

The Rising American Electorate

Their Growing Numbers and Political Potential

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A New Decade and A New Electorate

- **We are in the first decade that will be defined by the Rising American Electorate (RAE). Unmarried women, adults under age 30, and people of color now make up a majority (53 percent) of the adult citizen population.**
- **The RAE has grown substantially in the last decade and there has been a steady uptick of their share of the vote since 2002. But large numbers of the RAE remain un-registered and underrepresented.**
- **The 2008 Presidential election was a strong exhibition of the power and potential of this vote. But the 2010 elections made clear, the 2008 surge vote will not reappear in 2012 unless outreach and repair begins now.**

What Happened in 2010, What Does it Mean for 2012?

- **The 2010 election provides evidence of the unique characteristics of the RAE. Models developed when the electorate was dominated by married white couples are less useful in understanding the RAE.**
- **Turnout was down in 2010, which is normal in off-year elections. But the RAE turnout dropped off more than non-RAE Americans.**
- **The 2008 surge vote was not sustained in 2010. Young people, particularly young Latinos, showed the greatest drop-off in turnout between 2008 and 2010.**

The Registration Gap

- Registration is the first step to voting, and more than 4 in 10 members of the RAE are not registered to vote. That includes half of young adults and nearly half of Latinos.
- The primary reasons the RAE gives for not registering are: feeling disconnected from politics and being unable to see how the political process has relevance to their day-to-day lives.
- Members of the RAE are also more likely to express difficulties with deadlines, rules and logistics as reasons for not registering.
- Mobility is a major challenge for registering the RAE. They move more frequently than other Americans – 42 percent of the RAE moved between 2006 and 2010. This makes it more difficult to find them, get and keep them registered, and mobilize them for GOTV efforts.

Looking Forward

- Research findings indicate that turnout and registration efforts targeted to the RAE can be effective. Organized efforts have helped the RAE overcome many of their challenges to participation.
- Efforts by government agencies and mail rank as the top means for registering the RAE, and there can be vastly different strategies for engaging them in registration efforts compared to other voters.
- Still, the 2010 drop-off among the RAE provides a strong cautionary tale about assuming that casting a “surge” vote in 2008 transformed them into habitual voters.

Looking Forward: The Challenges

Increasing RAE participation in 2012 will be challenging:

- The RAE has been hit harder by the bad economy -- and they were already having a harder time making ends meet before the downturn. They are highly mobile, and face increasing barriers that have a disproportionate impact.
- Like voters overall, many of the RAE feel disconnected from politics. They need to see their lives as part of the narrative of the election.
- The RAE finds it difficult to maneuver the bureaucracy, requirements and deadlines of registration. Yet, only a small percentage of them report being part of a registration drive or directly contacted to register. Targeted efforts such as registering and voting Vote by Mail can add more of these voters to the American electorate. Government agencies need to step up their efforts to improve the registration rates and ease the process.

Data Sources and Methodology

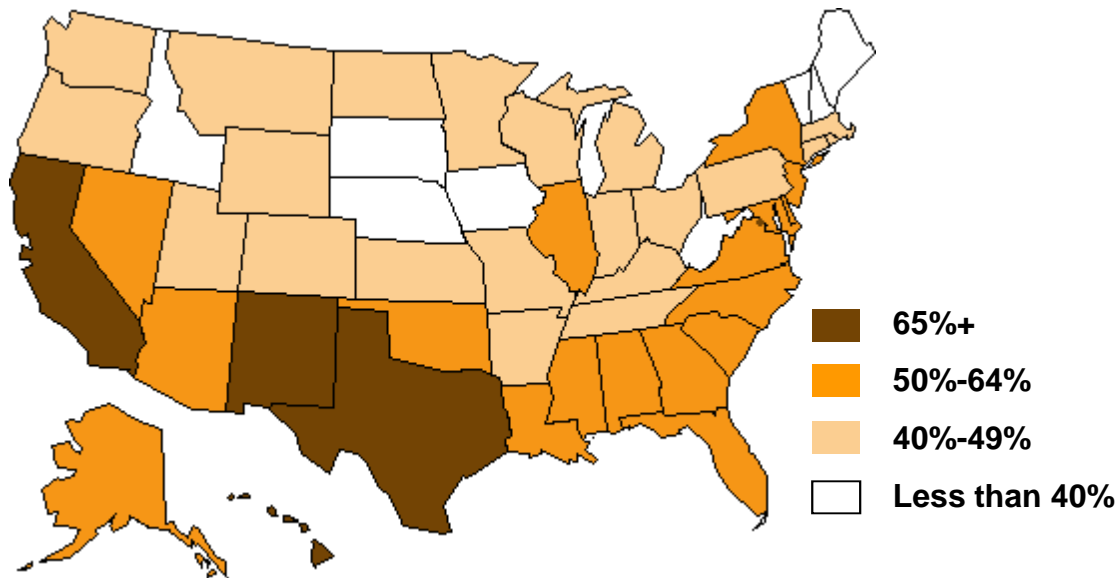
- **Unless noted, all of the data in this report are from the Current Population Survey (CPS) and the November CPS supplements on voting and registration:**
 - The CPS is a monthly survey of about 50,000 households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
 - The CPS is the primary source of information on the labor force characteristics of the U.S. population.
 - Information on reported voting and registration by various demographic and socioeconomic characteristics is collected by CPS in November of Congressional and Presidential election years.
- **The CPS uses a multistage probability sample based on the results of the decennial census, with coverage in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The sample is continually updated to account for new residential construction.**

A New Decade and the Rising American Electorate

The Rising American Electorate is growing in size and making strides in voting, but there is still a large gap between their population and vote share.

The RAE can be found across the United States. The vast majority of states have 40% or higher RAE population.

Rising American Electorate Population by State



States with Highest % RAE in Adult Citizen Population

Hawaii	89%
Washington, DC	81%
New Mexico	74%
California	67%
Texas	65%

RAE state population totals were calculated based on unmarried women, 18-29 year olds, and all people of color in that state.

Over the last decade, the RAE has grown overall and across key states.

	2000 CPS Estimates for the RAE	2010 CPS estimates for the RAE	% change from 2000 to 2010	Non-RAE % change from 2000 to 2010
The US	91,705,814	111,312,648	21.4%	5.1%
AZ	1,626,629	2,399,803	47.5%	36.0%
CO	1,366,877	1,603,029	17.3%	25.7%
FL	5,071,471	7,009,013	38.2%	13.5%
IA	731,405	858,684	17.4%	3.8%
MI	2,960,756	3,360,612	13.5%	-4.7%
NC	2,805,373	3,634,514	29.6%	18.5%
NM	809,268	995,842	23.1%	-3.5%
NV	613,870	990,072	61.3%	19.4%
OH	3,646,390	3,704,482	1.6%	5.9%
PA	3,584,000	4,107,836	14.6%	2.5%
VA	2,415,516	2,935,717	21.5%	4.5%
WI	1,337,507	1,713,701	28.1%	1.0%

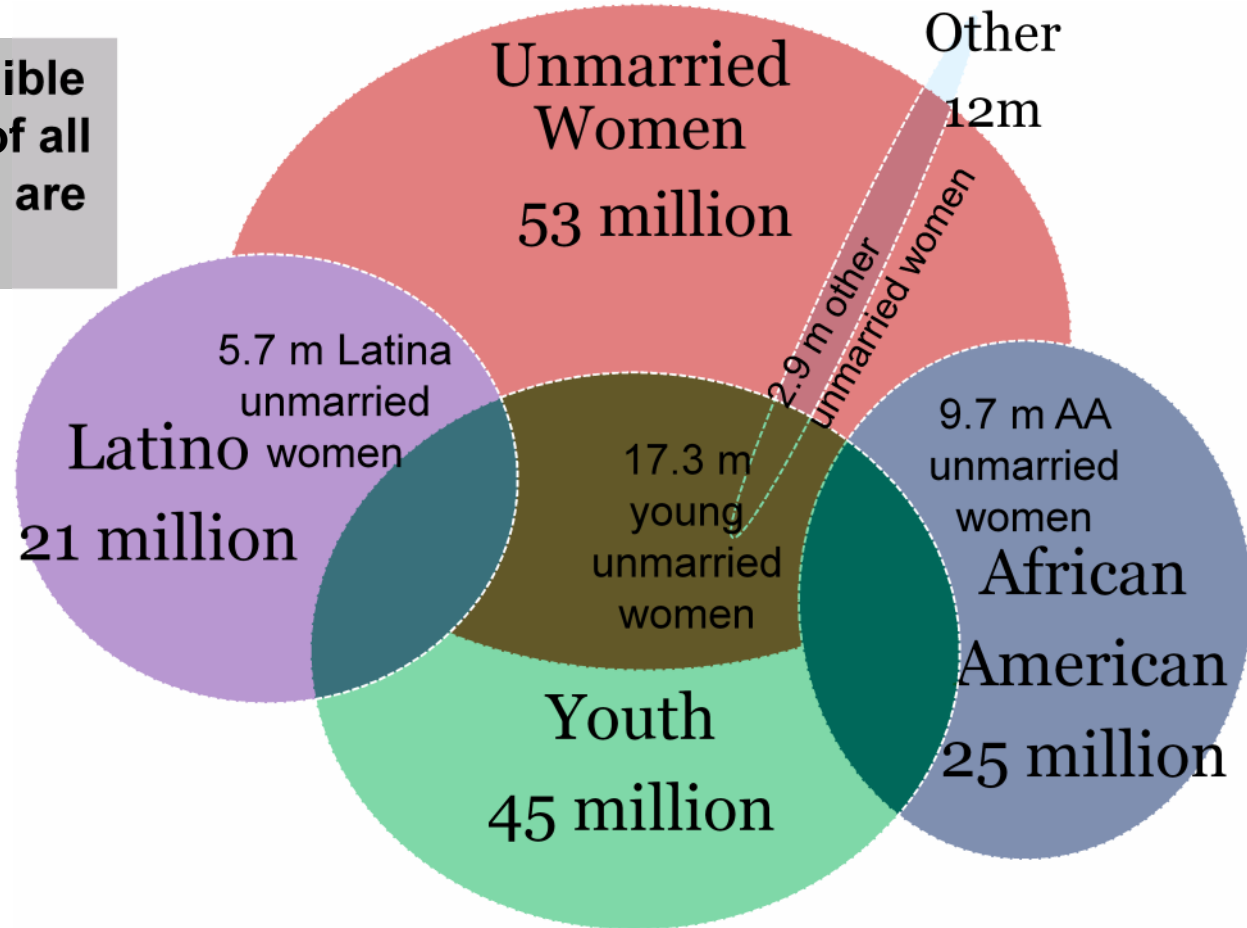
The RAE is expected to grow in many key states leading up to 2012.

	Projected RAE Vote Eligible Population for 2012	Estimated change in the RAE from 2010 to 2012	Estimated change in the Non-RAE from 2010 to 2012
The US	115,683,857	4,371,000	996,000
AZ	2,602,707	202,900	132,000
CO	1,655,793	52,760	88,100
FL	7,477,622	468,600	149,000
IA	887,791	29,110	11,000
MI	3,448,986	88,370	-36,000
NC	3,827,650	193,100	109,000
NM	1,038,038	42,200	170
NV	1,090,525	100,500	27,800
OH	3,716,358	11,880	55,800
PA	4,222,743	114,900	27,900
VA	3,050,680	115,000	23,800
WI	1,803,688	89,990	5,660

The projections are estimated by averaging sub-population growth rates between election cycles since 2000 using the Current Population Survey November Supplements.





There are an estimated 111 million eligible voters in the RAE with 4 million added since 2008.

111 million eligible voters (52.8% of all eligible voters) are in the RAE







Unmarried women had the most growth in sheer numbers (8.3 million) over the last decade. Latinos had the largest growth rate relative to their size (62 percent increase).

