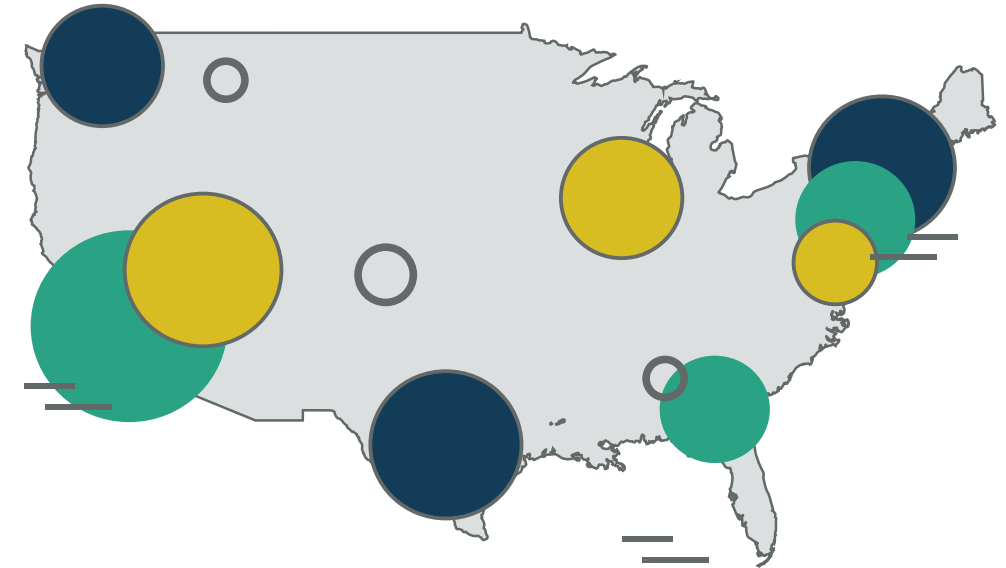
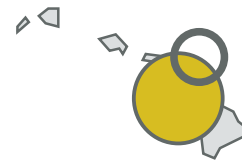


# AAPI VOTING BLOC

## Activating the AAPI Voting Bloc



### Summary

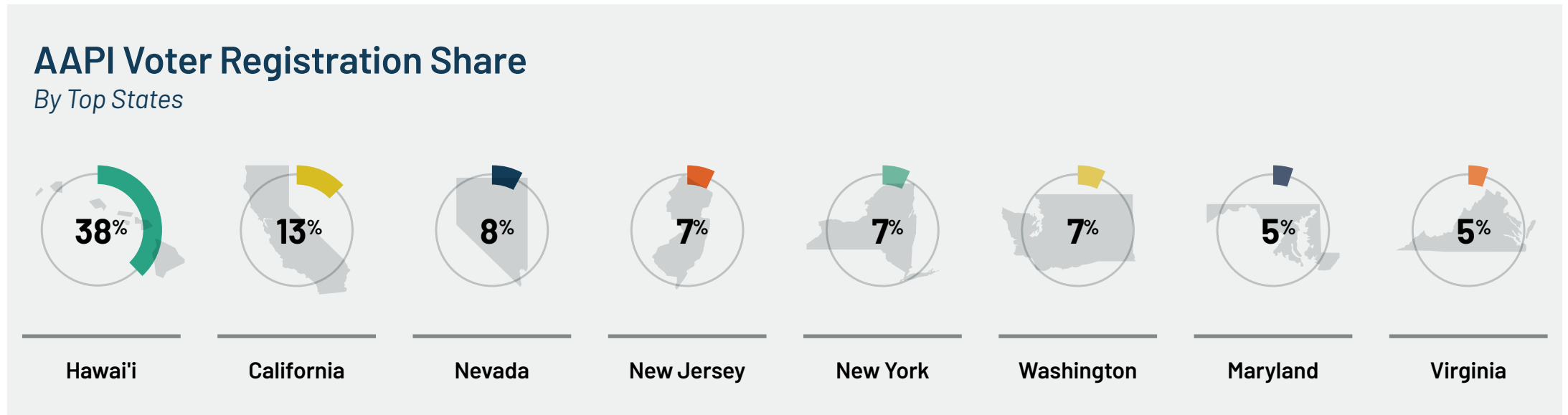
Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs)<sup>1</sup> have been among the country's fastest-growing racial groups for decades and now number more than 22.1 and 1.5 million, respectively, nationwide. As these communities continue to grow, so does their importance as voters. The AAPI electorate has reached a critical mass in Hawai'i and California

and in congressional districts in California, Hawai'i, Georgia, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Texas, Washington, and Virginia. In these geographies, AAPIs have become a voting bloc, characterized by (a) significant numbers and (b) unifying perspectives. This voting bloc is worthy of attention from candidates and decision makers.

