MONROE COUNTY
BOARD OF ELECTIONS

2023 Annual Report to the Monroe County Legislature

Lisa Polito Nicolay
Commissioner

Peter Elder
Deputy

You're Right To Vote.

Jackie Ortiz
Commissioner

Natalie Sheppard
Deputy

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MISSION STATEMENT

MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

WE WILL PROVIDE, AS A NEW YORK STATE MANDATED DEPARTMENT OF MONROE COUNTY, THROUGH A SKILLED AND DEDICATED STAFF, IN COLLABORATION WITH FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY AND LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES, FOR THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF VOTER PARTICIPATION IN HONEST AND FAIR ELECTIONS FOR ALL THE CITIZENS OF MONROE COUNTY, NEW YORK.

NEW IN 2023

REDISTRICTING – Monroe County Board of Elections (MCBOE) implemented voter systems updates and produced maps to reflect the new district lines in all twenty-nine Monroe County Legislative Districts, which were used for nominating petitions, party primaries and the General Election in 2023.

VOTER VERIFICATION – MCBOE redesigned the required annual post card mailing to voters, to be both visually recognizable and memorable to recipients. The post cards provide important information and are mailed First Class with Return Service, to verify each voter's address.

AFFIDAVITS – MCBOE streamlined the Affidavit research and data entry process for the 2023 General Election, to increase efficiency, ensure accuracy and improve record keeping.

VOTING MACHINES – With the purchase of 20 additional ImageCast Evolution (ICE) voting machines, MCBOE doubled the number of these rapid accessible devices available for deployment at Early Voting sites.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT – In 2023, two MCBOE staff members were enrolled in the "Developing the Conscious Leader and Conscious Culture" certificate program at MCC, while nine others completed the college's "Lead to Success – Supervisor Basic Training" course.

NEWSLETTER – Commissioners Nicolay and Ortiz launched the "Election Connection" newsletter, keeping voters and stakeholders informed and up-to-date on news and noteworthy initiatives at the MCBOE.

BUDGET 2023

The entire budget of the MCBOE is charged back to the taxpayers of Monroe County. The total adopted budget for the MCBOE in 2023 was $11,564,664. This is an increase of $548,003 (5%) from the 2022 adopted budget. MCBOE is grateful to the Monroe County Legislature for fully funding our requested operating budget. It is allocated to the following areas:

- Personnel costs including salaries and benefits

- Data processing charges

- Rent for three locations

- Voting machine parts and repair costs

- Postage and office supplies

- Commercial services which include: ballot printing, Accupay Systems payroll, election security, envelope printing, voting machine delivery, Mailchimp email service, and election day taxi cab service

- Professional services which include: election inspectors, election coordinators and site chairs, Spanish interpreters, and rental of polling sites

