

The Political Participation of Chinese and Asian Americans

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Who are Asian Americans?

- ▣ Asian Americans are people of Asian descent who reside in the United States on a long-term basis.
- ▣ Main countries/ places of origin include:
 - China (+Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau)
 - Japan
 - Korea (mainly from the South or the Rep. of Korea)
 - Vietnam (+Cambodia, Laos, Burma/Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia)
 - The Philippines
 - India (+Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal)
 - DHS also includes those in the Middle East (Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen)

What is Political Participation for Asian Americans?

	<i>Non-Electoral</i>	<i>Electoral</i>
<i>Non-Domestic</i>	Sending Remittance, Fundraising, and Volunteering for Homeland Modernization, Liberalization, Defense, and Democratization	Campaigning and Voting in Homeland Elections, Holding an office in Homeland Government; Lobbying and Campaigning for U.S. Foreign-policy Concerns
<i>Domestic</i>	Labor Organizing, Fundraising, Volunteering in Community Organizations, Protests, Boycotts, Strikes, Litigation, Lobbying	Voting, Donating to Campaign Funds, and Volunteering for Political Campaigns in U.S. Local, State, and Federal Elections; Running for and Serving in U.S. Public Offices

The Four Stages of AAPP

- ▣ 1. Mid-1800s to early-1960s – early, non-voting forms of political participation in response to racial exclusion
- ▣ 2. mid-1960s to mid-1970s – Rising racial consciousness and the early Asian American Movement
- ▣ 3. mid-1970s to present – From protest to politics; emergence of AA elected officials in HI and large metro areas in mainland USA.
- ▣ 4. mid-1980s to present – New, emerging sites of politics in the immigrant-influenced suburbs (with community-based org. and ethnic media)

Unequal by law under politics of exclusion

- ▣ All nonwhites were prohibited from accessing US citizenship by the 1790 Nationality Act that restricted citizenship to “free white persons.”
- ▣ CA Supreme Court ruled in People v. Hall (1854) that Chinese had no right to testify against whites
- ▣ 1875 Page Act prohibited entry of Chinese, Japanese, and Mongolian women suspected of going into prostitution
- ▣ 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act; denied immigration and naturalization to the Chinese (until 1943)
- ▣ United States v. Wong Kim Ark (1898) affirmed birthright citizenship of the U.S. born

Early Forms of Political Activism prior to the 20th century

- ▣ Formation of (umbrella) ethnic-based organizations among the foreign-born (Chinese Six Companies; Japanese Asso.)
- ▣ Litigation (of cases against immigration exclusion, denial of citizenship, economic injustice, other racial/social discrimination)
- ▣ Petition elected officials and opinion leaders for political and moral support
- ▣ Political donations to help fund legal defense and other activities

History is bound to repeat itself unless we learn from it

- ▣ Link to Anti-Chinese legislation and court cases
<http://www.mocanyc.org/timeline/timeline.html>
- ▣ **The 1882 Project** is a nonpartisan, grassroots effort focused on educating lawmakers and the public the Chinese Exclusion Laws and the impact such legislation had on our history.
<http://www.1882foundation.org/>
- ▣ It helped secure passage of two congressional resolutions in 2011-12 that expressed regret for the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act.