<sup>1</sup> AAPIs include people of East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Philippines, and the Pacific Islands.

## Significant Numbers in Key Geographies

The following pie charts display states with the highest share of AAPI registered voters. While AAPIs live in large numbers in many states, they represent significant voting blocs in Hawai'i and California<sup>2</sup>:



<sup>2</sup> Source: Catalist, 2020.

The following two charts<sup>3</sup> display congressional districts with the highest share of AAPI registered voters, first by California congressional districts and then by non-California congressional districts:

California Congressional District	Location	Representative	AAPI Voter Registration Share
CA-17	Santa Clara, CA	Rho Khanna (D)	44%
CA-14	San Mateo, CA	Jackie Speier (D)	29%
CA-15	Castro Valley, CA	Eric Swalwell (D)	29%
CA-27	Pasadena, CA	Judy Chu (D)	29%
CA-12	San Francisco, CA	Nancy Pelosi (D)	28%
CA-19	San Jose, CA	Zoe Lofgren (D)	27%
CA-39	Fullerton, CA	Gil Cisneros (D)	27%
CA-45	Irvine, CA	Katie Porter (D)	20%
CA-47	Long Beach, CA	Alan Lowenthal (D)	20%
CA-18	Palo Alto, CA	Anna Eshoo (D)	19%
CA-34	Los Angeles, CA	Jimmy Gomez (D)	19%
CA-13	Oakland, CA	Barbara Lee (D)	18%
CA-32	El Monte, CA	Grace Napolitano (D)	17%
CA-46	Santa Ana, CA	Lou Correa (D)	17%
CA-48	Newport Beach, CA	Harley Rouda (D)	17%
CA-38	Whittier, CA	Linda Sanchez (D)	16%
CA-52	San Diego, CA	Scott Peters (D)	16%
CA-6	Sacramento, CA	Doris Matsui (D)	15%
CA-7	Elk Grove, CA	Ami Bera (D)	14%
CA-11	Concord, CA	Mark DeSaulnier (D)	13%
CA-9	Stockton, CA	Jerry McNerney (D)	13%
CA-28	Burbank, CA	Adam Schiff (D)	12%
CA-33	Torrance, CA	Ted Lieu (D)	12%
CA-43	Los Angeles, CA	Maxine Waters (D)	12%
CA-53	San Diego, CA	Susan Davis (D)	12%
CA-3	Walnut Grove, CA	John Garamendi (D)	11%
CA-30	Sherman Oaks, CA	Brad Sherman (D)	11%
CA-5	St. Helena, CA	Mike Thompson (D)	10%

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Non-California Congressional District	Location	Representative	AAPI Voter Registration Share
HI-1	Honolulu, HI	Ed Case (D)	48%
NY-6	Flushing, NY	Grace Meng (D)	31%
HI-2	Honolulu, HI	Tulsi Gabbard (D)	29%
WA-9	Renton, WA	Adam Smith (D)	19%
VA-11	Annandale, VA	Gerry Connolly (D)	16%
NY-10	New York, NY	Jerry Nadler (D)	15%
NY-14	Jackson Heights, NY	Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D)	15%
TX-22	Sugar Land, TX	Pete Olson (R)	15%
NJ-6	New Brunswick, NJ	Frank Pallone (D)	14%
NY-5	Jamaica, NY	Gregory Meeks (D)	14%
NY-7	Brooklyn, NY	Nydia Velazquez (D)	14%
NJ-12	Ewing, NJ	Bonnie Watson Coleman (D)	13%
NY-3	Little Neck, NY	Thomas Suozzi (D)	13%
VA-10	Sterling, VA	Jennifer Wexton (D)	13%
GA-7	Atlanta, GA	Rob Woodall (R)	12%
NV-3	Las Vegas, NV	Suzie Lee (D)	12%
NY-11	Staten Island, NY	Max Rose (D)	12%
TX-9	Houston, TX	Al Green (D)	12%
NJ-9	Paterson, NJ	Bill Pascrell Jr. (D)	11%
NY-12	New York, NY	Carolyn Maloney (D)	11%
TX-3	McKinney, TX	Van Taylor (R)	11%
IL-8	Elgin, IL	Raja Krishnamoorthi (D)	10%
TX-7	Houston, TX	Lizzie Fletcher (D)	10%
VA-8	Alexandria, VA	Donald Beyer (D)	10%

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At the congressional district level, the role of AAPIs is even more salient, particularly in California, Hawai'i, Georgia, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Texas, Washington, and Virginia.