CPS Estimates of the Vote Eligible Population

	2000		2010
Unmarried Women	44,782,087	+8.3 million, 19% increase 	53,106,959
18-29 Year Olds	39,331,698	+5.9 million, 15% increase 	45,219,899
African Americans	22,409,056	+2.4 million, 11% increase 	24,782,189
Latinos	13,158,725	+8.1 million, 62% increase 	21,284,881

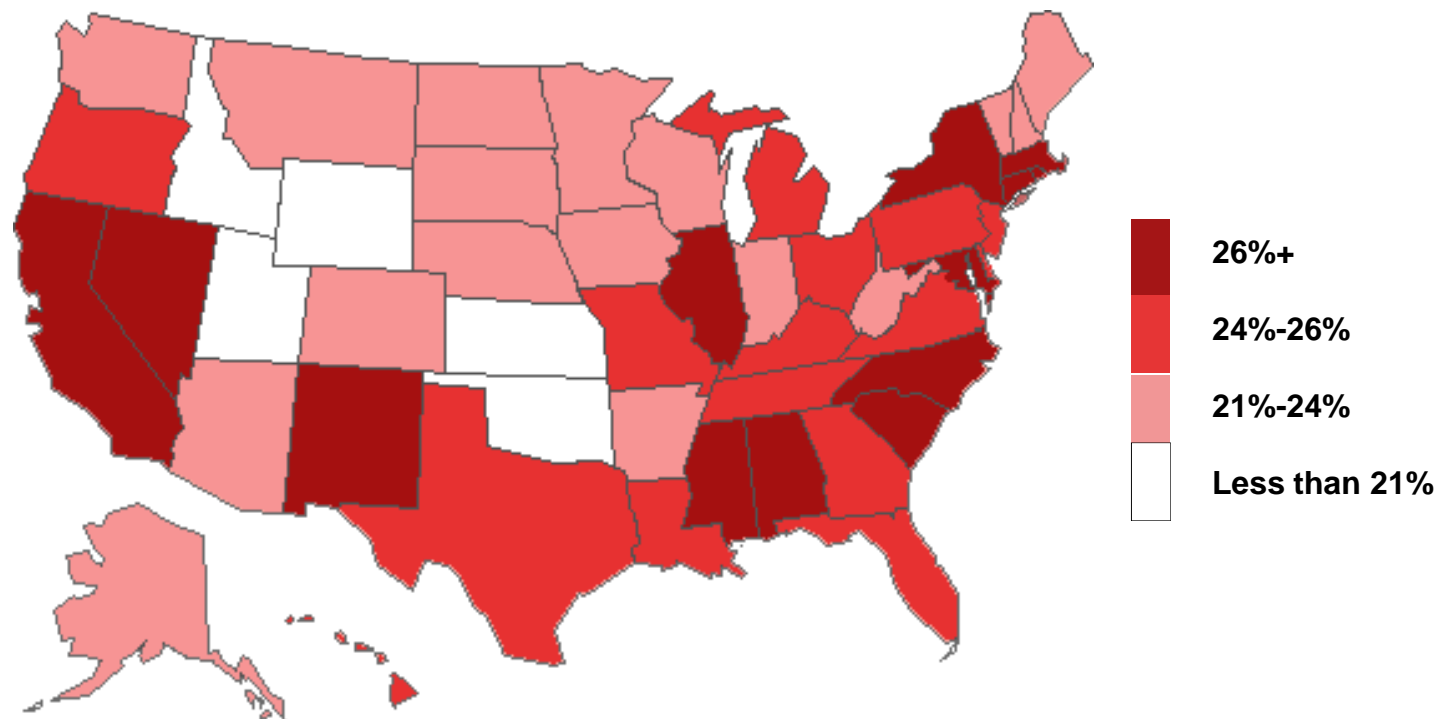
The adult citizen population has grown by 13 percent since 2000 and that growth is disproportionately represented by unmarried Americans. Comparatively, the numbers of married men and women have increased by less than 7 percent.

CPS Estimates of the Vote Eligible Population

	2000		2010
Unmarried Women	44,782,087	+8.3 million, 19% increase 	53,106,959
Unmarried Men	34,940,764	+9.3 million, 27% increase 	44,271,258
Married Women	52,826,289	+3.6 million, 7% increase 	56,413,889
Married Men	53,817,309	+3.2 million, 6% increase 	57,007,827





Unmarried women are a growing segment of the population across regions of the country. Nineteen states have a higher percentage of unmarried women than the overall national percentage for this group (25.2%). They include the key states of Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, and North Carolina.

Unmarried Women Population by State



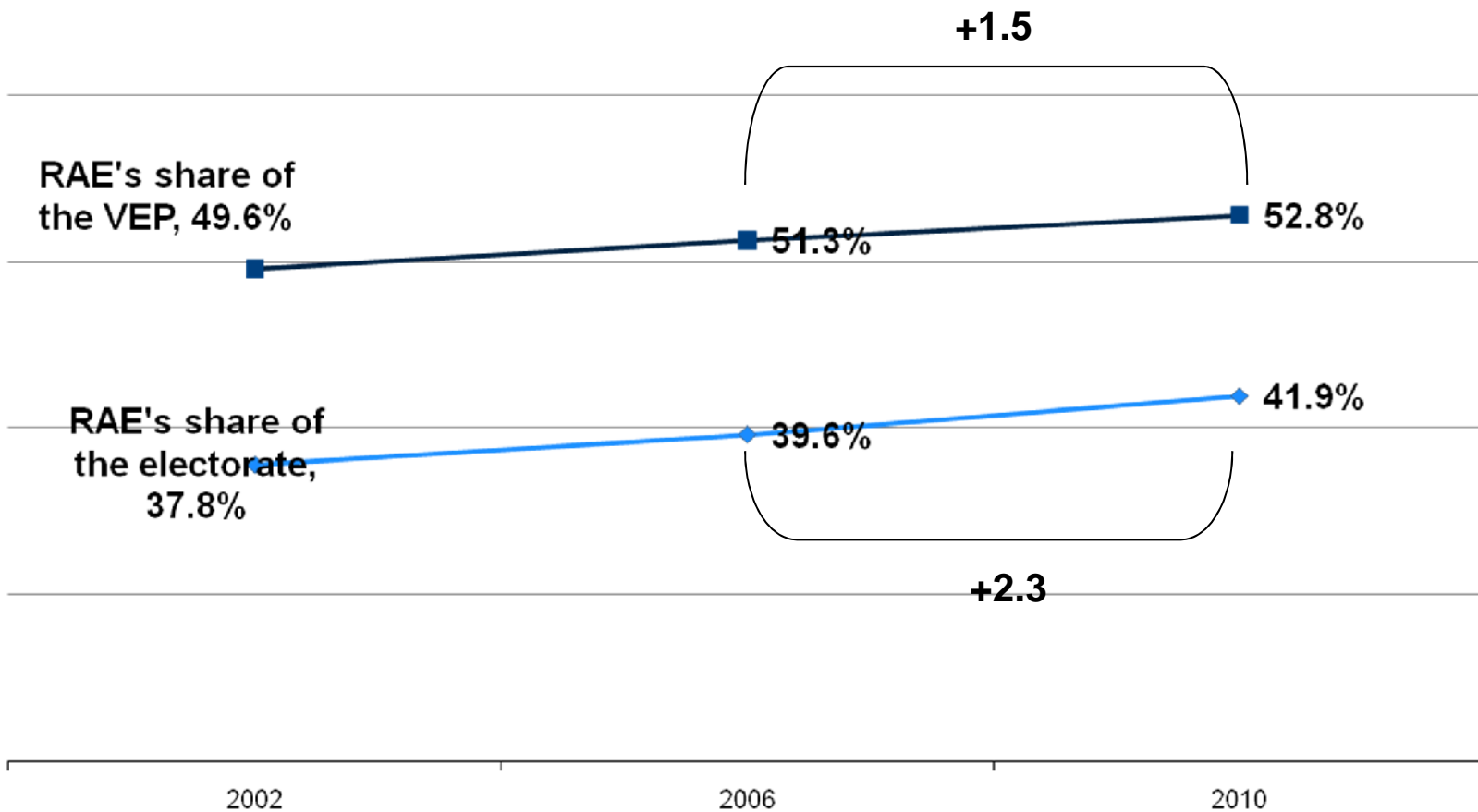
Looking ahead to 2012, the RAE is estimated to be 53.5% of VEP with nearly two million more unmarried women and more than two million additional Latinos.

CPS Estimates of the Vote Eligible Population – Projected for 2012

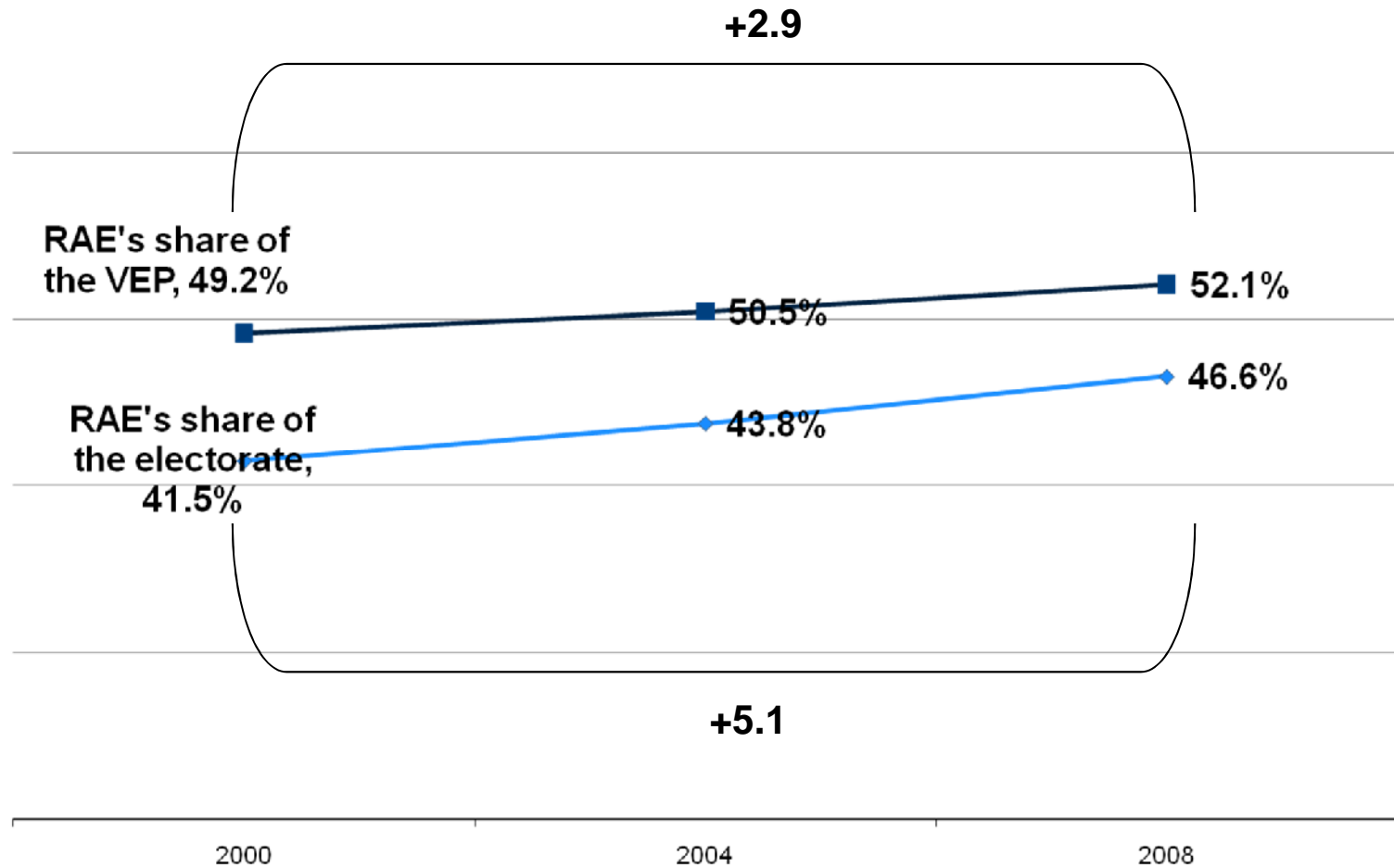
	2010		2012
Unmarried Women	53,110,000	+1.8 million 	54,950,000
18-29 Year Olds	45,220,000	+1.3 million 	46,500,000
African Americans	24,780,000	+0.5 million 	25,290,000
Latinos	21,290,000	+2.2 million 	23,440,000

The projections are estimated by averaging sub-population growth rates between election cycles since 2000 using the Current Population Survey November Supplements. These projected growth rates would predict the total RAE share of the vote eligible population to be 53.5% in 2012.

Over the last decade, there has been a steady increase in the RAE's share of the vote eligible population and a narrowing of the gap between their population share and their share of the electorate in mid-term elections. Still, their unrealized potential is seen in the gap between their majority status, estimated at 52.8%, and their latest share of the vote (41.9%).



Looking at the presidential elections over the last decade also shows an upward trend and narrowing of the gap between the RAE's share of the population and their share of the electorate.