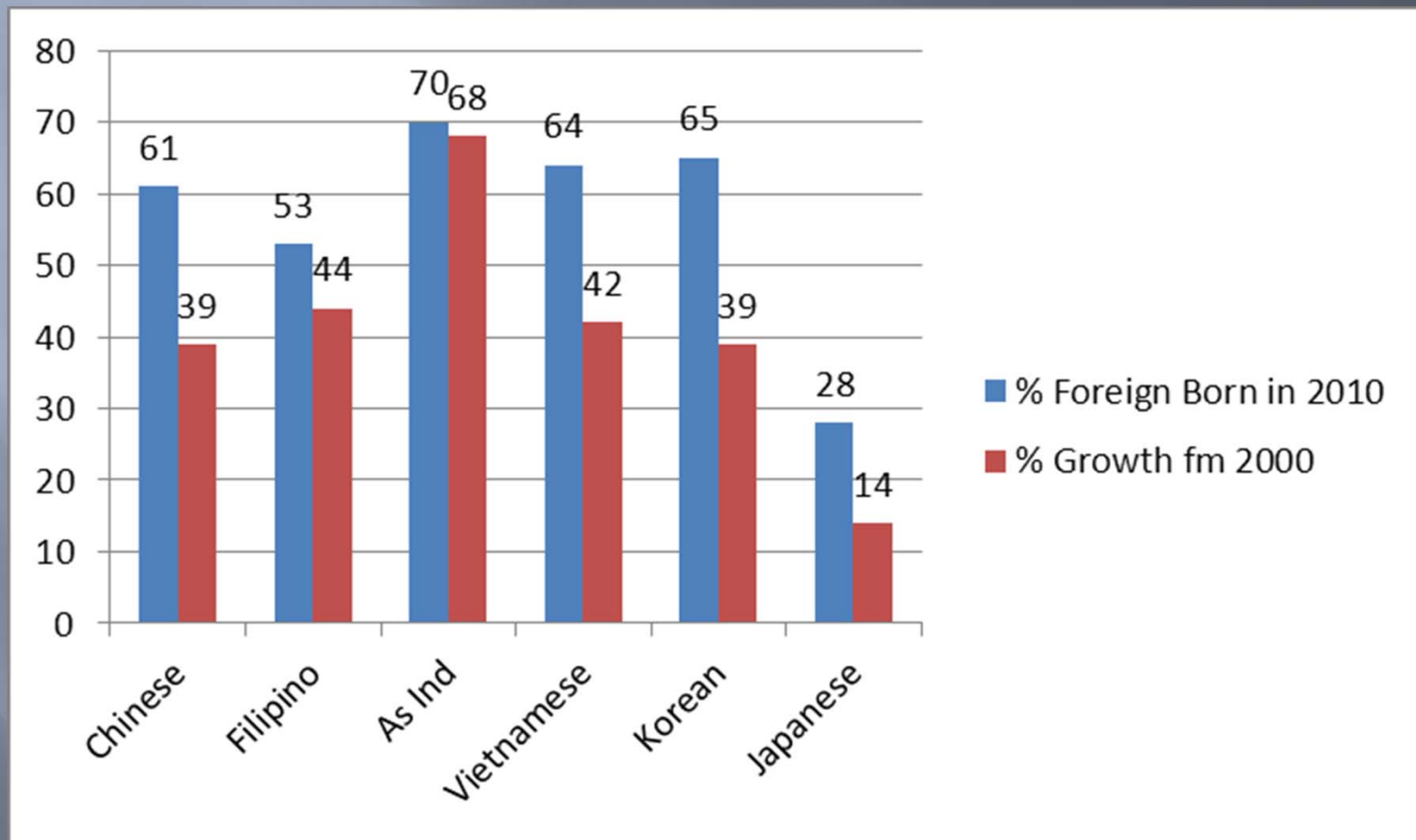
Legislative Action in California

- ▣ Proposed by former Assemblyman Paul Fong of San Jose and current CA Senate leader Kevin de Leon back in 2009--CA Assembly Con Res (ACR) 42 issued an apology for Chinese exclusion in the state of California.
- ▣ Proposed by Senate Republican leader Bob Huffs in 2014-- CA Senate Joint Res (SJR) 23 urged Congress to offer an explicit apology, rather than an expression of regret .

The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act Turns 50 on Oct. 7, 2015

- ▣ On Oct. 7, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1965, which forever altered the face of America.
- ▣ For the first time, each Asian country was given the same visa quotas of 20k per year.
- ▣ Between 1965 and 2015, the US share of the Asian American population increased ten-fold, from just 0.5% to 5.6%--mostly through family sponsorship of parents, siblings, and children of US citizens/PR holders.
- ▣ However, due to serious backlogs, Filipino Americans would have to wait 23 years to see their siblings and Chinese Americans would have to wait 17 years. Our immigration system needs to be fixed, but will it be?

Migration from Asia, esp. South Asia, fueled the population growth 2000-10



The emergence of Asian Americans in US electoral politics: key questions

- ▣ When and Where?
- ▣ Can Asian Americans make an impact on US elections – at national, state, and local levels?
- ▣ How do they behave as voters, candidates, campaign donors, and volunteers?
- ▣ What 's their relation with the two major parties?

Although APAs are still relatively few in elective offices, they are more now than ever.