## Unifying Perspectives

Large in number in key geographies, AAPIs are also uniting in their perspectives. For example, among Asian Americans likely to vote in the 2018 General Election:<sup>4</sup>

- 90% agreed that women and men should be paid the same wages for the same work.
- 76% agreed that Congress should pass the DREAM Act.
- 79% agreed that Congress should enact stricter gun laws.
- 79% agreed that racial profiling is a form of harassment and should not be allowed.

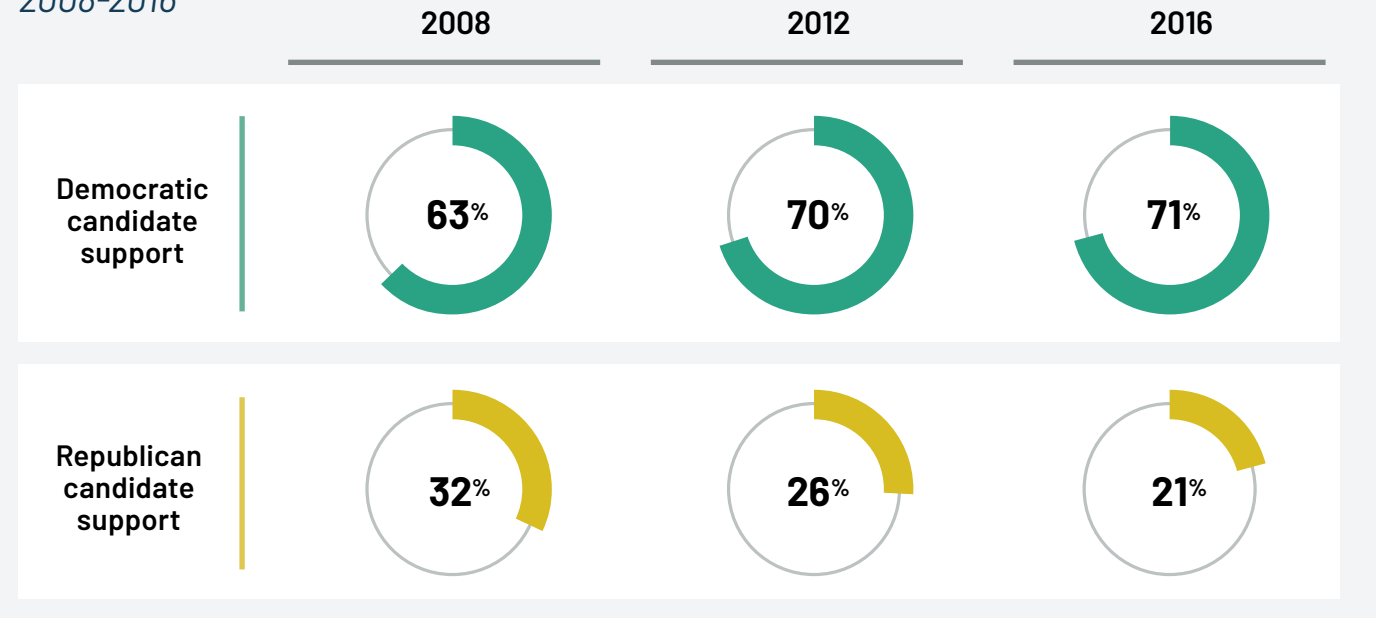
Looking at presidential elections between 2008 and 2016, AAPI voters' preference for the Democratic candidate over the Republican candidate reached 71% in 2016, trending up steadily since 2008.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Source: 2018 American Election Eve Poll.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Catalyst, 2020. Catalyst's Vote Choice History (VCH) assigns an individual-level probability that a voter cast (or could have cast) a ballot for a named Democratic or Republican candidate in all presidential, Senate, U.S. House, gubernatorial, State Senate, and State House elections from 2008 to the present. These probabilities are then aggregated to provide estimates of subgroup support. It is important to note that VCH is estimated using identical methodology across years and offices, and that reported changes in support from 2012 to 2016 are likely to represent real underlying changes in support.