BUDGET COMPARISON BY YEAR

Adopted Budgets
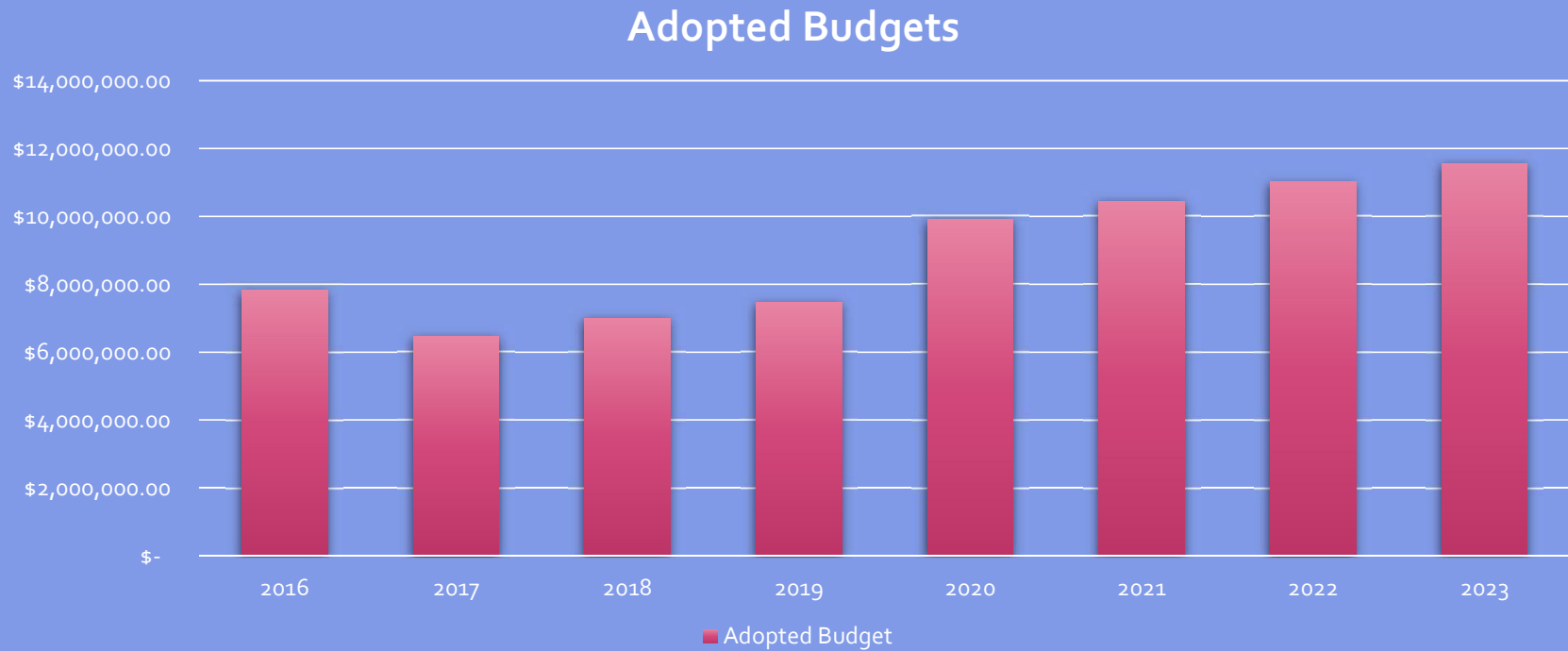
STAFF 2023

MCBOE conducts all National, State, County, City, Town, and Village elections held within Monroe County. Although the Board of Elections is a county agency, the structure, responsibilities and duties are mandated by New York State and Federal Election Laws. The New York State Board of Elections provides regulations and advice on how to administer elections and procedures to meet both Federal and State Election guidelines.

Two Election Commissioners (one Republican and one Democrat), as a bipartisan team, make up the MCBOE, each serving a staggered four-year term. The Commissioners are recommended by their respective county political committees and elected by the Monroe County Legislature. The Commissioners are each assisted by a Deputy Commissioner as required per Election Law 3-204.

In 2023 the Monroe County Board of Elections employed 47 full-time and 3 part-time employees, as well as an additional 8 seasonal staff members at various points throughout the year. MCBOE staff represents individuals enrolled in the Republican or Democratic Parties, as mandated by New York State Election Law.

POLLING LOCATIONS 2023

In 2023, there were 125 polling locations in the Primary Election and 223 in the General Election.

Securing polling locations that meet legal requirements (especially post COVID-19) is always challenging. Ideally, we want spacious areas that are fully ADA accessible, offer ample parking and lighting, and provide sufficient cellular connectivity. Moving forward, our goal is to provide consistent polling locations to all voters. This is a good example of where quality really is more important than quantity.

Using critical data that was collected from a full inventory of all polling sites in 2022, such as square footage, parking spaces, ADA accessibility and cellular connectivity, MCBOE was able to establish a minimum threshold for all polling locations. Continuing to work toward the goal of uniform, fair and accessible locations for all voters throughout Monroe County, MCBOE conducted supplemental inventories of all new polling sites and any sites where modifications were made in response to reported issues.

VOTING MACHINES 2023

- The County of Monroe owns and deploys a fleet of optical scan tabulator voting machines, including ImageCast voting machines (IC1), ImageCast with Ballot Marking Devices voting machines (IC2), and ImageCast Evolution voting machines (ICE), which are all housed in our 30,000 square foot Service Center. A total of 574 machines serviced our 929 Election districts at 224 polling locations throughout Monroe County during the 2023 General Election. Each machine is tested annually, as required by NYSBOE.

- Poll Pads, secure Apple iPad devices, ensure that voters only cast a ballot once and that voters are unable to receive a ballot at another Early Voting site or Primary/Election Day polling place. Poll Pads communicate via a secure network connection, transmitting non-personal information and updating voter files in near real time, thus ensuring individuals are presented with the correct ballot, based upon the residential address from which they are registered.

- With NYSBOE's certification of the ExpressVote XL full face touch-screen voting machines, on August 2, 2023, MCBOE plans to replace our current machines with these new devices. An anticipated full deployment would commence with the 2025 Primary Election.