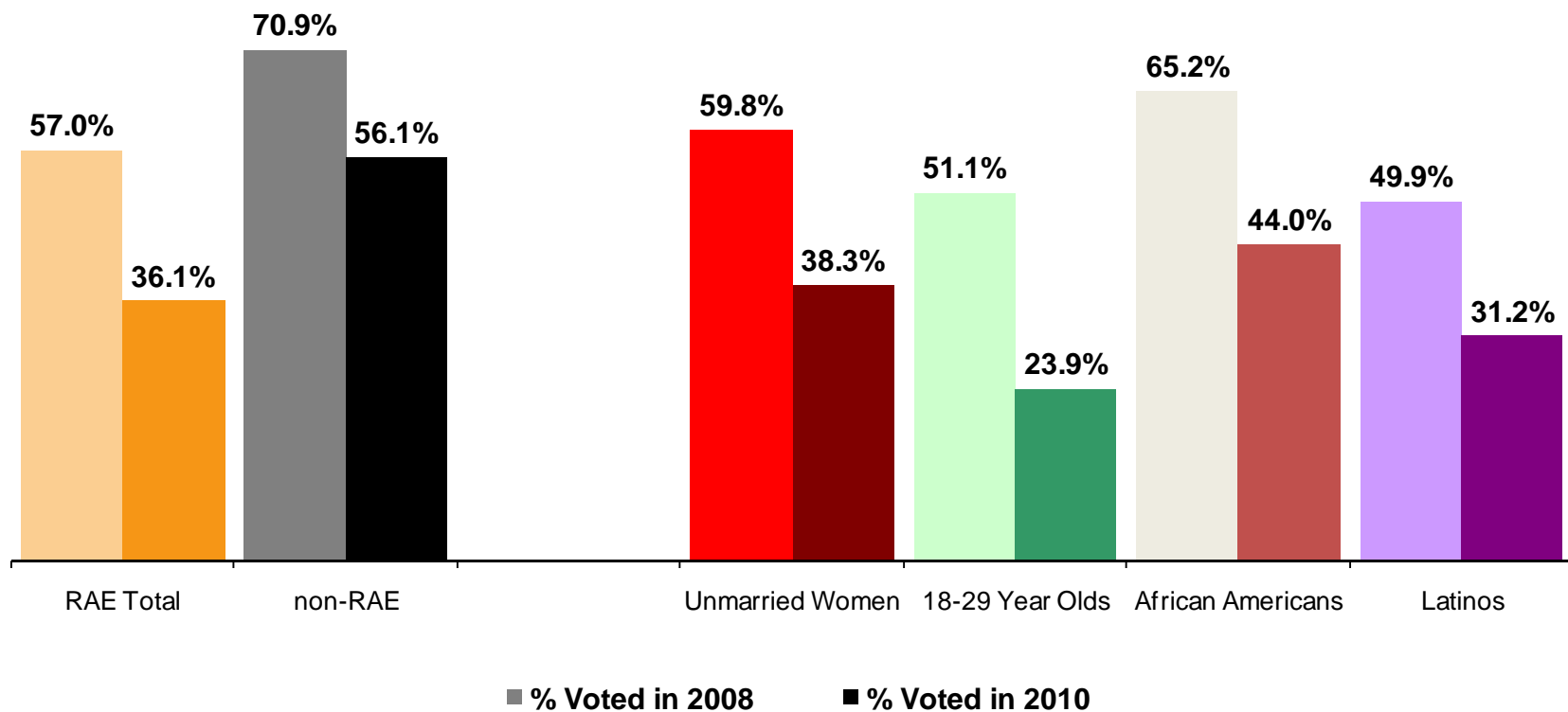


What Happened in 2010?

The sharp drop-off in RAE turnout after the surge of 2008 is a sobering reminder of the work involved in sustaining their participation and realizing their potential.

The 2008 surge in turnout among the RAE groups was not sustained into 2010. Turnout among these growing groups dropped sharply. Among young voters, 2008 turnout rates were cut in half by 2010.

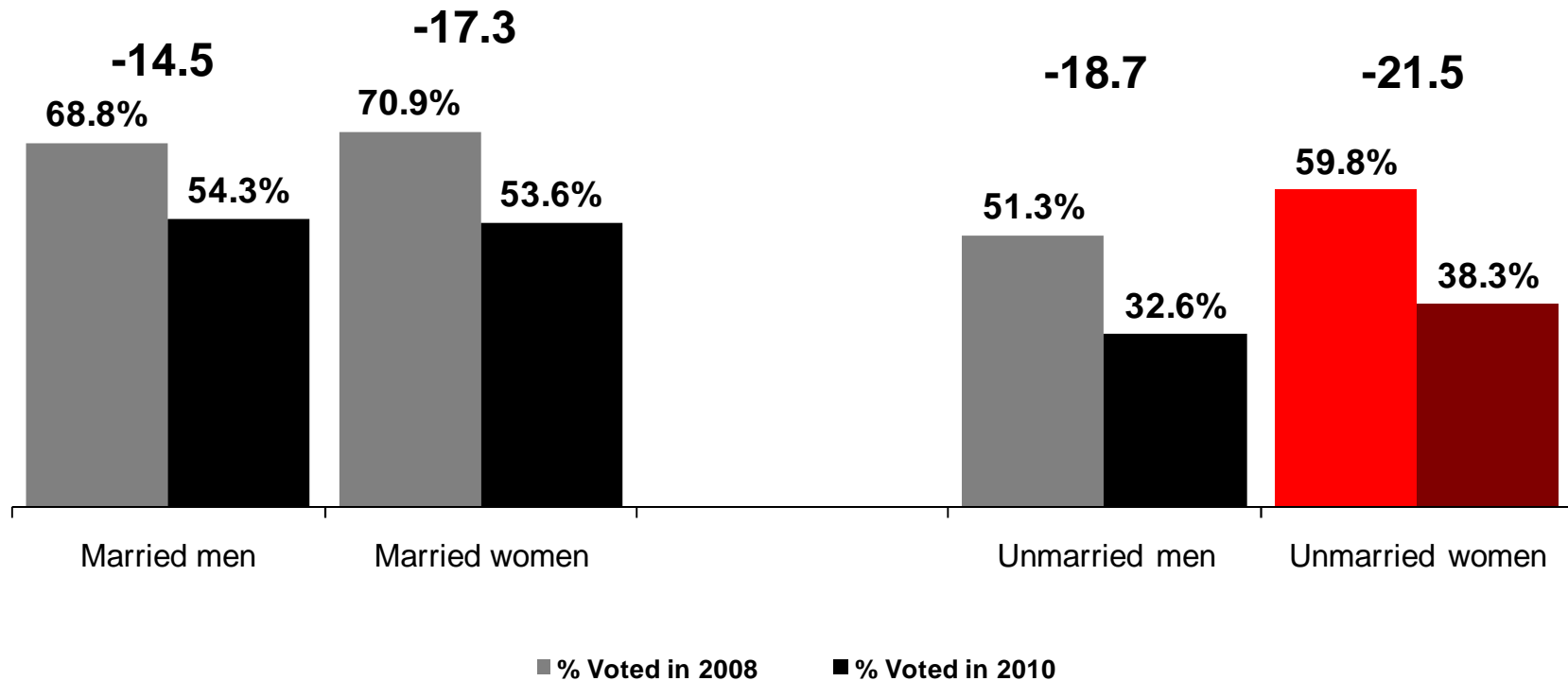
Turnout Drop-Off Between 2008 and 2010



% equals the number of that group who voted divided by the number of that group eligible to vote

Unmarried women showed the biggest drop-off in turnout among marital groups from 2008 compared to 2010. In the two years between elections, these “surge” voters did not become regular voters.

Turnout Drop-Off between 2008 and 2010 by Gender/Marital Status

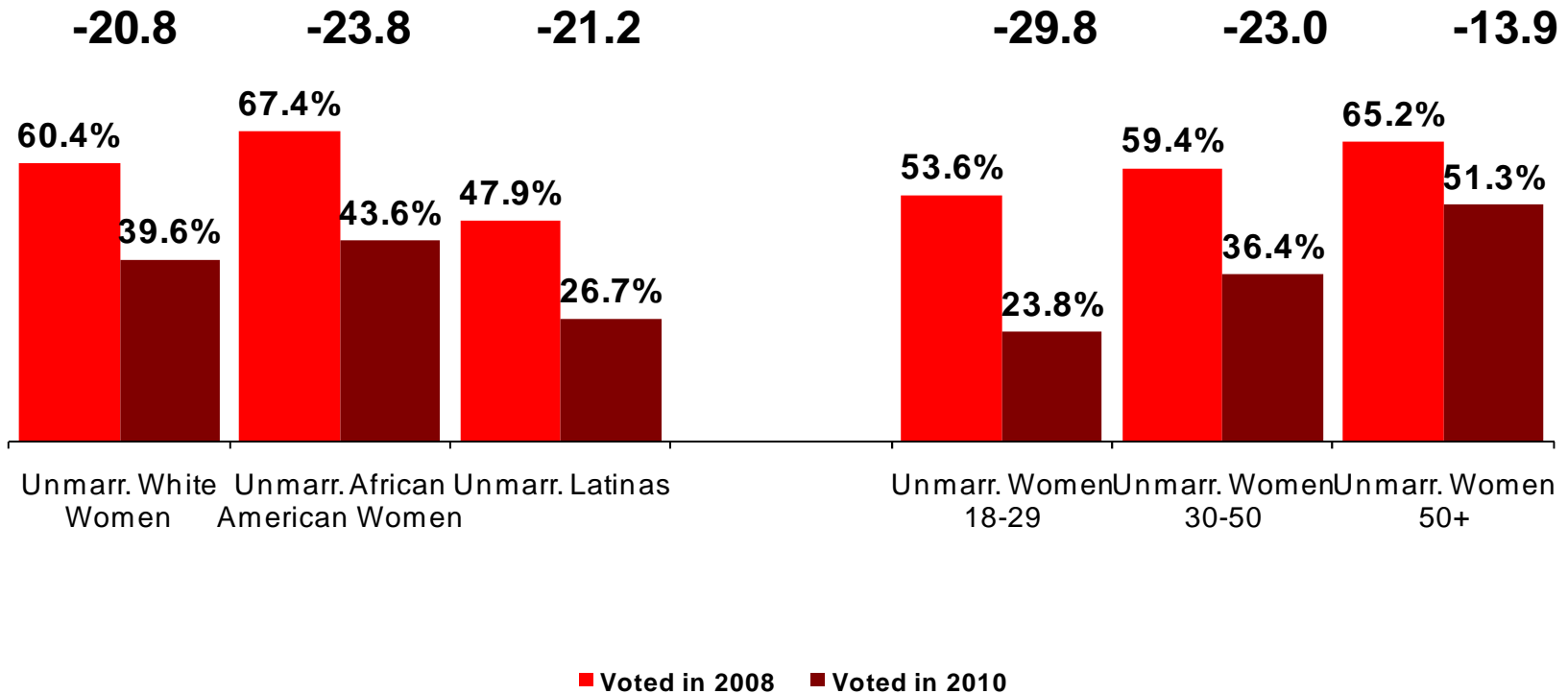


% equals the number of that group who voted divided by the number of that group eligible to vote

The drop-off for 18-29 year old unmarried women was -29.8

Within the group of unmarried women, the biggest drop in turnout was among young unmarried women.

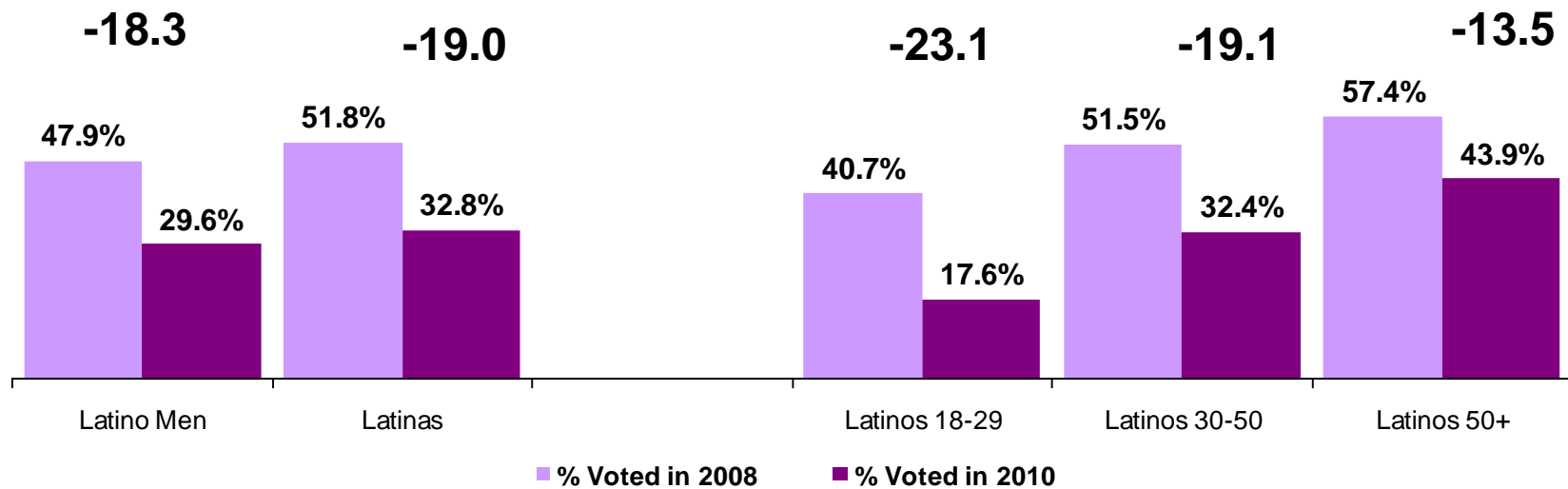
Turnout Drop-Off in 2010 among Unmarried Women



% equals the number of that group who voted divided by the number of that group eligible to vote

Among Latinos, drop-off from 2008 was highest among young Latinos. Older Latinos actually showed less drop-off than voters overall.