### AAPI Voter Presidential Choice by Party

2008-2016

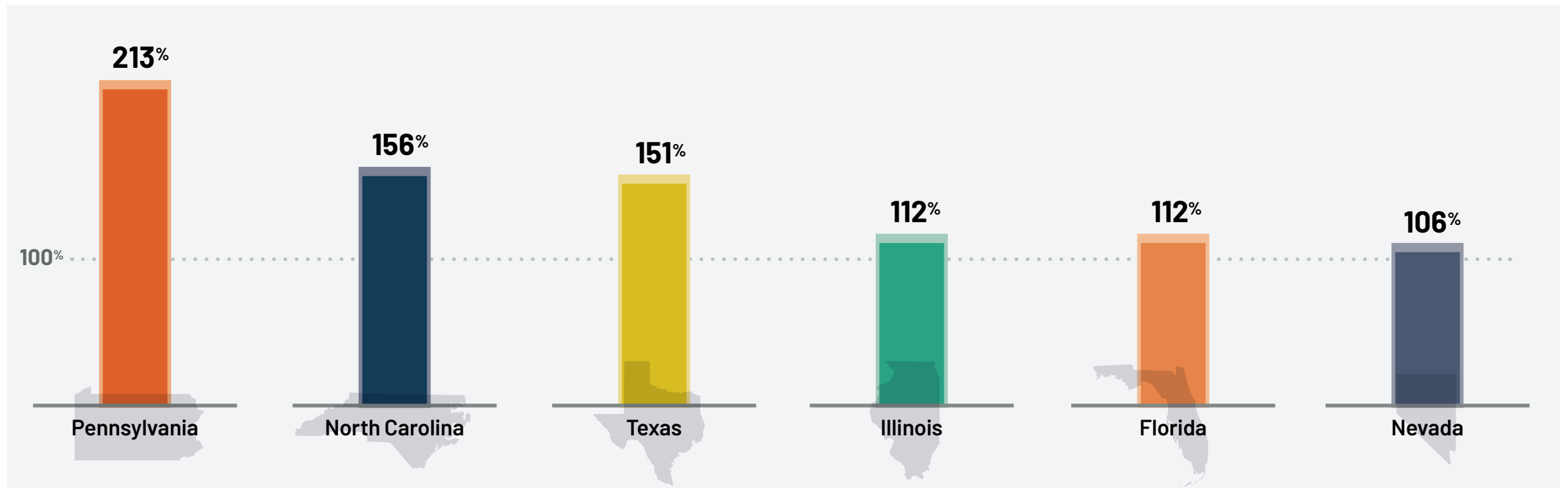


AAPI voters have similar beliefs on both policies and political choices, a key criteria in the development of a voting bloc.