VOTER ACCESSIBILITY 2023

- EVERY polling location is ADA accessible!

- In 2023 the MCBOE continued its commitment to improving accessibility to the election process for all persons. The BMD (IC2) voting machine allows individuals with nearly any disability to vote independently and is available at every polling site.

- MCBOE printed election materials, such as the voter registration form, absentee ballot request, and "Voter's Bill of Rights" are available in Spanish and Braille.

- American Sign Language interpreters were available at select Early Voting and Primary/Election Day poll sites.

- Accessible absentee ballots for voters who are blind or visually impaired were once again available for both the Primary and General Elections in 2023.

- A Language Access Device (LAD) was available at each Early Voting and Election Day polling site for the 2023 General Election. This technology provides interpretive services for 47 different languages, including ASL.

TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT 2023

For the 2023 Election year, including 18 total days of Early Voting and both Primary and General Election Days, MCBOE assigned 2,099 Inspectors.

Election Inspectors ensure fair and honest elections for all voters. Without the dedication and commitment from our dedicated Poll Workers MCBOE would not be able to conduct successful elections year after year.

MCBOE continues to hold in-person and online classes for both Primary and General Elections each year. 1,416 Inspectors took the online training this year, and 1,683 Inspectors attended the in-person training.

A host of new policies and procedures were implemented by MCBOE for Election Inspectors, Site Chairs and Coordinators, to make Primary Day and General Election Day in 2023 run as smoothly as possible.

Over the course of 2023, MCBOE added and improved upon existing training mechanisms. This included mandatory in-person Leadership Training for all Site Chairs and Coordinators, to gain a more tangible experience with election materials. Open sessions were offered to all Poll Workers in order to get more hands-on experience. Online training was also enhanced to ensure that training materials remained consistent across both training platforms.

The Training and Recruitment Team implemented the following ideas successfully to meet the goal of filling every election inspector assignment:

- Postcards were sent to households of registered Republicans and Democrats in targeted districts where Election Inspectors were needed.
- Strengthened our Social Media presence on Facebook and Instagram.
- Recruited at political committee meetings, rotary clubs, veteran events, churches, and libraries.
- Posted flyers at town halls, recreation centers, and at various events, including outdoor festivals.
- Worked with local elected officials to get the public more involved in the election process.
- Participated in job fairs both virtual and in-person.
- Reached out to area colleges and high schools, working with professors and teachers to allow participating students to receive extra credit and approved absences from school.

Total number of NEW Inspectors who worked in 2023 was 304.

Monroe County Board of Elections

Election Inspector

Join Democracy in Action & Serve your Community!

Hiring Now - Earn Over $270 Election Day

In-person and Online Trainings are available!

Once you sign up as a Poll Worker, the Training Team will contact you via email with available dates and times.

Sign Up:
1. Open Camera
2. Scan QR Code
3. Sign Up & Join!

You're Right To Vote.

Visit: monroecounty.gov/elections-inspectors

HIGH SCHOOL LEAP PROGRAM

The MCBOE expanded the Student Leaders Engaging as Poll-workers (LEAP) Program in 2023 to include the Greece Central School District, Rush Henrietta Central School District, and Brighton Central School District. Ten social studies teachers hosted the BOE for classroom presentations across five high schools.

With the help of these teachers, participating students received extra credit in addition to the stipend and school credit they received from the BOE. Thirty-six high school students served as poll workers in 2023, not including returning students who participated in 2022. This increase of 16 students provided much-needed assistance in a local election year that typically sees a slight decrease in poll worker turnout.

Based on the continued success of the LEAP program during the 2023 election cycle, the MCBOE is working to expand its reach to additional area high schools and classrooms for the 2024 election cycle.

ONLINE INFORMATION 2023

The MCBOE website, **www.monroecounty.gov/elections** provides a tremendous amount of up-to-date public information, on demand. Information is available about voter registration, polling locations, maps, petition requirements, party enrollment, Early Voting, elected officials, running for office, election results and absentee voting. A real-time interactive voter application, as well as an online voter registration portal, may also be accessed.

@MonroeCountyBOE

Monroe County Board of Elections Facebook Page and **X** provide easy and accessible ways to share information, provide updates, and engage the community in our electoral process.

VOTER REGISTRATION 2023

- Although Monroe County saw a decrease in total actively registered voters, from 487,814 in 2022 to 483,566 in 2023, MCBOE expanded our outreach and impact, registering 22,211 new voters through in-person community events, collaborations and new partnerships.

