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To: Interested Parties

From: Voter Participation Center

Re: Anticipating 2014 Voter Drop-Off

Date: October 30, 2013

A recent report released by the Voter Participation Center (VPC) highlights the potential drop-off in voter turnout looking ahead to the 2014 election. VPC, a non-profit, non-partisan organization, is dedicated to increasing the share of unmarried women and other historically under-represented groups in the electorate. The report prepared by Lake Research Partners looks more closely at the potential drop-off among the Rising American Electorate (people of color, unmarried women and youth voters ages 18-29). Drop-off numbers are the share, or number of voters, who voted in November 2012 but are predicted not to turn out to vote in November 2014.

There are 115 million eligible voters in the RAE or 53.5% of the vote eligible population, or VEP (U.S. citizens who are over age 18 and eligible to vote), in this country. While their turnout has increased in recent elections, they are still not voting in proportion to their share of the population. Moreover, the RAE tends to drop off more than their non-RAE counterparts with even fewer of them voting in non-presidential year elections.

Nationally, in 2012, the RAE made up 47.5% of those who voted (Census Bureau Current Population Survey Data, November update). Using a predictive methodology for population growth and likely turnout patterns (full methodology below) it is predicted that the RAE will comprise 42.6% of those who will vote in November 2014. This means that more than one-in-three RAE voters who turned out in 2012 will NOT turnout in 2014 (34.5% of those who voted in 2012, or 21.8 million RAE voters, will stay home). The predicted drop-off among all other voters is only 17.5% or 12.2 million voters. In fact, of the 34 million Americans predicted to drop-off from 2012, roughly two-thirds will come from the RAE (remember, the RAE represents 53.5% of VEP).

Certainly, the drop-off numbers are disappointing for all advocacy groups interested in a thriving American democracy, but the drop-off among the RAE is

almost twice what it will be for the non-RAE and represents a difference of almost 10 million voters.

Drop-off among the different RAE segments varies as well. The table below illustrates the drop-off among different segments of the RAE. Turnout is predicted to drop the most among unmarried women and young voters. In fact, this was true in the patterns seen between 2008 and 2012.

RAE Segment	Share of the 2012 VEP	2012 Turnout	2014 Projected Turnout	Drop-Off	Drop-Off
Unmarried women	25.6%	58%	39%	32.9%	10.5 million
Latinos	10.8%	48%	32%	34.1%	3.8 million
African Americans	12.5%	66%	42%	36.2%	6.5 million
Under 30s	21.2%	45%	24%	46.8%	9.6 million

The report also looked at the eight so-called “Toss Up States” as identified by the Rothenberg Political Report’s Senate Ratings (as of August 9, 2013). The eight states are Alaska, Arkansas, Iowa, Louisiana, Montana, North Carolina, South Dakota, and West Virginia. These states are projected to have a total estimated voter drop-off of 3.2 million voters, 64.7%, or 2.1 million, of whom are members of the RAE. This means that registering and turning out the RAE in these states could play a significant role in defining the make up of the U.S. Senate.

Methodology

2012 Data - The November 2012 election data comes from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2012 November Supplement.

2014 Population Estimates - CPS counts of the VEP were pulled for each month going back to August 2010. Data was divided by state, and then into demographic subgroups of Latino, non-Latino RAE, and non-RAE, as those populations are growing at different rates. A rolling average was calculated, such that each month’s data was represented by an average of that month and the 11 preceding months; this was done to smooth out random fluctuates in the data that were the result of sampling error. From these rolling averages, the monthly increase in population was estimated and multiplied by 24 to give an estimate of the increase in population between November 2012 and November 2014. Data was then summed by state and by demographic subgroup to produce total national estimates.

Drop-Off - refers to the loss of voters from 2012 to 2014. The average of turnout in 2002, 2006, and 2010 was applied to 2014 population estimates to calculate 2014 turnout. Percentage drop-off is the difference between 2012 and 2014 turnout as a percentage of 2012 turnout. Number drop-off is that percentage of the 2012 electorate.