# Growth Makes the Future Bright

## *for AAPI Voting Power*

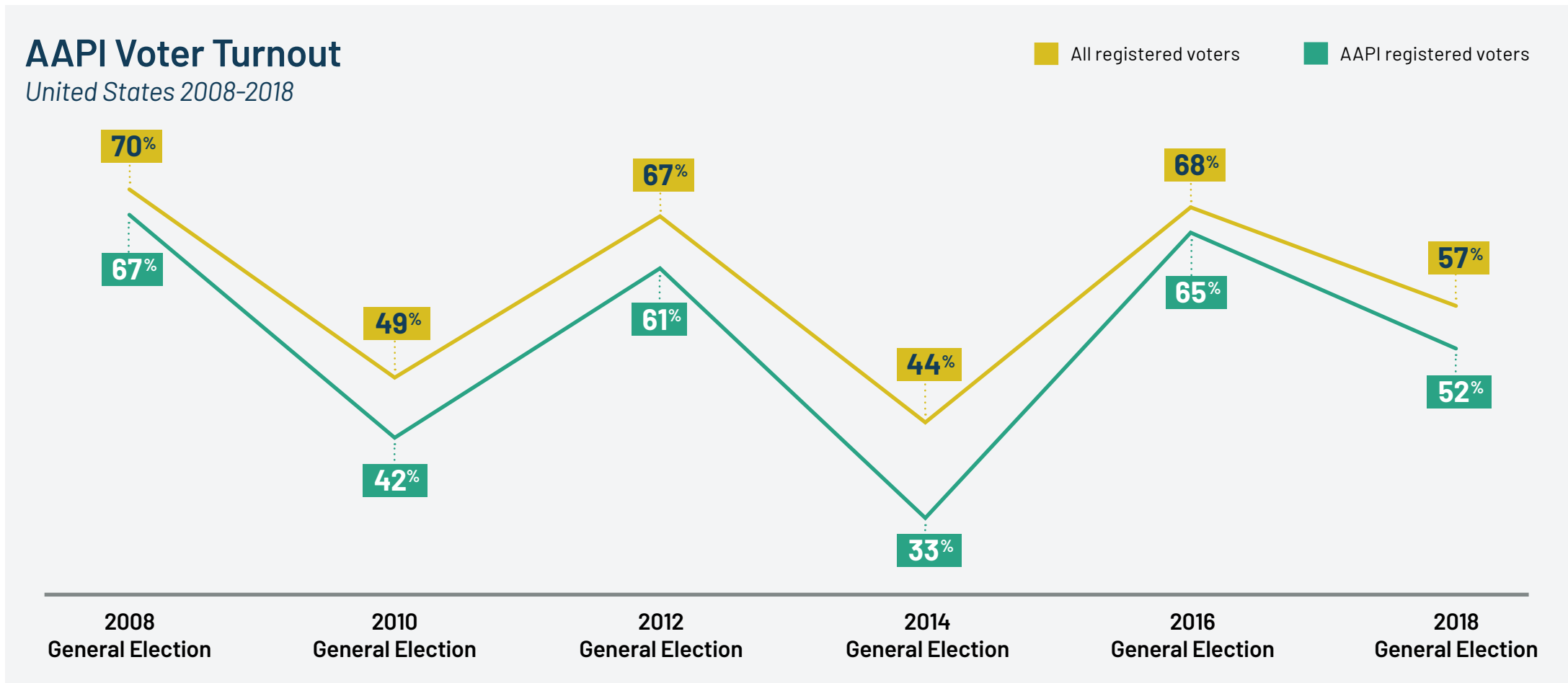
AAPIs comprise just more than 4% of the nation's registered voters but are among the fastest-growing racial groups in America. Voter registration of Asian Americans increased 51% between 2008 and 2016, compared to just 8% nationally.<sup>6</sup> Key states for AAPI growth include:<sup>7</sup>



<sup>6</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2017 Current Population Surveys, March Supplements.

<sup>7</sup> Please note that percentage growth in voter registration is not an indication of voting bloc power because, in many of these states, AAPI's represent a small percentage of the overall population.

These densely populated and growing areas translate into voting power as well. As the following chart<sup>8</sup> indicates, AAPIs turn out to vote at rates that approach overall turnout during presidential elections. Additionally, in the 2018 midterm election, AAPIs were within 5% of overall turnout, a significant milestone for AAPI voter turnout. **All signs indicate that these densely populated and growing areas translate into new AAPI voting power.**



<sup>8</sup> Source: Catalyst, 2020.

## Looking Ahead

Exercising the right to vote has remained a challenge for AAPI and other voters of color, particularly for those who live in cities and states with restrictive voting rules or who are limited English proficient and not offered voter information in their native language. In the context of the global pandemic, voters have legitimate concerns for their health. **Civic participation organizations must be appropriately equipped to run effective voter turnout campaigns.**

## Conclusion

AAPIs have emerged as an indispensable voting bloc in the states of California and Hawai'i and in congressional districts in California, Hawai'i, Georgia, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Texas, Washington, and Virginia. AAPIs have significant numbers and unifying perspectives in these areas.

**With more organizing and funding, the AAPI community can expand its influence even further by increasing voter registration and turnout rates; participating at higher rates in changing policy and social activism; and running for office.**

Deeper analysis into AAPI voting blocs in key municipalities may provide additional insights on where AAPIs can wield power in city council, county commission, and other local races. The AAPI Civic Engagement Fund is considering additional research in this area.

For additional data on the state of AAPI voters, please visit <https://aapifund.org/program/research-and-tools/>.



# Acknowledgments

This brief was authored by the AAPI Civic Engagement Fund. The AAPI Civic Engagement Fund would like to thank Catalist and SWEL for their assistance with this report. Christine Dunn provided copy editing and Allison Iguchi designed this brief.

## About the AAPI Civic Engagement Fund

The AAPI Civic Engagement Fund was established in 2014 with the mission to foster a culture of civic participation within AAPI communities by supporting the growth of AAPI groups as organizational-movement and power-building leaders that achieve specific policy, systems, and transformational change.

It holds the vision that AAPIs must be an integral part of strengthening America's democracy, in advocating for improving the quality of life for all, and in creating vibrant multiracial communities. [www.aapifund.org](http://www.aapifund.org)