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THE DISABILITY VOTE: AN INCREASING VOTER BLOC THAT WILL IMPACT 2020

New Report Highlights Turnout Surge by Disabled Voters in 2018

Washington, D.C. – In 2020, approximately 23% of the American electorate — over 35 million individuals — will be people with disabilities. As demographic changes are unfolding, it is becoming increasingly clear that voter turnout is more diverse than ever. However, many candidates are missing the impact of the disability vote.

According to a new report by Dr. Lisa Schur and Dr. Douglas Kruse at Rutgers University, “voter turnout surged by 8.5 points in 2018 among citizens with disabilities relative to the 2014 midterm elections.” This turnout surge indicates that disabled voters will be an increasingly powerful voting bloc in 2020. The report also shows a significant increase in the disability vote in states such as: Texas, New Jersey, Florida, Arizona, Georgia, and Pennsylvania. These increases are no surprise to the disability community that has been hard at work on voter engagement activities through the [REV UP campaign](#).

REV UP (which stands for Register! Educate! Vote! Use your Power!) is a non-partisan initiative of the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) — in partnership with numerous disability organizations around the country — to build the influence of the disability vote and increase the political power of the disability community. Each year, on the third week of July, AAPD and its REV UP network coordinates National Disability Voter Registration Week ([NDVRW](#)), happening this year on July 15-19. Based on research conducted by Drs. Schur and Kruse, “the increase in turnout between 2014 and 2018 among people with disabilities was 9.0% in REV UP states compared to 5.7% in non-REV UP states.” Overall, Schur and Kruse found that the REV UP campaign may have contributed an additional 257,000 disability votes in 2018.¹

“Leading up to every election since 2016, our REV UP partners around the country have been organizing to get out the disability vote,” said Helena Berger, President and CEO of AAPD. “With 23% of the vote up for grabs, candidates should be hiring campaign staff with disabilities, responding to our issues, making sure their campaigns are fully accessible, including their website, and for the presidential candidates, completing the AAPD/NCIL/REV UP Presidential Candidate Questionnaire. The research out of Rutgers University not only proves there’s a disability vote, but an increasing one, and every candidate running for political office would be wise to court it.”

¹ Fact Sheet: Estimating the Effect of the REVUP Campaign on Disability Turnout.
https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/revup_factsheet.pdf.



You can find more information on the report, Disability and Voter Turnout in the 2018 Elections, at this link: <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2018disabilityturnout.pdf>.

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AAPD is a convener, connector, and catalyst for change, increasing the political and economic power of people with disabilities. As one of the leading national cross-disability civil rights organizations, AAPD advocates for the full recognition of rights for the over 60 million Americans with disabilities. AAPD's programs and initiatives have been effective in mobilizing the disability community through communications advocacy; cultivating and training new and emerging leaders with disabilities through leadership development programs; increasing the political participation of Americans with disabilities and elevating the power of the disability vote through the REV UP (Register! Educate! Vote! Use your Power!) Campaign; and advancing disability inclusion in the workplace through the Disability Equality Index (DEI) — the nation's leading corporate benchmarking tool for disability equality and inclusion. To learn more about AAPD, visit www.aapd.com.