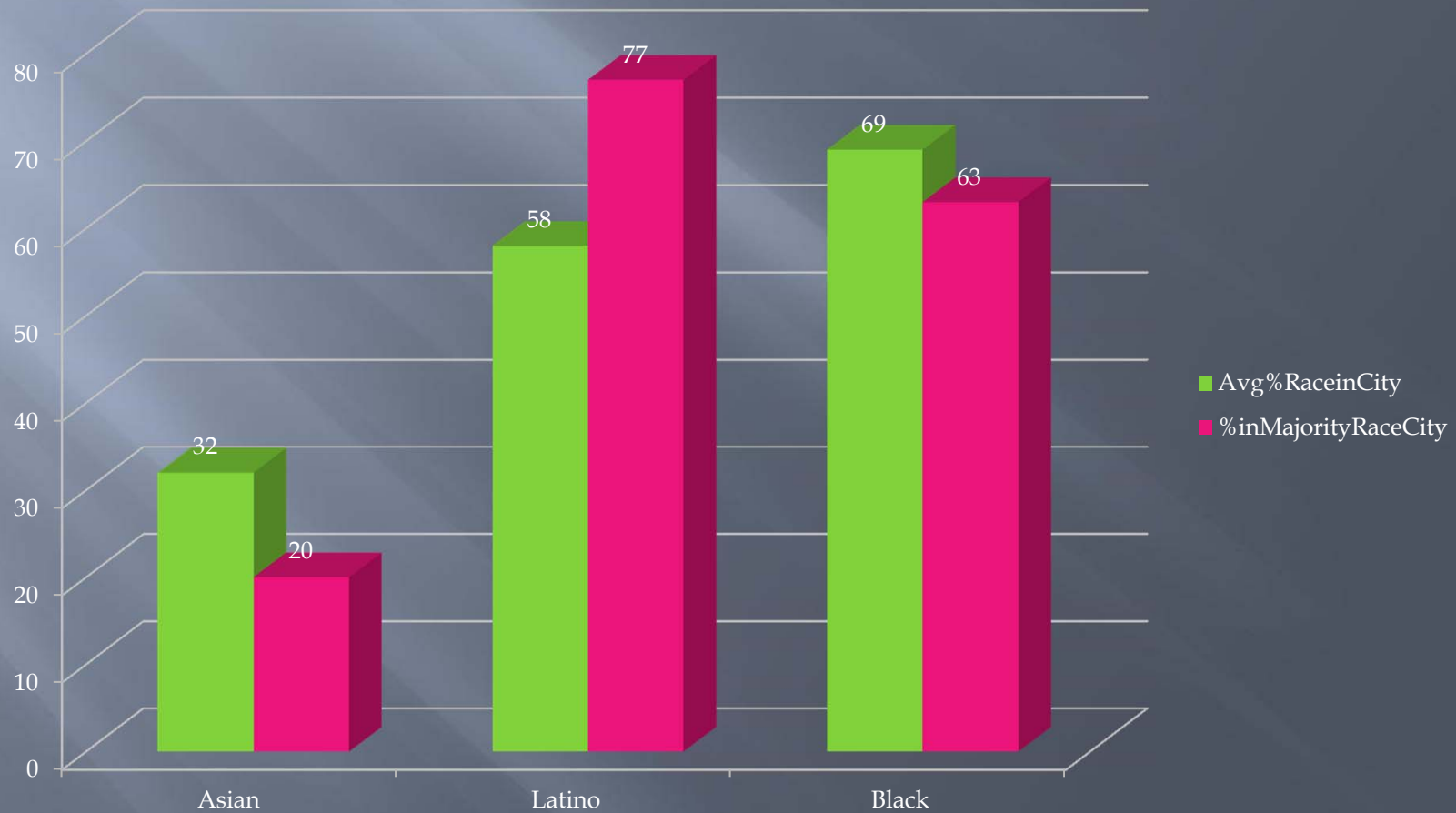
- ▣ <http://apaics.org/2015/02/04/2015-asian-american-pacific-islander-leaders-in-elected-office/>

- ▣ And more are joining the game!

- ▣ <http://apaics.org/2014/10/15/highlights-of-asian-american-and-pacific-islanders-running-for-elected-office/>

Unlike their Latinos and Black counterparts, Asian municipal officials were mostly elected from non-majority-Asian cities

(Source: Gender & Multicultural Leadership Project, 2007)



When and Where do you find Asian Americans in elective offices?

When: Both before and after 1965

Where: Hawaii (1954-) v. mainland states (1984 -)

Where: Big metropolitan areas and ethnic enclaves v. **ethnoburbs**

→ small and medium sized cities located in the suburbs whose population and economy have been transformed in recent decades by transpacific capital and immigration.