- MCBOE continues to build a robust outreach program with a greater emphasis placed on reaching underserved communities through civic education and interactive presentations, such as the "How to Absentee Vote" and "Make a Plan to Vote" campaigns, which focus on ways to vote and new laws impacting voters.

- MCBOE attended and presented at town halls, churches, social clubs, youth center programs, as well as community resource and job fairs. Dozens of college campus pop-ups and civic education presentations were completed. New community-led partnerships were initiated and now these partners display posters and supply voter registration forms to their clients.

Participation in our national civic holidays garnered national resources, which enhanced impact and outreach locally. Participation in this year's Students Learn Students Vote (SLSV) Coalition's annual National Student Vote Summit brought additional resources and new national youth-lead partnerships.

Underserved communities were activated through in-person public events leading to a greater understanding of the voting process for these newly registered voters. Commissioner Ortiz and staff toured many assisted living facilities in Monroe County, educating voters on how to vote Absentee.

This outreach and civic education program was well received, answering many questions that elders had about how to vote. Voter Registration Forms continue to also be accessed by traditional avenues such as the Post Office Counter Box program, municipal government facilities, and the automatic component implemented through the Department of Motor Vehicles.

The MCBOE continues to design and plan community outreach initiatives, scheduling public facing events into 2024. This need has been heard from the community. They want more outreach from the MCBOE through civic educational presentations and workshops that provide resources to make voting a lifelong habit. Preregistering high school students as voters will be a big emphasis moving into 2024.

2023 VOTER REGISTRATION ACTION PLAN RESULTS

- MCBOE completed over 130 public-facing community engagement voter registration events.
- Worked closely with community service organizations to meet their clients' voting access needs.
- Continued the process to redesign, refresh and modernize counter boxes in post offices, DMV's, libraries, and all municipal buildings, to be deployed in 2024.
- Developed a concise civic educational presentation on navigating the election process, from registering to utilizing available tools (voter apps & QR codes), to casting a ballot.

- Designed and provided presentations on Absentee Voting, Voting with a Disability and Using the BMD Equipment, now available at all poling sites.
- Attended and presented at the regional Language Access Conference with a hands-on demonstration of the polling site language access machines.
- Presented at dozens of public and private high schools throughout Monroe County, including charter institutions, preregistering inclined youth voters.

- Participated in High School Career Days to enhance pre-registration efforts to assist in creating leads for LEAP students for the poll inspector recruitment team.
- Solidified MCBOE as a partner of national civic institutions and coinciding registration efforts.
- Participated in national civic holiday observances, including National Civic Education Week, National Voter Registration Day, and Vote Early Days with over a dozen community allies, including college campus partners.
- Wrote and received a grant to attend the Students Learn Students Vote (SLSV) Coalition's annual National Student Vote Summit in Washington, DC, bringing national partnerships and new resources to MCBOE.
- Deepened partnerships with 5 Universities/Colleges to have multiple simultaneous efforts occurring for greater coverage and impact.
- Designed a College/MCBOE Intern program that had limited results yet will springboard college student voter outreach efforts in 2024 with a redesign of the program, by working with national civic education partners.
- Utilized Language Access Coalition network to expand MCBOE reach and impact. Worked with Spanish Language Partners to reach constituents. All materials are translated into Spanish. Having a public facing Spanish speaker is critical to effective communication and outreach.
- Expanded additional language access efforts by communicating important information through Spanish radio regarding critical election deadlines and interpreting needs.
- Increased internal MCBOE outreach distribution listings beyond legacy Print/TV/Radio media outlets to be more inclusive and cast a wider net (i.e. community associations, neighborhood block clubs, etc.).

EARLY VOTING 2023

The Monroe County Board of Elections offered fourteen Early Voting sites for both the Primary Election and General Election in 2023. These sites were conveniently located in the towns of Brighton, Gates, Greece, Henrietta, Irondequoit, Penfield, Perinton, Sweden, Webster, as well as five in the City of Rochester. Any voter registered in Monroe County may early-vote at any one of these locations, over a nine day period (which includes two weekends) preceding Election Day. Electronic Poll Pads allow countywide voter data to be accessible at each site.

None of the votes cast during early voting are tallied until the polls close on Election Day. Standards for protecting ballots and memory cards are extensive. A daily audit of each location is required.