Turnout Drop-Off Between 2008 and 2010



% equals the number of that group who voted divided by the number of that group eligible to vote

RAE turnout dropped sharply after the 2008 surge in a number of battleground states.

- **The drop in overall RAE turnout from 2008-2010:**
 - Virginia - 33
 - Michigan -26
 - Ohio -25
 - Pennsylvania -21
 - Florida -21

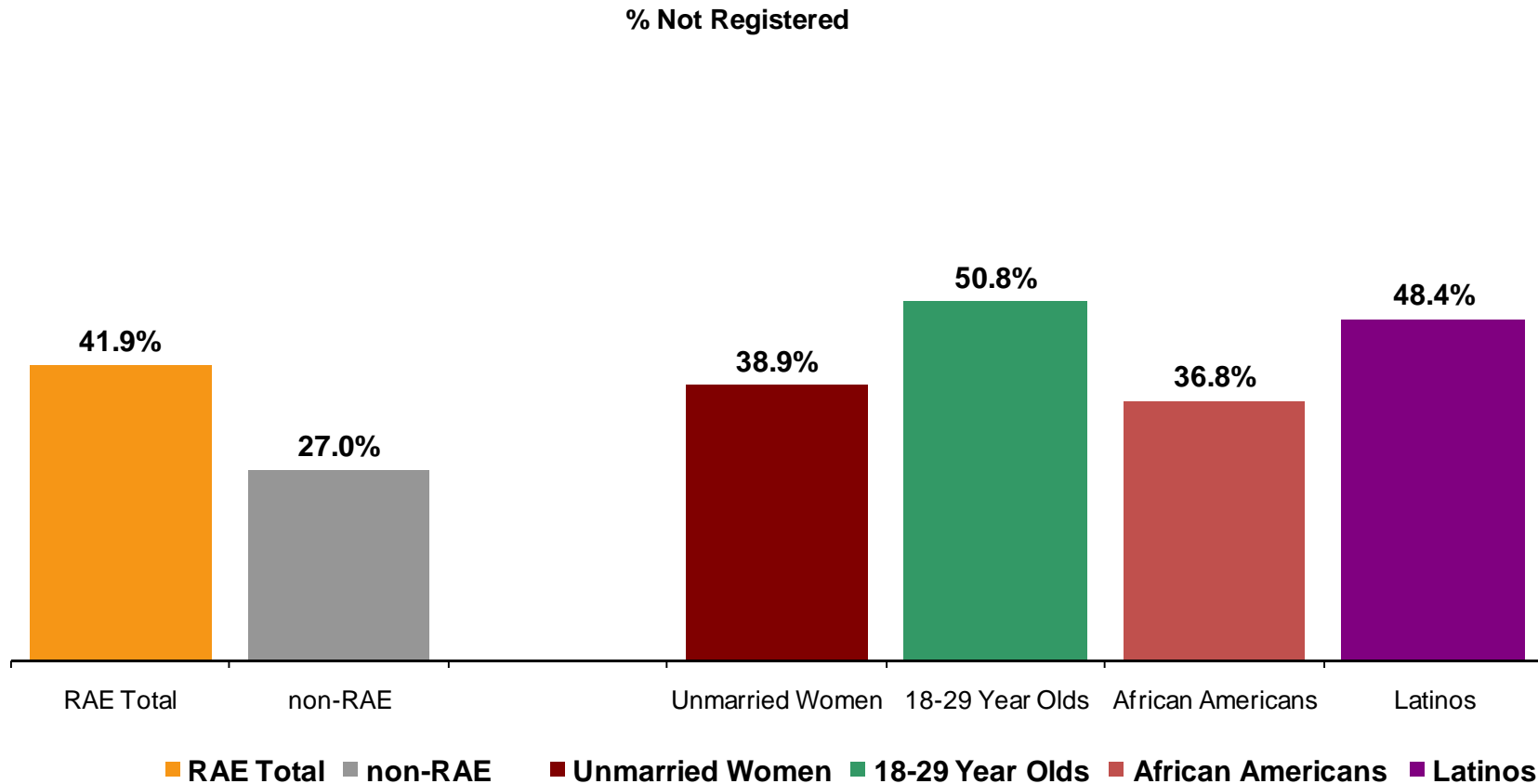
- **The drop in the turnout of unmarried women:**
 - Virginia -34
 - Michigan -27
 - Ohio -23
 - Pennsylvania -23
 - Florida -21

- **The drop in the turnout of Latino voters:**
 - Virginia -38
 - Pennsylvania -26
 - Nevada -24
 - Florida -21

The Registration Gap

Registration is the first and essential step to realizing the RAE's potential

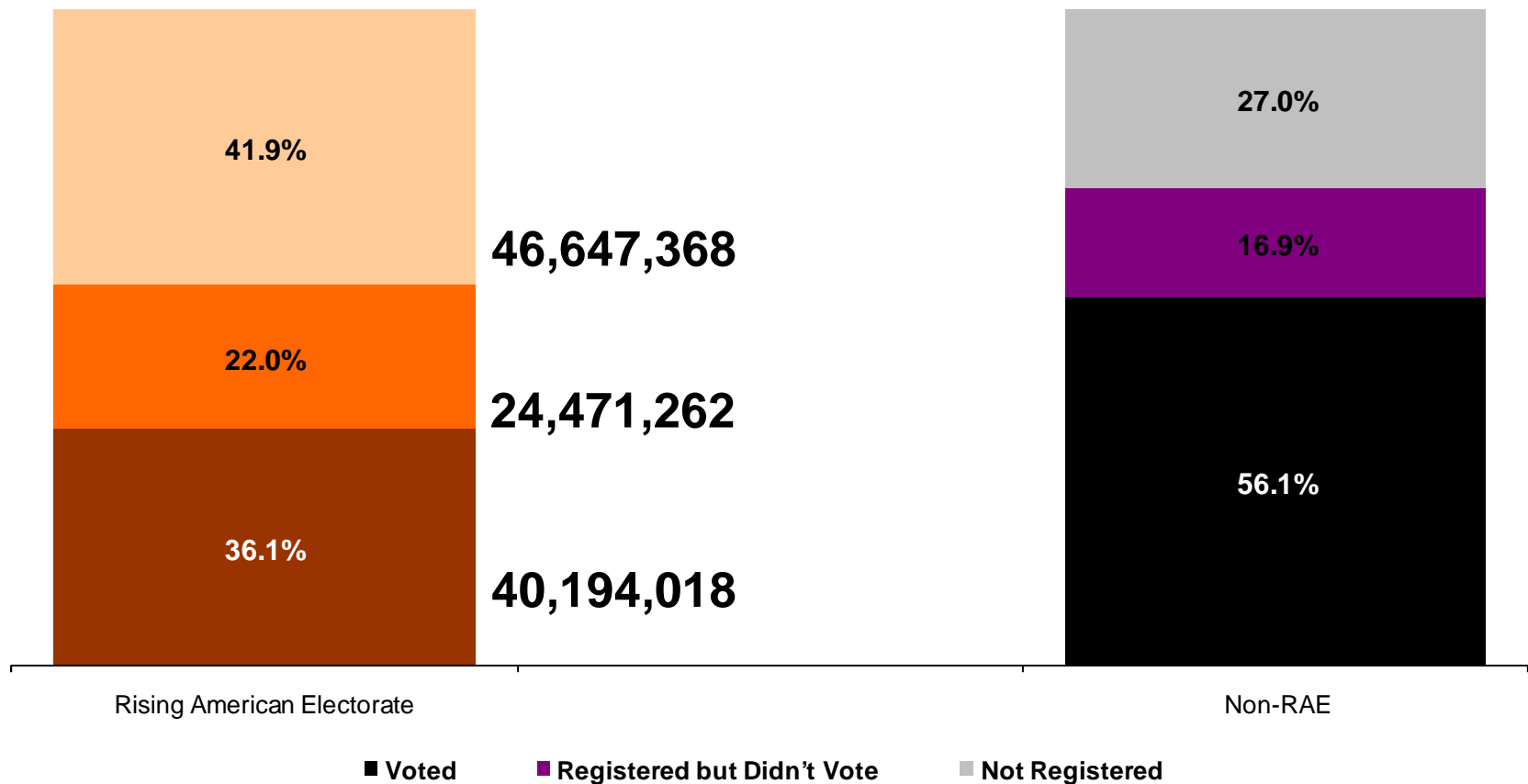
As of November 2010, 41.9% of the RAE said they are not registered to vote. That represents 63% of all unregistered Americans.



% equals the number of that group who are NOT registered divided by the number in that group eligible to register and vote.

Out of the 111 million adult citizens in the RAE, 46 million or 41.9% said they are not registered; 22% said they are registered but didn't vote; and 36.1% reported being registered and voting in November 2010.

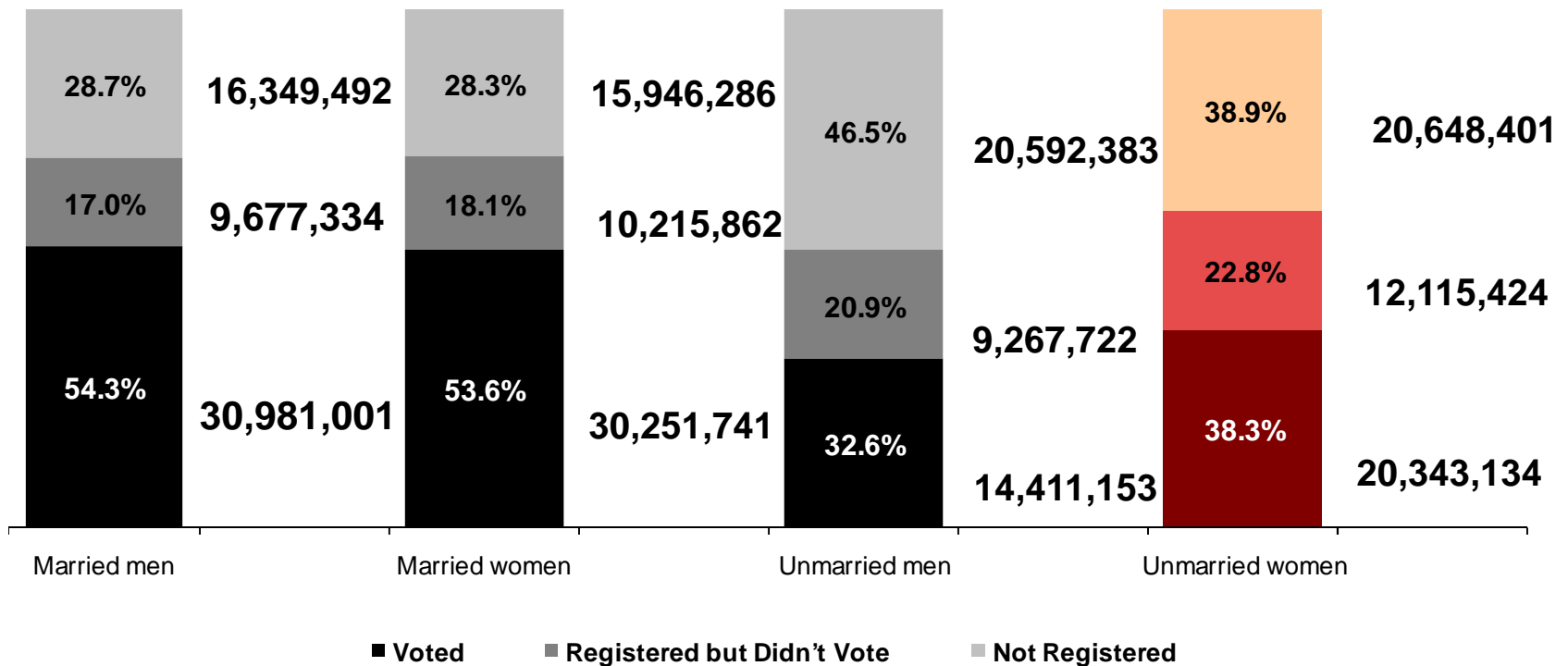
Registration and Voting Rates among the RAE and non-RAE



% equals the number in the group registered/voted divided by the number in that group eligible to vote

More than a third of unmarried women are not registered to vote, and that number rises to more than 46 percent for unmarried men. Among married voters, only just over a quarter are unregistered.