--examples of cities in SoCal and the SF Bay Area that are (near-) majority Asian

Can the Asian vote count? How can Asian Americans impact an election?

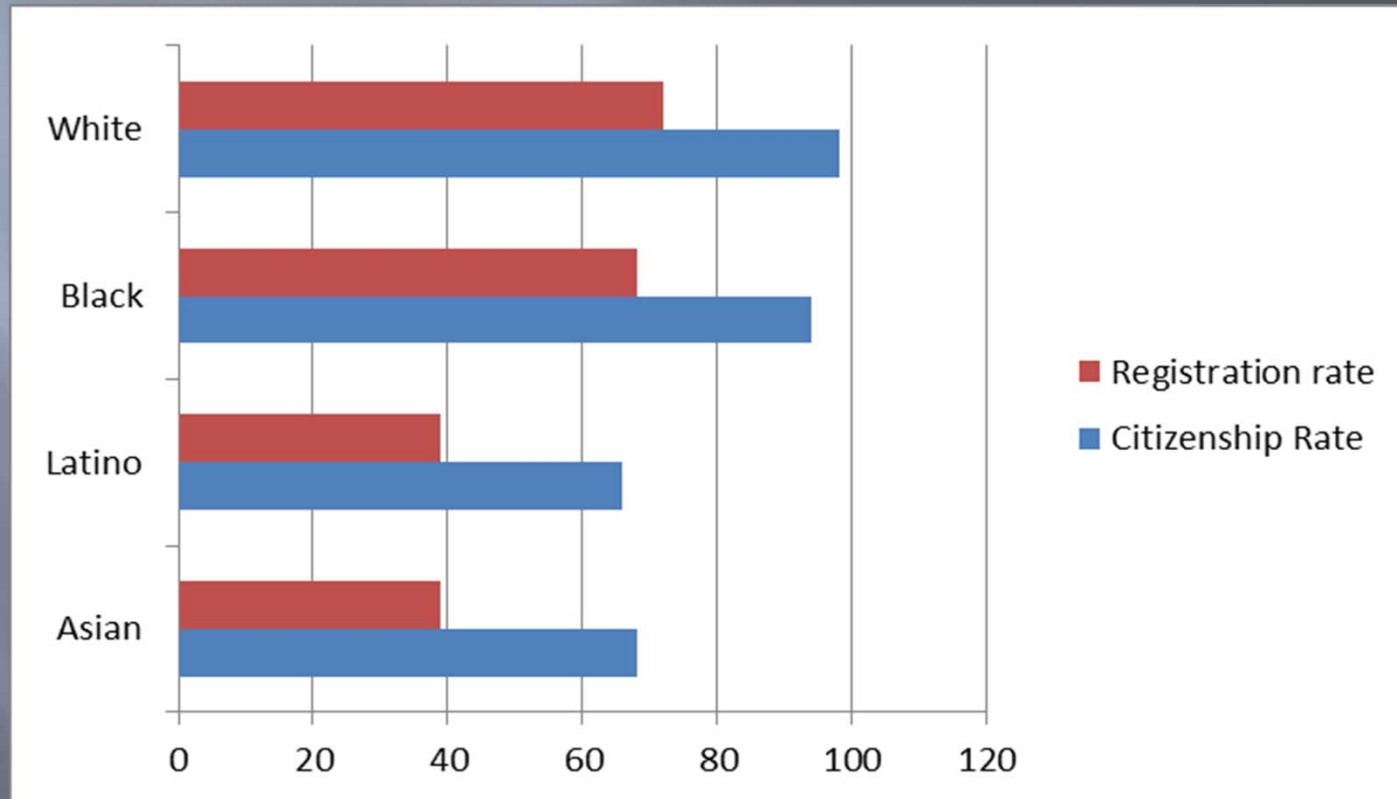
Despite being numerically small as a group, Asian American voters can swing the outcome of an election--

- ▣ 1. if they turned out to vote, and
- ▣ 2. if they voted together as a bloc, and
- ▣ 3. if the elections are tight and the results may be decided by a small number of votes.