Early Voting began in 2019 with seven locations and very low turnout. Only 13,892 voters cast early ballots that first year. In 2020 an impressive 105,712 individuals took advantage of twelve locations over the nine days and voted early. This influenced MCBOE's decision to add two more early voting locations, beginning in 2021. Participation fell off in 2021 with 16,390 early voters, spiked again in 2022 with 55,211 and dropped to 23,388 in 2023. With an increase of nearly 10,000 voters in local election years between 2019 and 2023 and sizable jumps in both presidential and gubernatorial election years, Early Voting seems to be catching on and increasing in popularity, especially among older suburban voters.

ABSENTEE VOTING 2023

- Per NYS Election Law, as of 2022, if a voter **APPLIES** for an absentee ballot, they must vote absentee or by affidavit ballot.

- In 2023, MCBOE transmitted 11,657 absentee ballots to voters, including 2,426 for the Primary Election and 9,221 for the General Election. A total of 7,093 ballots were returned by absentee voters and counted, including 1,184 in the Primary Election and 5,909 in the General Election. Absentee ballot applications are returning to pre-COVID numbers and have fallen far below the record high of 131,871 for the 2020 General Election.

- MCBOE once again provided absentee ballot drop boxes at every polling location in 2023. These boxes allow voters or their representatives to deposit absentee ballots safely and securely at any polling site on Primary, General Election or Early Voting days.

AFFIDAVIT / COURT ORDER VOTING 2023

Affidavit Ballots – This method of voting allows someone election law states is unqualified to cast a ballot on a machine, during Early Voting, on Primary or on Election Day, to submit a provisional ballot. This typically occurs when an individual is not registered, has moved or changed names, making the registration record reflect their actual qualifications to vote. A change in NYS Law now requires an individual who applies for an absentee ballot to submit an affidavit ballot if they choose not to vote absentee. This triggers a manual review by Board of Elections staff to ensure that only one ballot per voter is canvassed.

In 2023, MCBOE processed 122 Affidavit Ballots in the Primary and 774 for the General Election.

Court Order Ballots – This method of voting is similar to an affidavit but a court or judge determines whether or not an individual is allowed to vote. Upon a favorable ruling, a voter is immediately allowed to cast a ballot on a machine.

MCBOE processed 0 court orders for the Primary Election, 6 prior to the General Election, and 21 on the day of the General Election.

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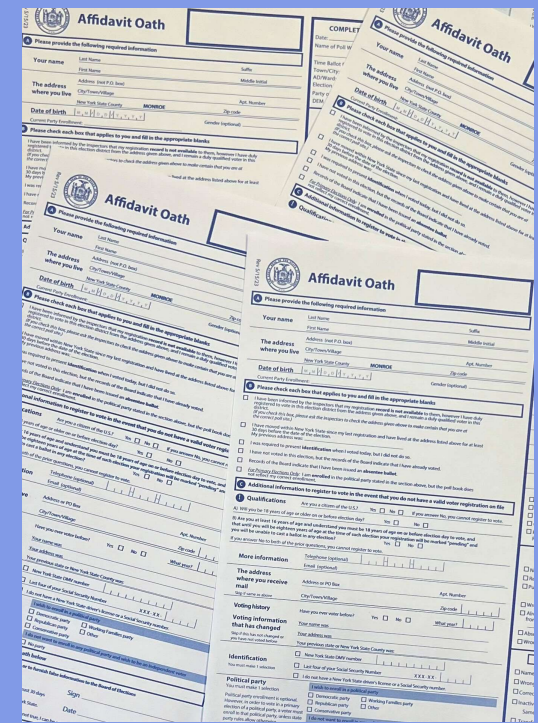
BALLOT CURES 2023

If an absentee or affidavit ballot is received by the MCBOE but is missing a signature, has a signature that does not match the signature on file, is unsealed, or lacks a witness statement for a voter's mark, that ballot cannot be counted by law.

In such cases, a voter is provided an opportunity to cure the ballot. MCBOE staff calls, e-mails, and mails the voter a cure letter. The letter explains the error, and the fact that it can be corrected by signing and returning said cure letter. Once received by the MCBOE the cure letter is attached to the voter's ballot and the ballot can now be tabulated.

In 2023 MCBOE identified 37 ballots in need of a cure. Of those, 26 cure notices were returned by the voter. A total of 23 ballots were determined to be sufficiently cured and able to be counted.

VOTER SECURITY 2023

There are many checks and balances in place to process voter registration forms, absentee ballot requests and ballot counting:

· The MCBOE verifies against other government records, an annual verification mailing, USPS changes of address, State and Federal address changes, death records from the Department of Health, and signature verification.