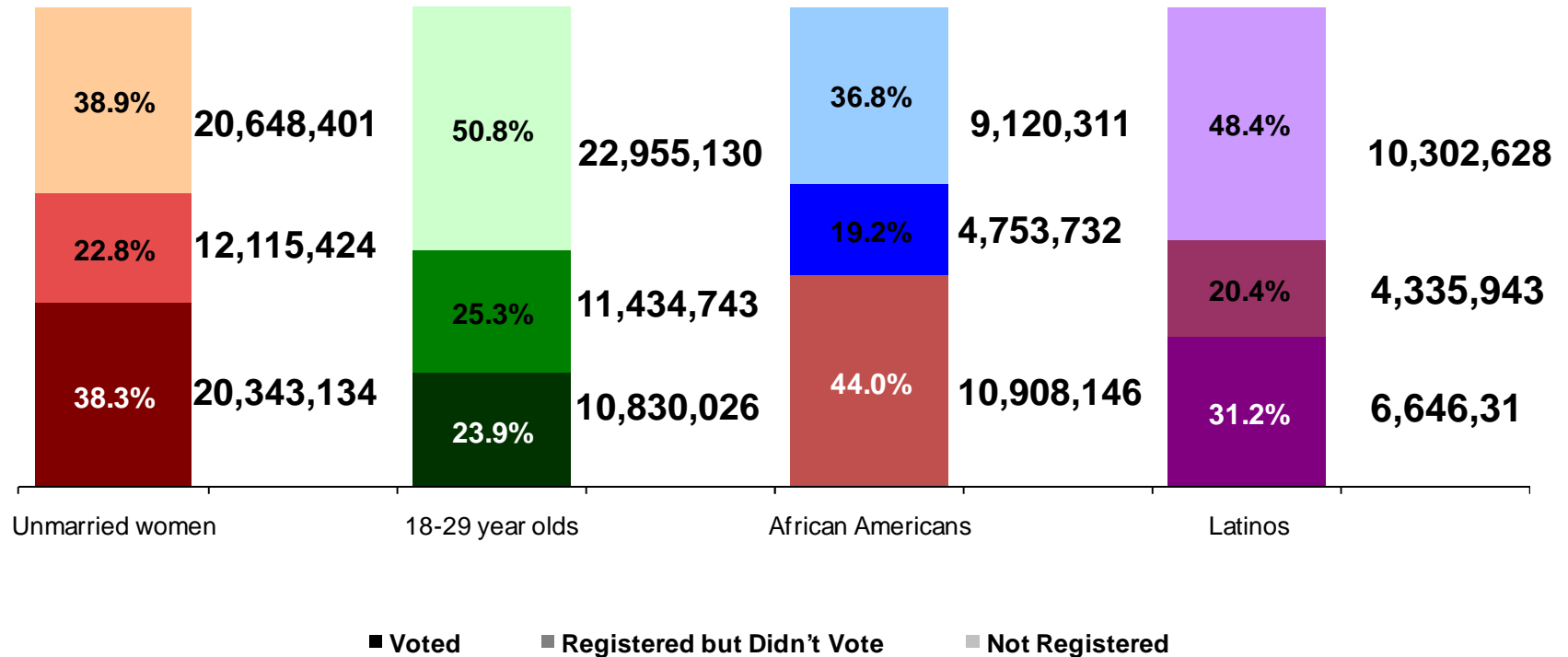
Registration and Voting Rates by Gender/Marital Status



% equals the number in the group registered/voted divided by the number in that group eligible to vote

Among young adults and Latinos, about half of those eligible to vote are not registered.

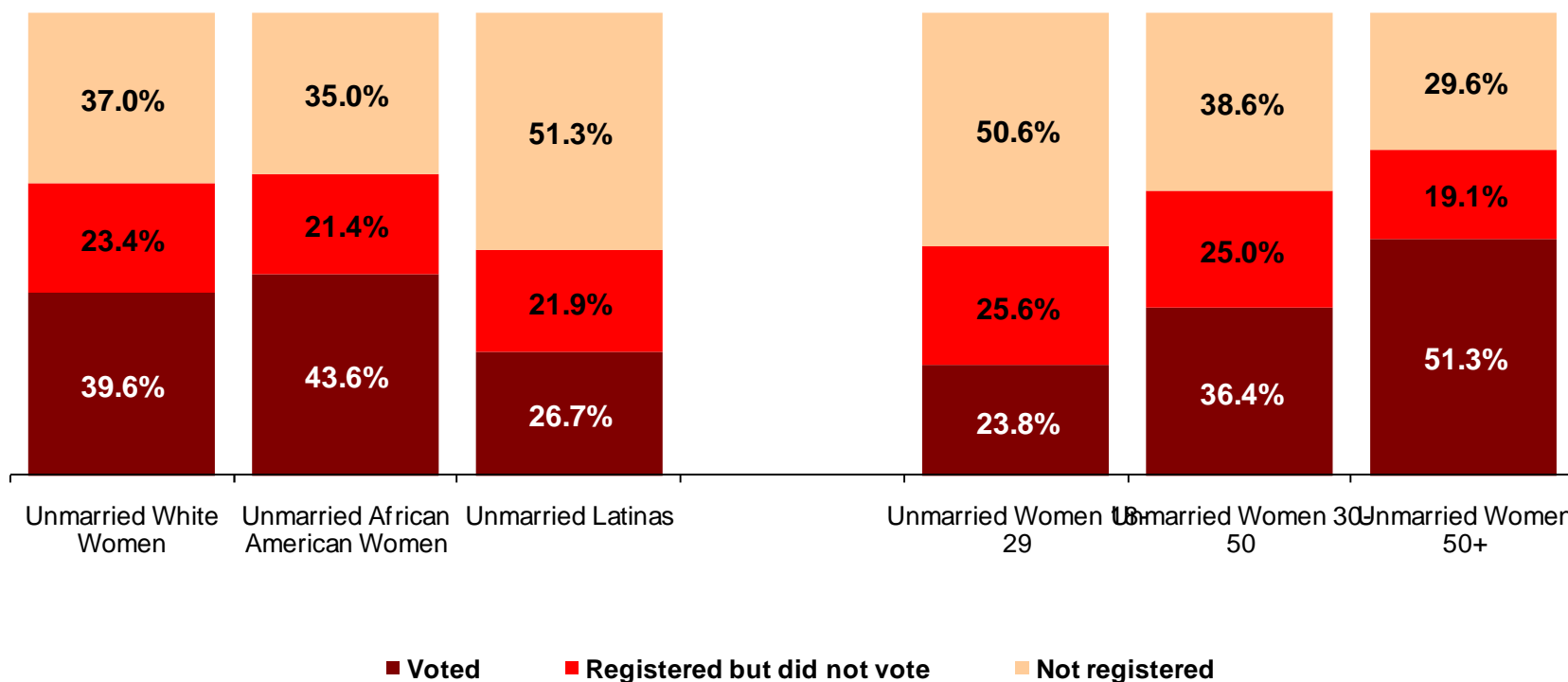
Registration and Voting Rates Among RAE Groups



% equals the number in the group registered/voted divided by the number in that group eligible to vote

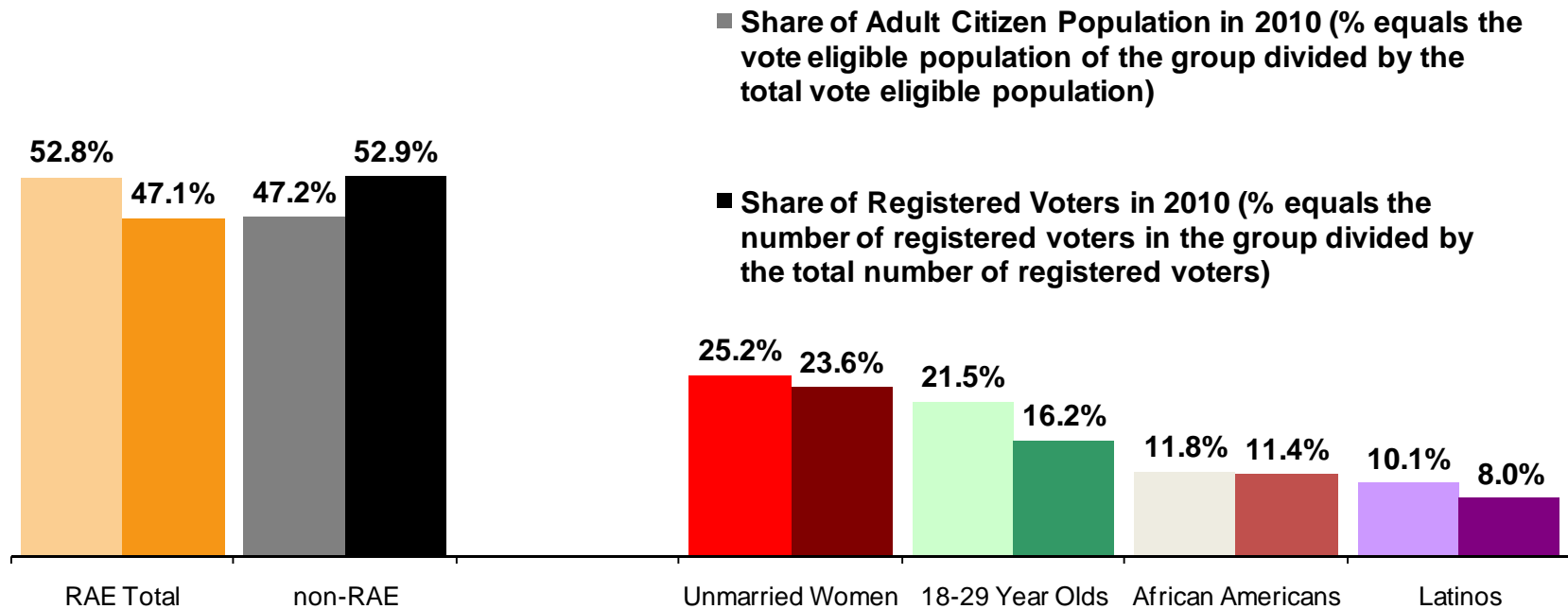
The majority of unmarried Latinas and unmarried women under 30 are not registered to vote.