Q. What proportion of eligible Asian Americans turned out to vote? Can they vote as a bloc?

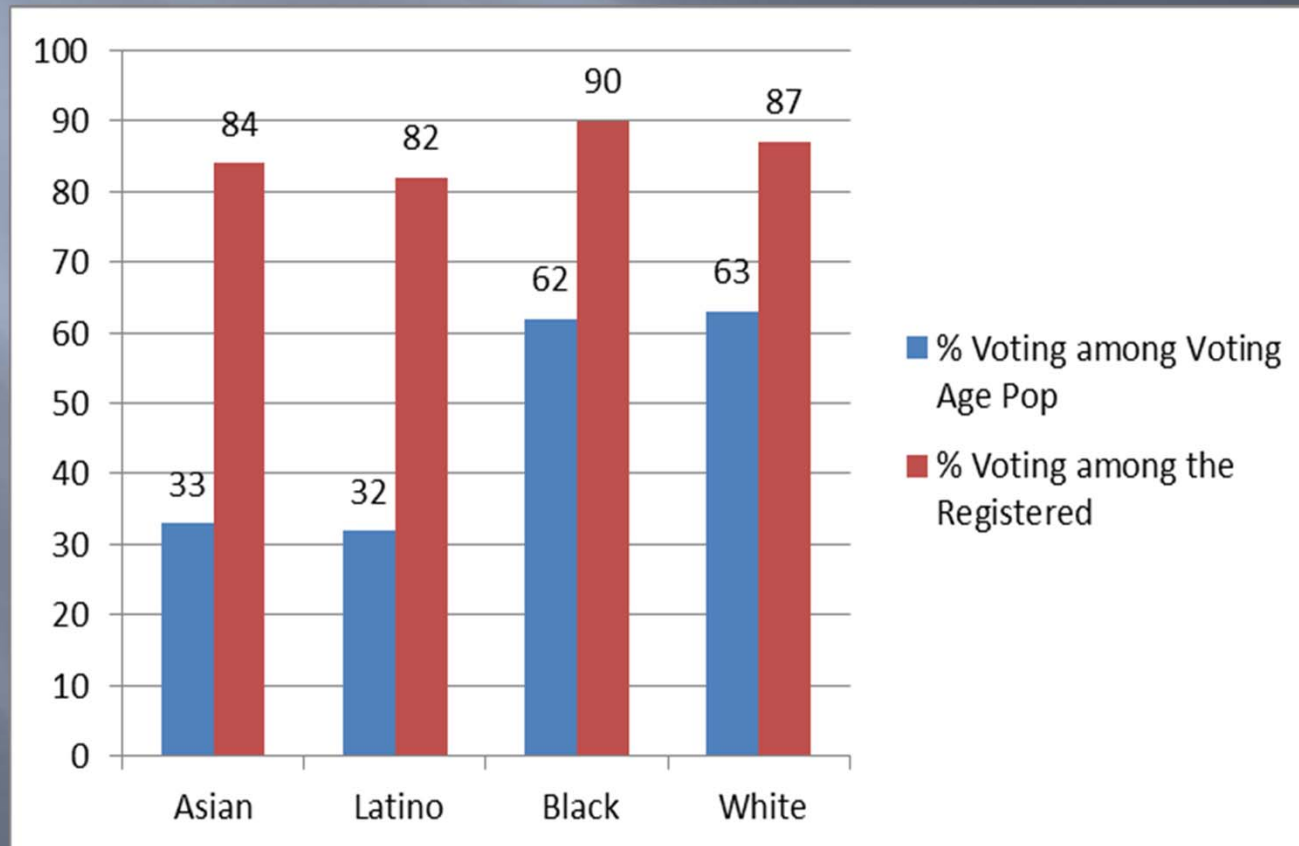
Among voting age Asians, just two-thirds (68%) are citizens; only two-fifths (39%) are registered to vote.

(Source: 2012 Current Population Survey)



