Eligible Voters
Voting at an in-person voting location on Election Day	30.5%	27.9%	30.4%	22.3%	28.9%
Voting early at an in-person voting location sometime in the three days before Election Day	14.8%	12.7%	8.8%	10.0%	10.5%
Voting early at an in-person voting location sometime in the ten days before Election Day	6.6%	8.1%	5.4%	5.8%	6.2%
Mailing in a ballot that was sent to my home a month before Election Day	19.2%	19.7%	26.6%	26.9%	24.0%
Dropping off my vote-by-mail ballot at an in-person voting location, after having that ballot mailed to my home a month before Election Day	6.2%	9.2%	9.2%	11.0%	9.2%
Dropping off my vote-by-mail ballot in a ballot drop-off box, after having that ballot mailed to my home a month before Election Day	5.3%	6.9%	9.5%	11.7%	8.6%
Using different voting methods in different elections	2.9%	2.8%	2.1%	2.5%	2.4%
None	7.8%	5.3%	3.7%	4.2%	4.6%
Don't know	6.7%	7.4%	4.2%	5.5%	5.6%

Data source: CID California Voter Experience Survey, 2024.
 Survey Population: Eligible Voters (adult citizens)

FIGURE 19

If you vote in person in future elections, when are you most likely to vote?



Data source: CID California Voter Experience Survey, 2024.
Survey Population: Eligible Voters (adult citizens)

Table 50 - If you vote in person in future elections, when are you most likely to vote?

	Black	Latino (Hispanic)	White (Not Latino/Hispanic)	AAPI	All Eligible Voters
The weekend before Election Day	18.3%	17.5%	13.1%	15.7%	15.0%
The day before Election Day	22.3%	18.6%	11.8%	15.6%	14.9%
Election Day	27.3%	28.6%	40.6%	28.9%	34.9%
The week before election day, if this option was made available	16.0%	20.2%	22.2%	28.4%	21.6%
Don't know	15.2%	13.7%	11.0%	10.3%	12.3%
Other	0.9%	1.4%	1.3%	1.1%	1.3%

Data source: CID California Voter Experience Survey, 2024.
 Survey Population: Eligible Voters (adult citizens)

4. Recommendations

Planning Voter Outreach for the 2024 General Election

Recommendations

- Voter groups need targeted outreach that addresses the differential experiences of each group with regard to voting and the election process.
- When messaging to voters about the options they have to cast their ballot, consider including community empowerment language.

Recommendations

- Access versus security. Some voters need messaging targeted to assist them with gaining access to the voting process, while others have concerns about what happens to their ballot after they have cast it.
- Campaigns need varying messaging to address the concerns of eligible voters and to be more effective across demographics of race, ethnicity, age, and disability status. Eligible voters of different subgroups respond more positively to some messages over others.

Recommendations

- Official voter materials are the most trusted source of information for all voters. These should be easy to use, written in plain language, and available in different formats and languages to ensure all voters have access.
- Friends and family are a key information source, particularly for Latino voters and young voters. Latino and younger eligible voters turn to friends and family for information at higher rates than other groups do. Older eligible voters rely more on the county voter information guide.

Recommendations

Understanding eligible voter preferences for how and when to vote can help prioritize messages about voting options.

- Mailing a vote-by-mail ballot was the most common voting method used in the 2022 general election. However, almost half of eligible voters surveyed said that they prefer to vote in person in a future election.
- Eligible voters say they are likely to use many services at voting locations in the future, in addition to voting in-person and dropping off their vote-by-mail mail ballot. The likely use of different service varies by group.
- Many in-person voters want an early voting option. Over a third of eligible voters prefer to vote early (up to ten days before Election Day), rather than on Election Day itself. Group differences should be considered in voter preferences on how and when to vote in future elections.

Questions?

Thank you!

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