Registration and Voting Rates Among Unmarried Women

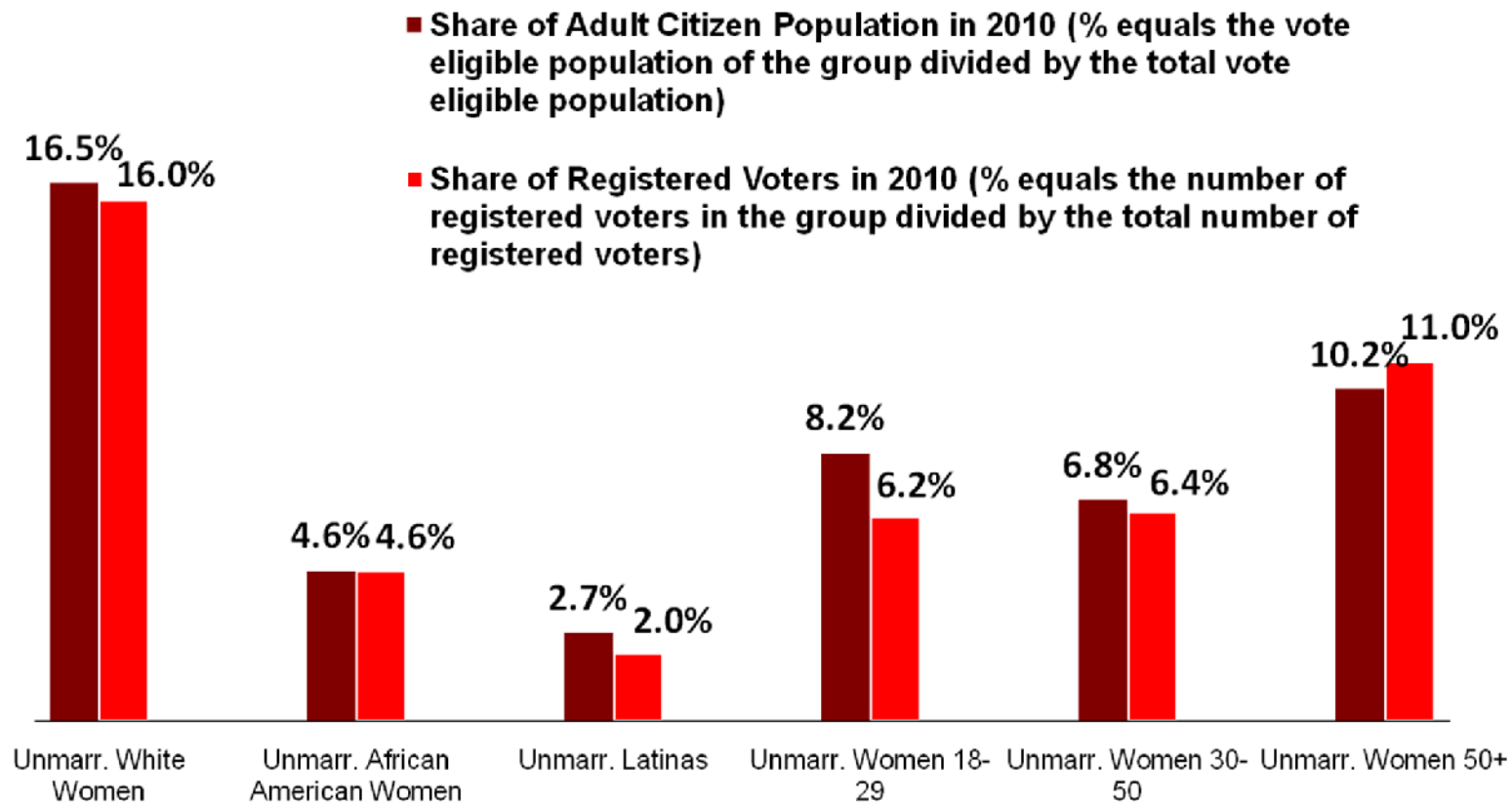


% equals the number in the group registered/voted divided by the number in that group eligible to vote

Another way to look at this gap is to compare the RAE's share of the population to their share of registered voters. Members of the RAE groups make up a smaller share of registered voters than they do of the eligible population.



The greatest gaps between share of the population and share of registered voters are among unmarried Latinas and younger unmarried women.



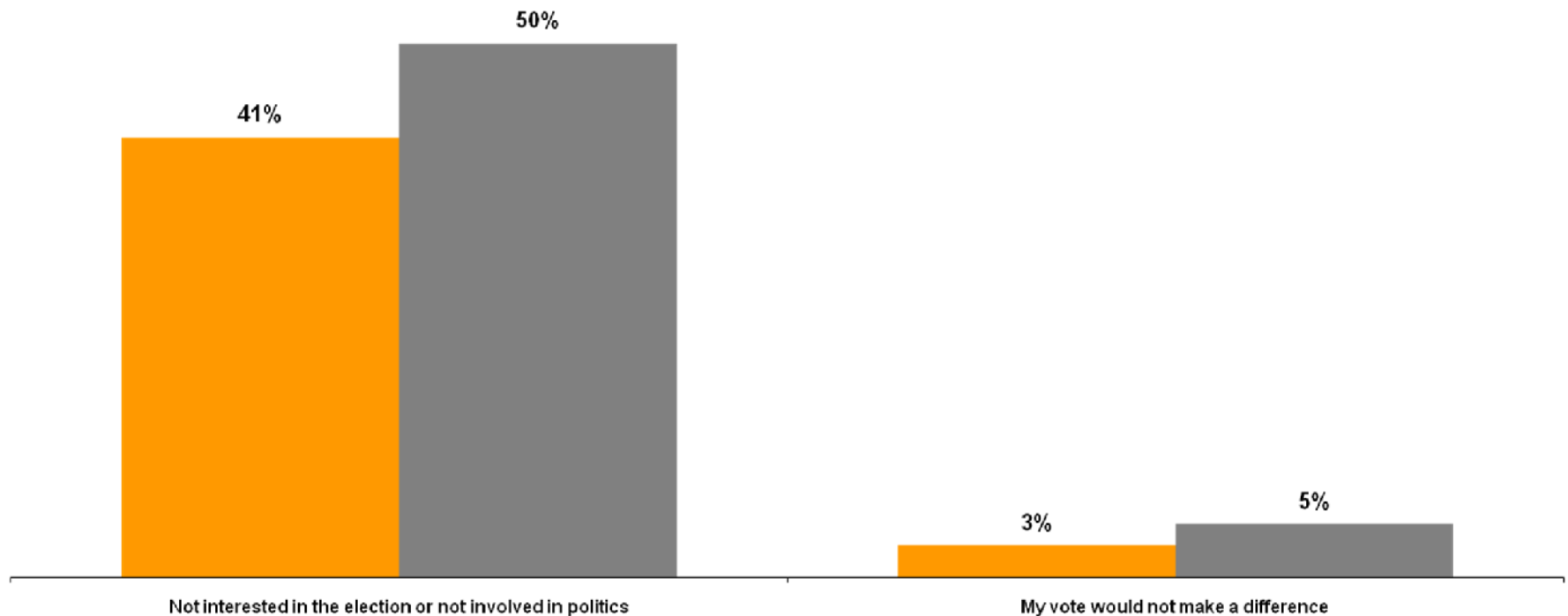
Closing the Gaps

RAE groups are more likely to express difficulties with deadlines and requirements for registering compared to all other voters. They also face the additional challenges created by moving so often.

The top reason for not registering among both the RAE and non-RAE groups is not being interested or involved in politics. More of the non-RAE group cites this reason along with feeling their vote wouldn't count compared to the RAE group.

Reasons for Not Being Registered in 2010*

■ RAE ■ Non-RAE



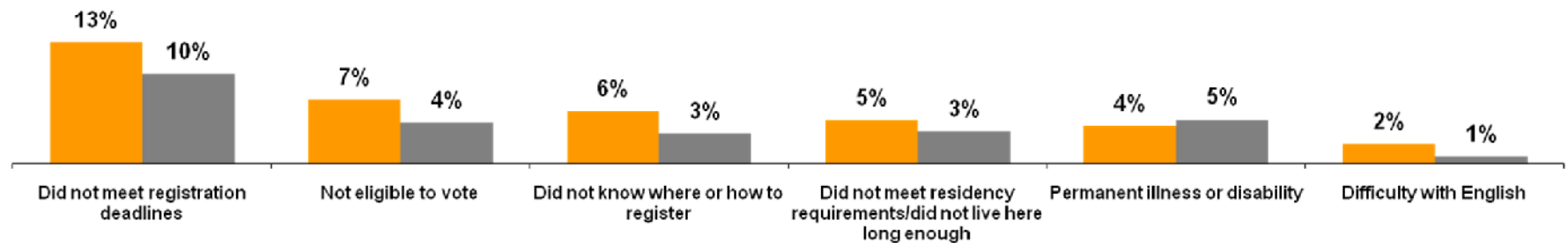
* Closed-ended response categories created by the US Census.

The remainder of reasons, related to logistics, deadlines, and rules, are more relevant to the RAE than to others.