AUDITS & CYBER SECURITY 2023

After each Election, ballots from three percent of all the machines used, selected by a random draw, are recounted using a separate NYSBOE approved audit system and the results are compared against the Election Day counts. This audit is also performed for absentee ballots. In addition, paper tapes are pulled from the voting machines and are used to compare the total ballots cast against the totals reported on Election Night. Finally, every polling site is required to provide a detailed reconciliation of ballots used, which are also reviewed and compared against the actual ballots cast. This process accounts for each and every paper ballot supplied.

Although voting tabulators are not and cannot be connected to the internet, many of the other systems used by the MCBOE need to be connected to do our job. Because of this, we are continually working to keep our cyber defenses updated. MCBOE is a member of the Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing & Analysis Center (EI-ISAC) and participates in monthly informational / training meetings as well as receiving advisories and alerts. A division of the Center for Internet Security (CIS), the EI-ISAC is federally funded by the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). The MCBOE is working together with the NYSBOE and the Monroe County Information Services Department to ensure that elections in Monroe County are safe and secure. All MCBOE employees are required to keep current with both County and State mandated training, which this year alone include over 24 modules. Staff have also taken multiple cyber security training classes both with the SANS Institute, which is a global leader in cybersecurity training and certification, and Rochester Institute of Technology. This training lays the ground work for being able to evaluate and enhance the cyber security defenses of MCBOE. This is particularly important as we look at new systems and vendors to modernize our computer systems.
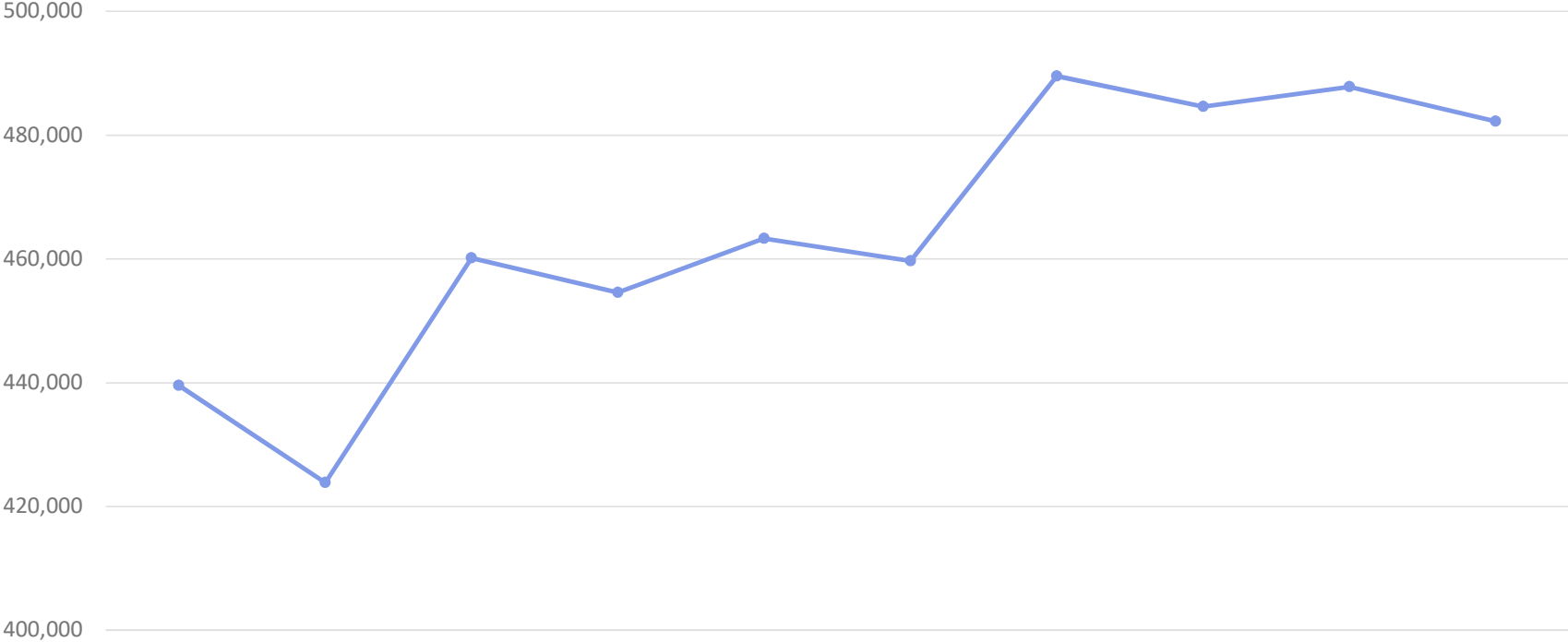
DIRECT COMMUNICATION 2023

Commissioners Nicolay and Ortiz remain very accessible to Monroe County's voters and continue to provide information regularly through the media and direct community engagement.