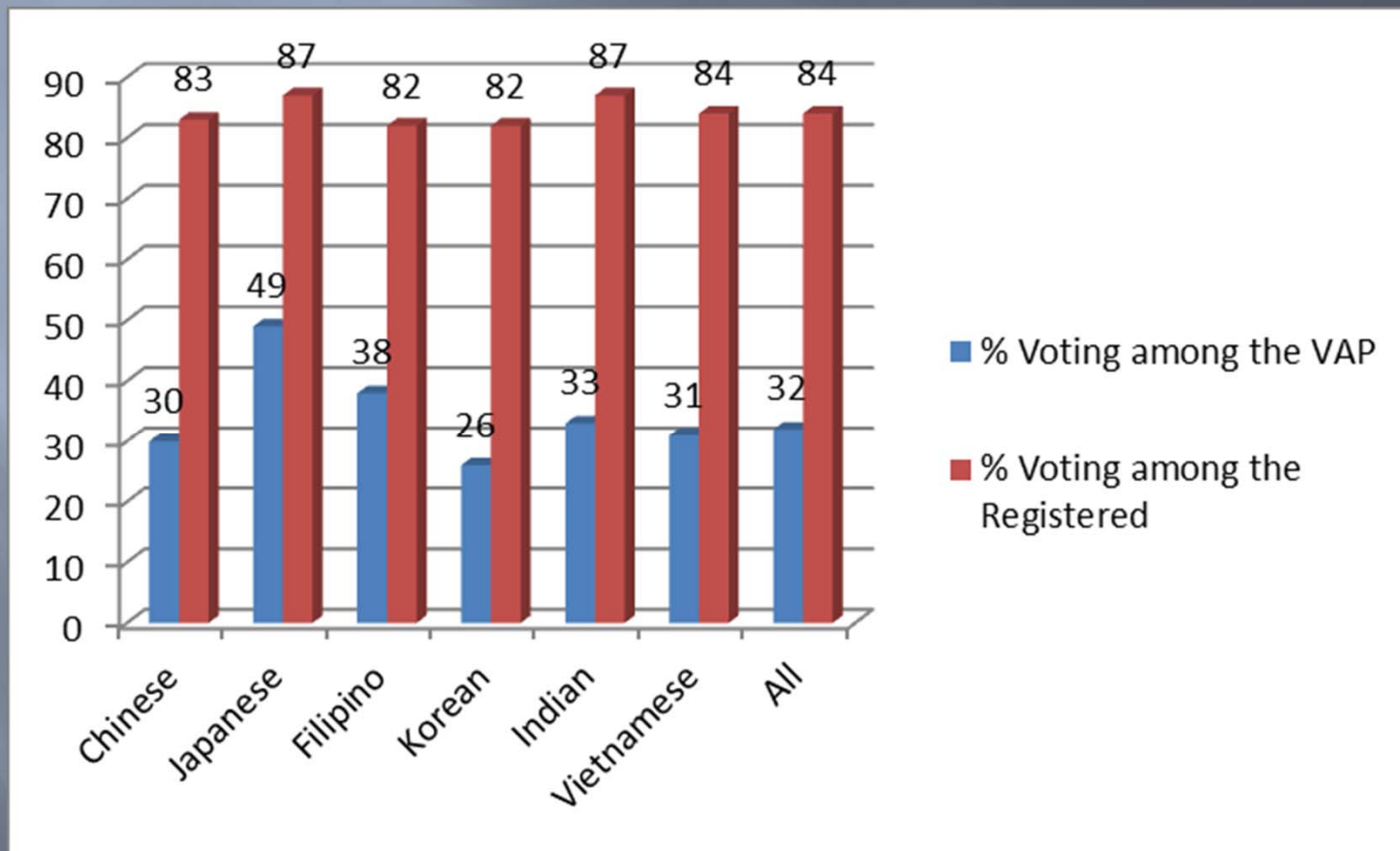
Only 1/3 of adult Asian Americans voted.
But over 8 in 10 who were registered turned
out to vote in Nov. 2012.

Voting in 2012 (Source: Current Pop Survey)



Voting Rates in Each Asian Ethnic Group increased sharply after controlling for Registration Status, 2012

(Source: Current Population Survey)



In spite of being numerically small as a group, Asian American voters are fastest growing