Reasons for Not Being Registered in 2010*

37% of RAE vs. 26% of non-RAE in one of these categories

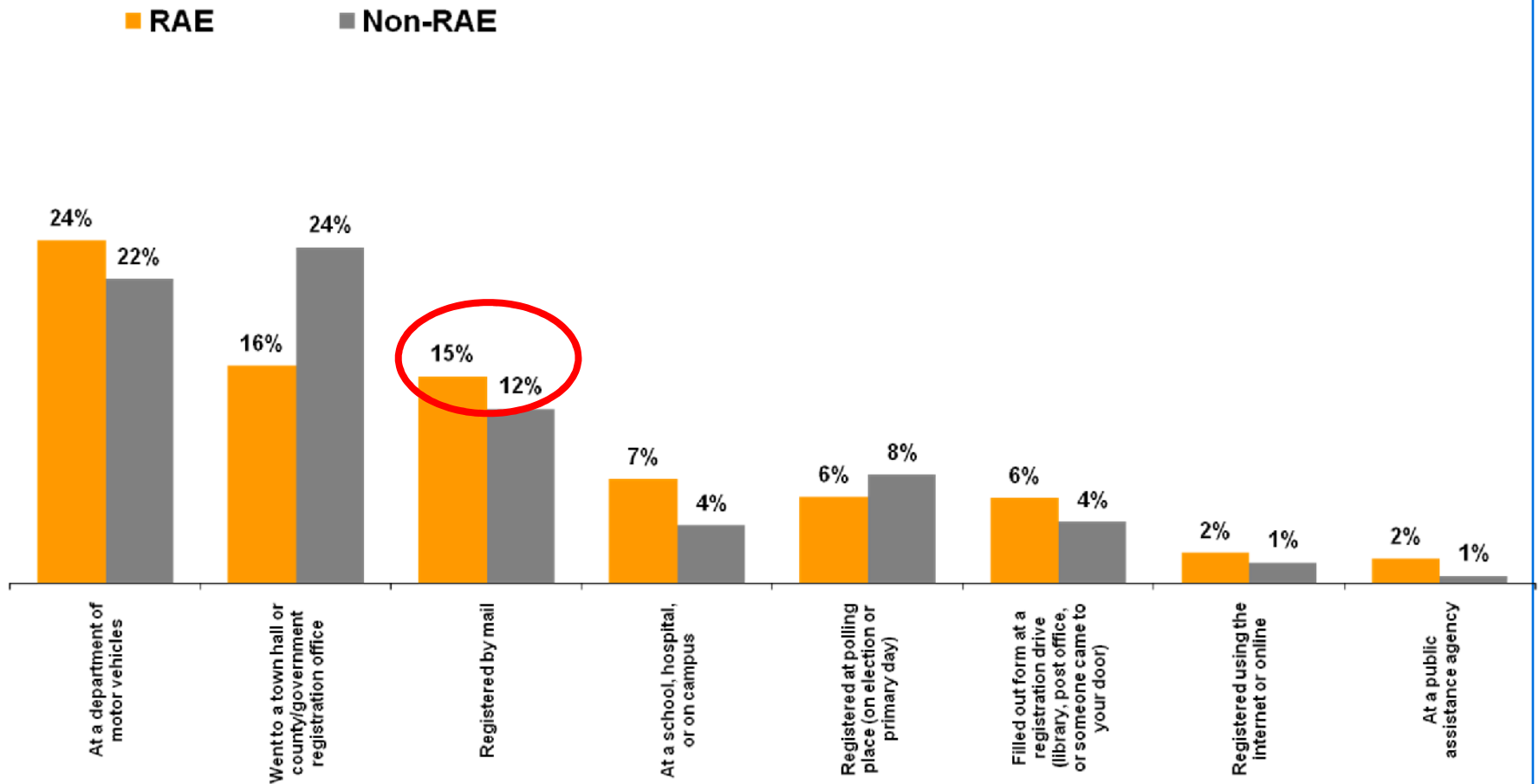
■ RAE ■ Non-RAE



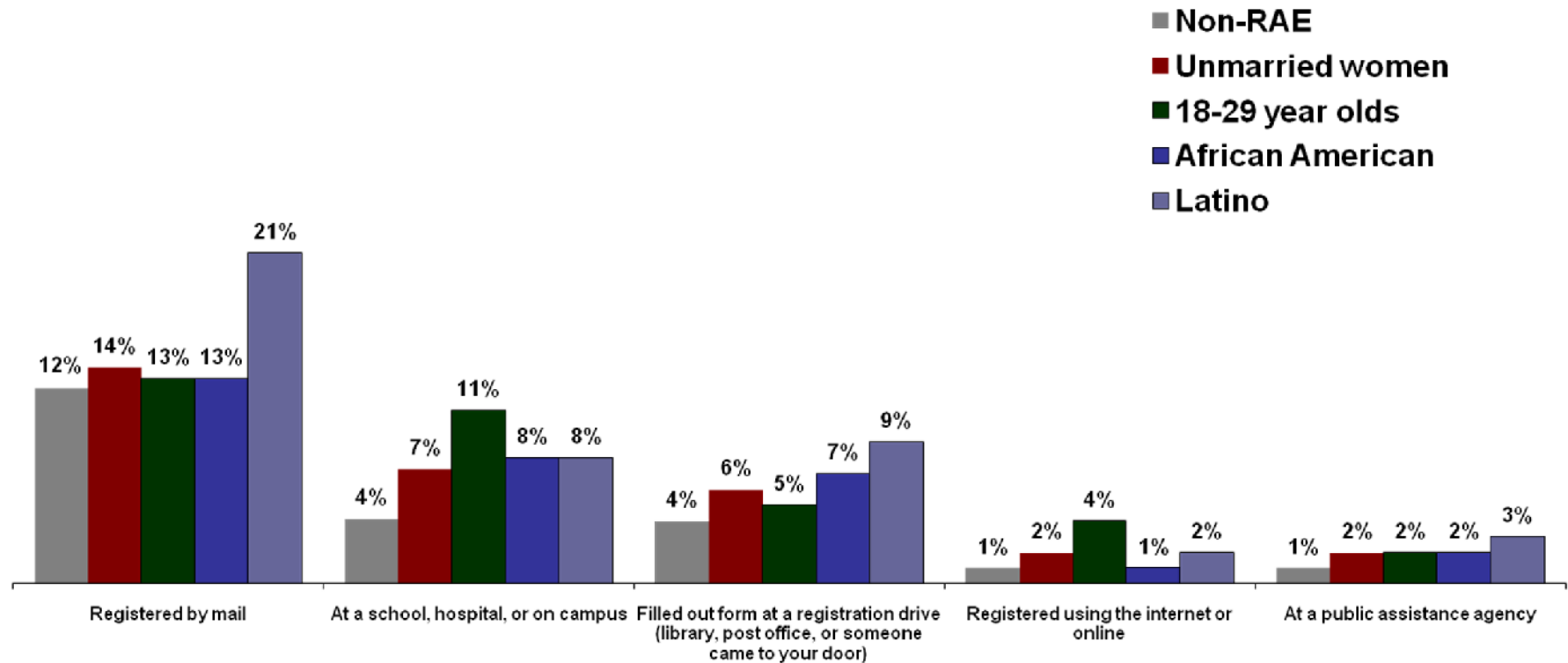
* Closed-ended response categories created by the US Census.

The RAE are more likely to report registering by mail, at a school, in a drive, online, or at a public agency (32%) compared to the non-RAE group (22% report using these methods).

Reports of registration methods RAE vs. non-RAE

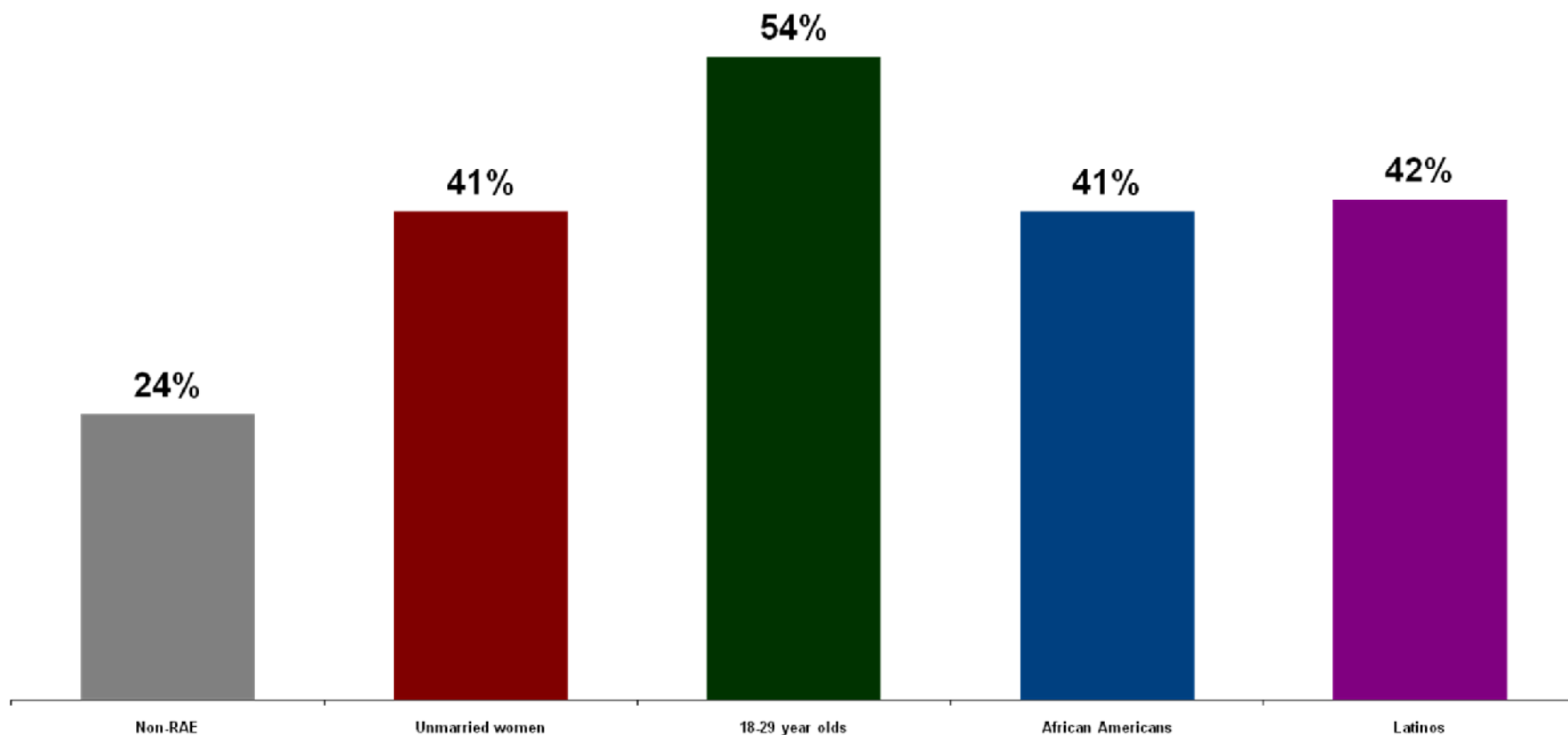


Looking at the methods of by mail, at a school, in a drive, online and at a public agency across the RAE groups, Latinos are much more likely to report registering by mail.



Compared to the rest of the vote eligible population, each of the groups in the RAE are much more likely to have moved in the last 5 years.

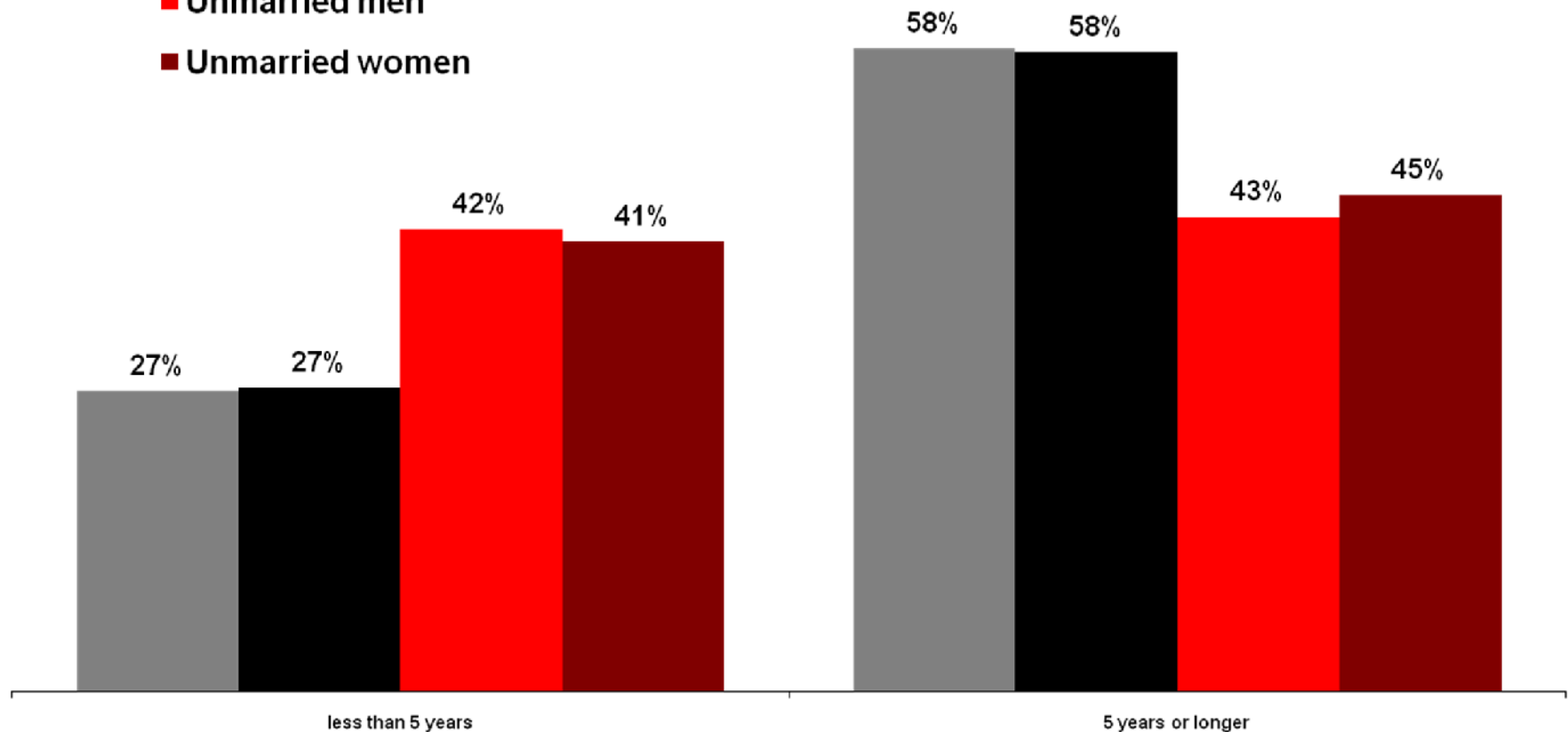
% Living at current address for less than 5 years



Unmarried women are much more mobile than their married counterparts. They are more than twice as likely to have moved in the last year.

Time at Current Address (as of 2010 Election)

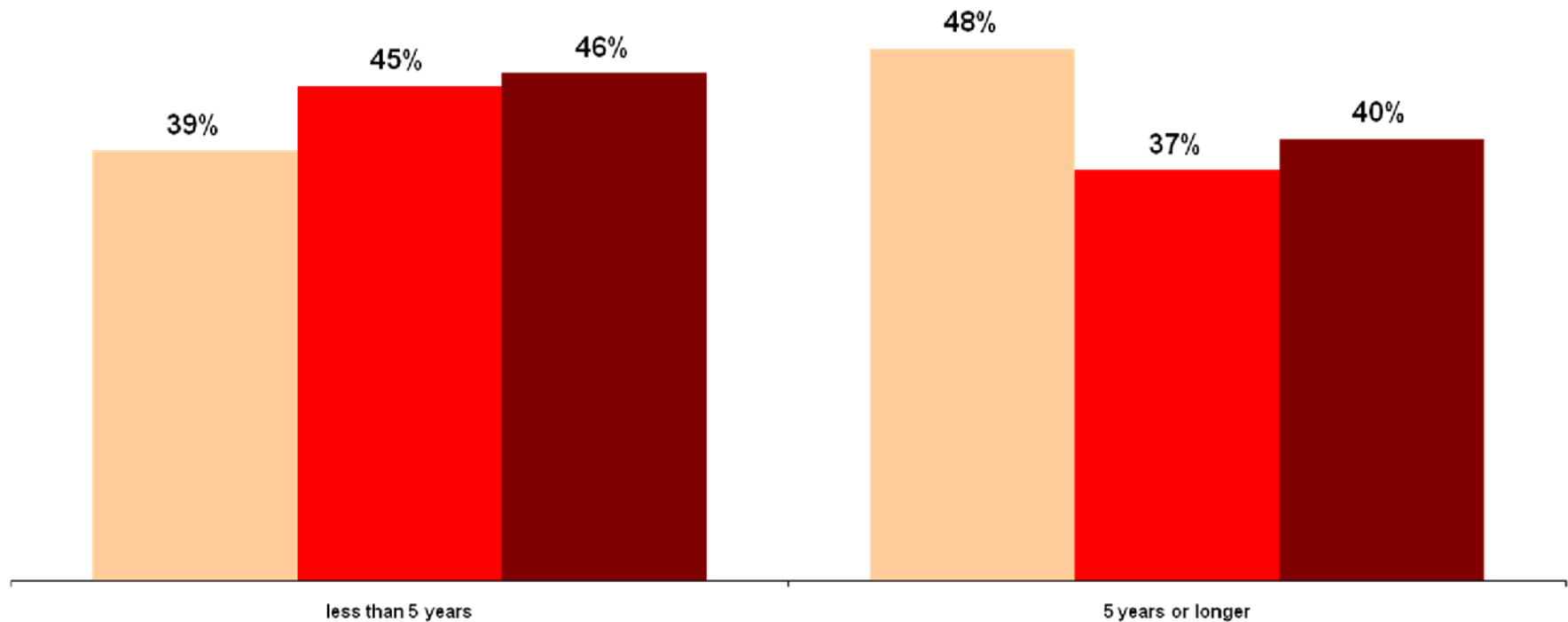
- Married men
- Married women
- Unmarried men
- Unmarried women



Unmarried women are quite mobile across all race/ethnic groups, but African Americans and Latinas in this group move the most.