REGISTERED VOTERS

2014 through 2023
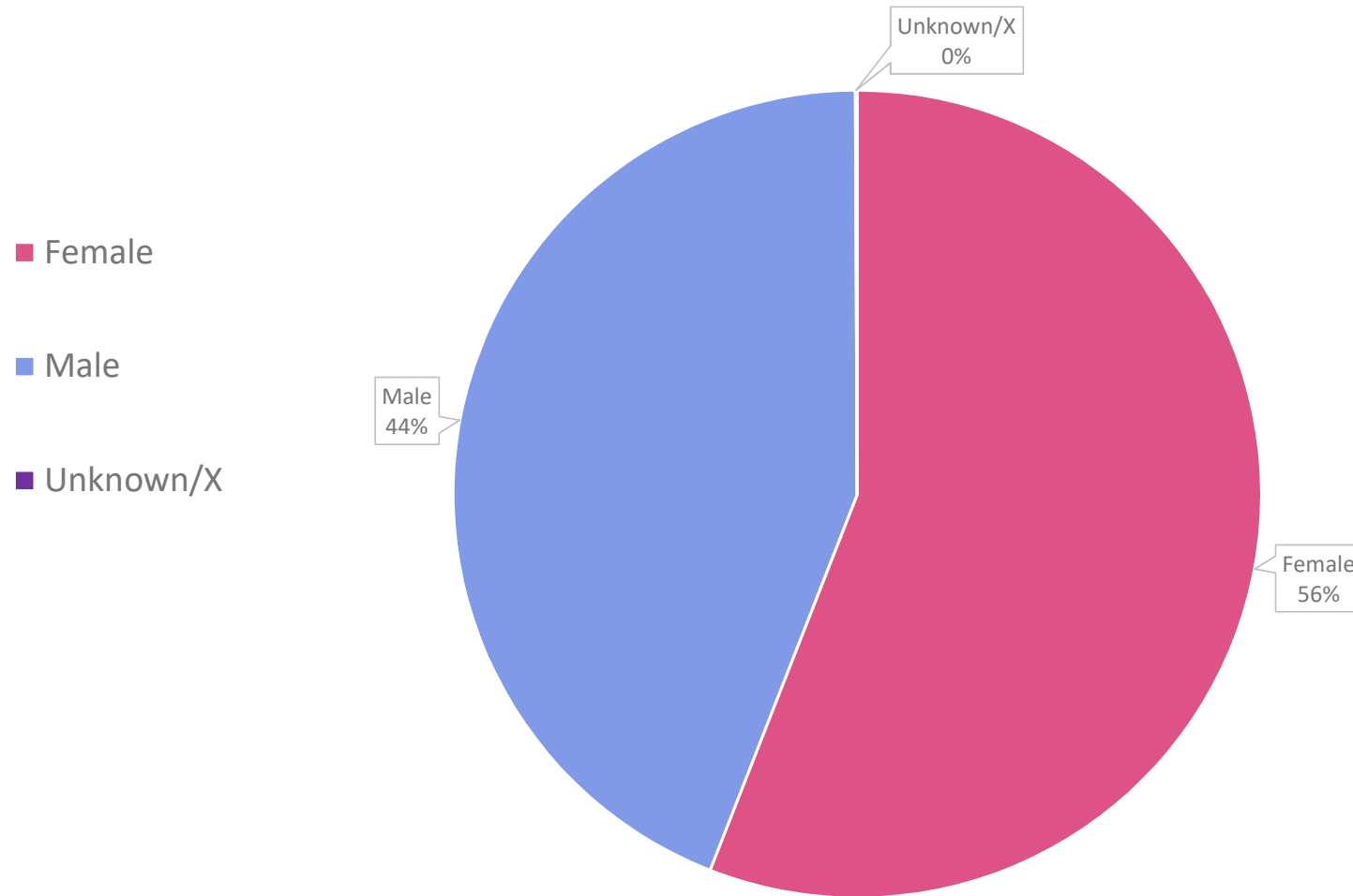
NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS
2014 Through 2023