<http://apaics.org>

rate-to-double-

2015

5.9 MILLION

Asian American
Registered Voters



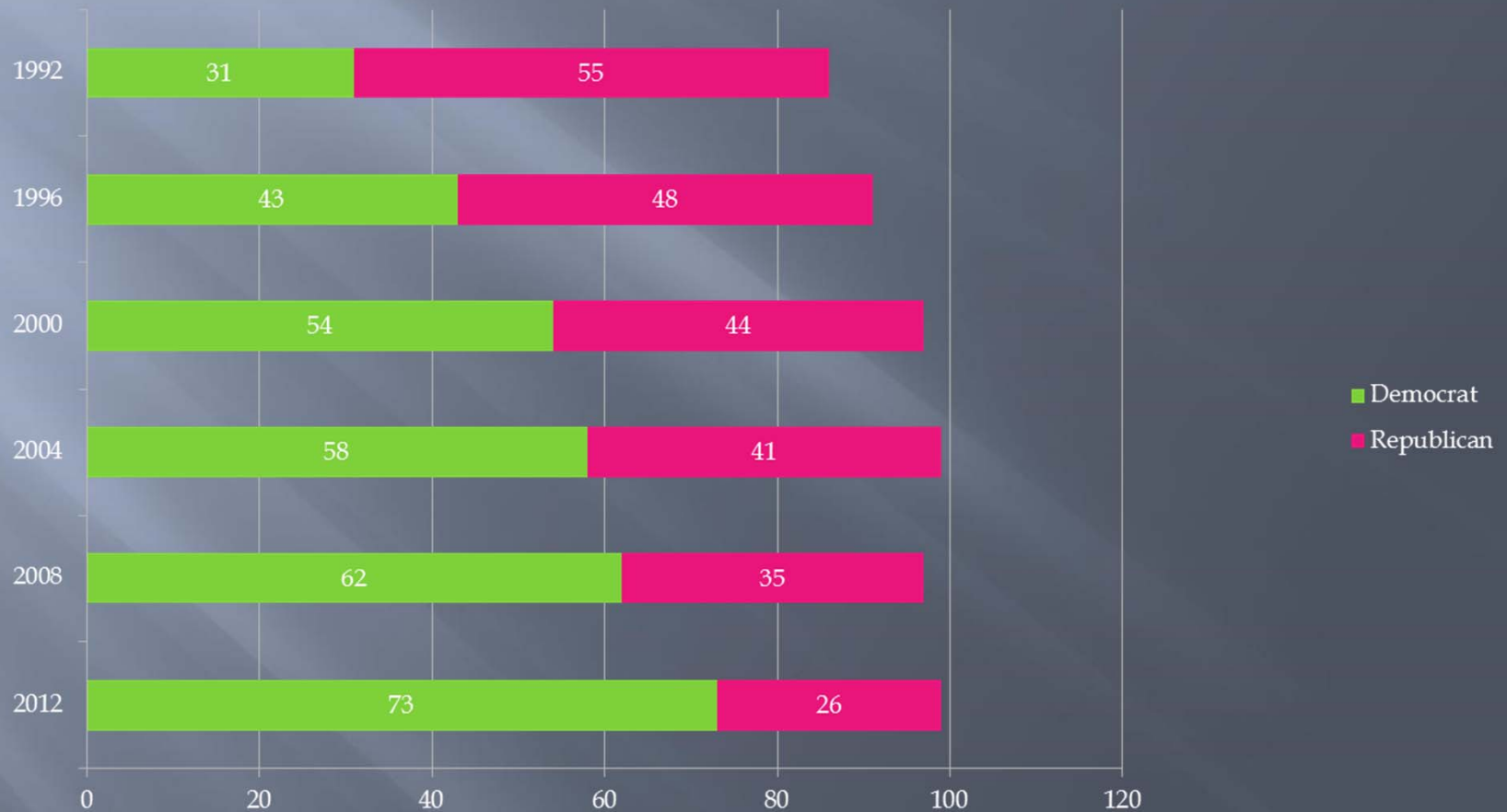
2040

12.2 MILLION

Asian American
Registered Voters



Asian American voters are becoming a solid Democratic bloc. (source: NYT exit polls)



Which horse do Asians ride?

Source: 2008 National Asian American Pre-Election Survey

There are more Democrats than Republicans, but the majority belong to neither (exceptions apply).

	All	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Korean	Japanese	Vietnamese
Democrat	32	39	25	35	38	42	22
Republican	14	7	7	19	18	18	29
Independent	19	21	28	18	6	17	15
Non-Partisan	35	33	40	28	39	28	34
N	5159	1095	1248	603	614	540	719

Two Myths about Asian American voting behavior

- ▣ 1. “Why don’t Asians vote?”
 - What is wrong with this question? Why is it a myth to say most Asians don’t vote? What is the evidence presented in this talk?
- ▣ 2. “Why Are Asian-Americans Such Loyal Democrats?” Thomas Edsall, NYT, 11/04/15
 - If exit polling since the early 1990s seems to suggest that Asian Americans are becoming a solid Democratic bloc of voters, why is it wrong to conclude that Asian Americans are loyal Democrats?