Time at Current Address (as of 2010 Election)

- Unmarried White Women
- Unmarried African American Women
- Unmarried Latinas



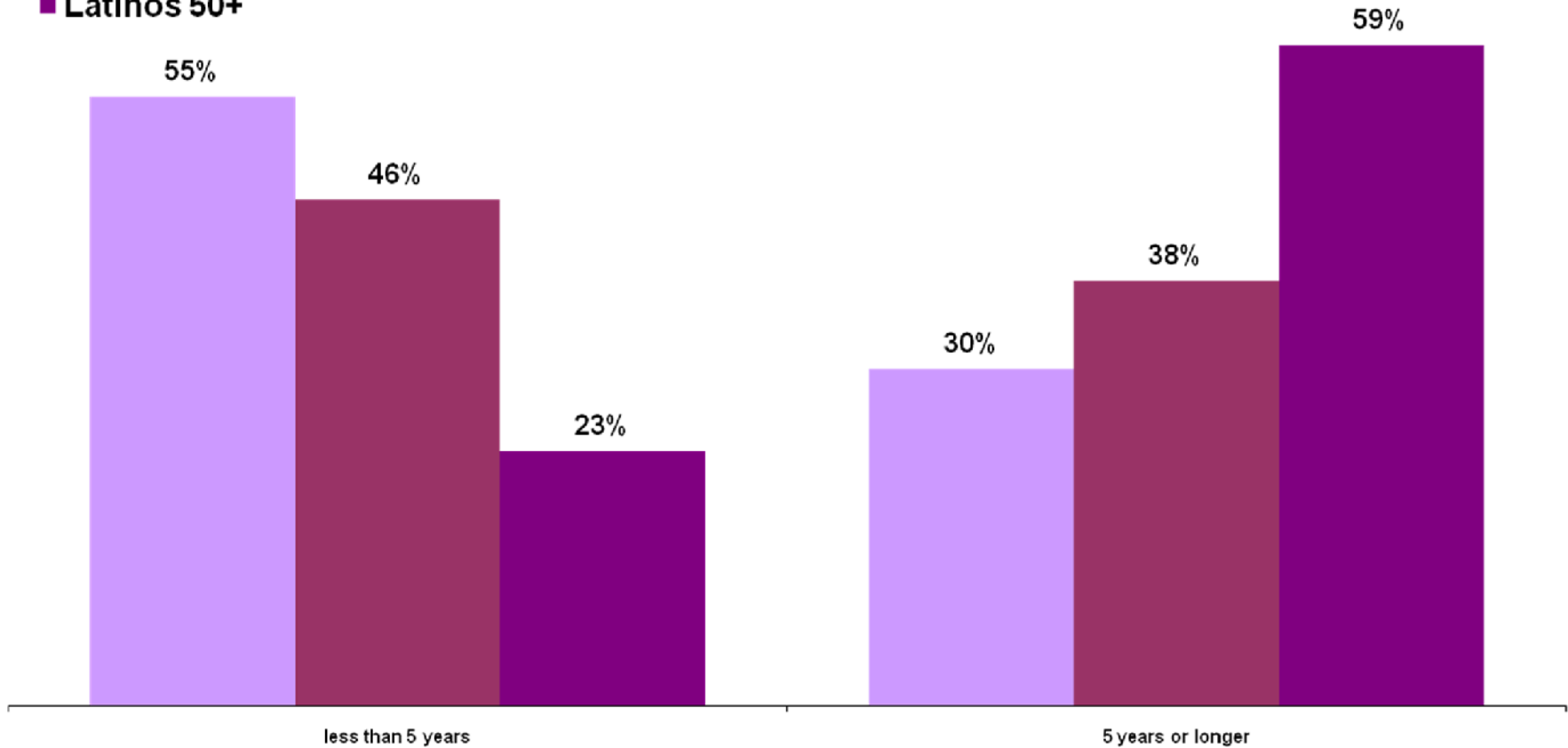
Young Latinos are especially mobile. More than half have moved in the last 4 years.

Time at Current Address (as of 2010 Election)

■ Latinos 18-29

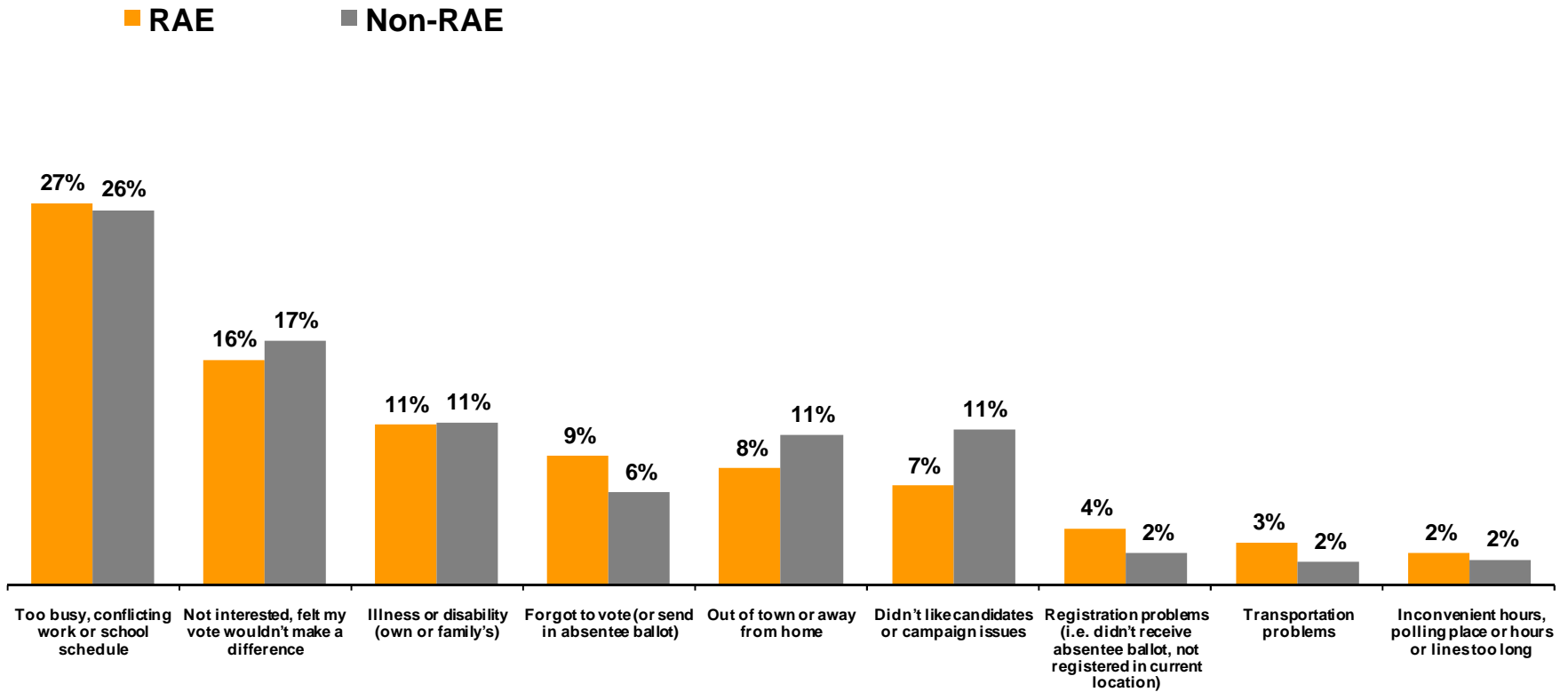
■ Latinos 30-50

■ Latinos 50+



Members of the RAE say they fail to vote for many of the same reasons cited by the non-RAE group. Politicians and organizations fail to communicate the relevance of voting to their lives.

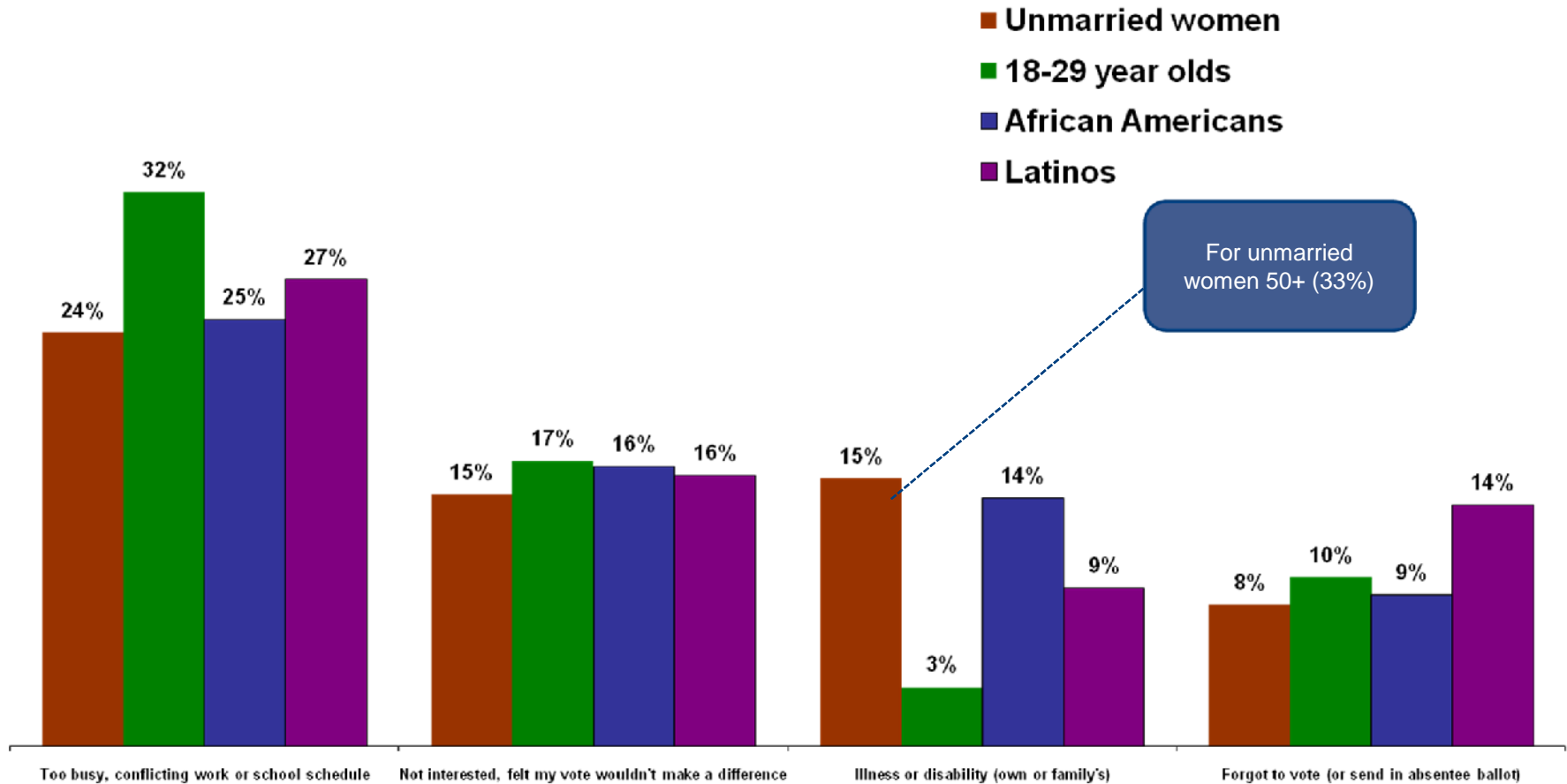
Reasons for Not Voting in 2010*



* Closed-ended response categories created by the US Census.

Looking within the RAE groups, time is an issue for all, particularly young people. Illness is an issue for unmarried women, particularly those in the older group.

Reasons for Not Voting in 2010*



* Closed-ended response categories created by the US Census.

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