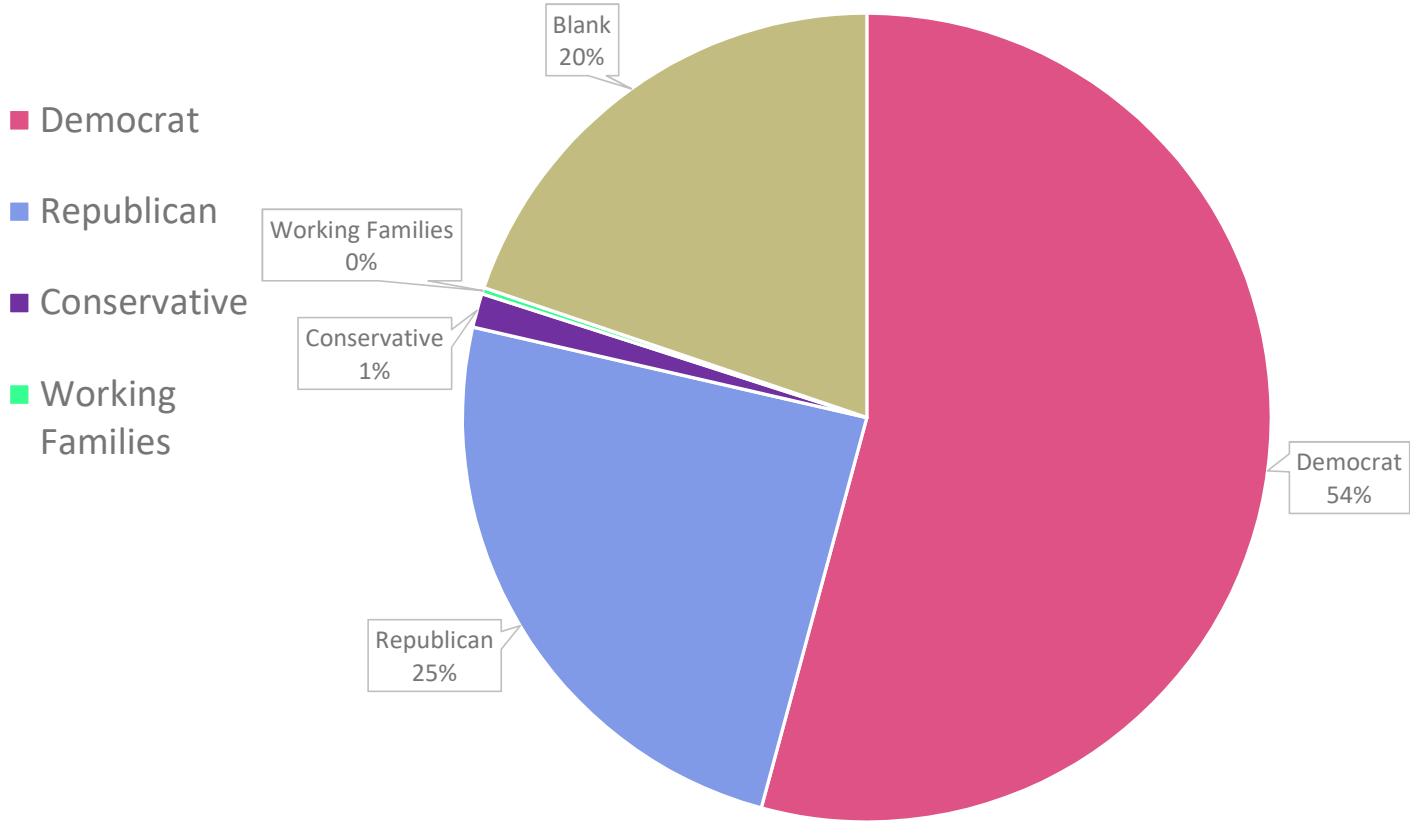|	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Registered Voters	439,534	423,859	460,140	454,580	463,304	459,669	489,532	484,613	487,814	482,238

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EARLY VOTING STATISTICS

General Election 2023

EARLY VOTING BY GENDER
GENERAL ELECTION 2023

- Female
- Male
- Unknown/X

Unknown/X
0%

Male
44%

Female
56%

EARLY VOTING BY PARTY
GENERAL ELECTION 2023

- Democrat
- Republican
- Conservative
- Working Families

Blank
20%

Working Families
0%

Conservative
1%

Democrat
54%

Republican
25%

29

**EARLY VOTING BY AGE
GENERAL ELECTION 2023**

Legend:
- 18-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70-79
- 80+

18-29 3%
30-39 5%
40-49 8%
50-59 13%
60-69 29%
70-79 32%
80+ 10%
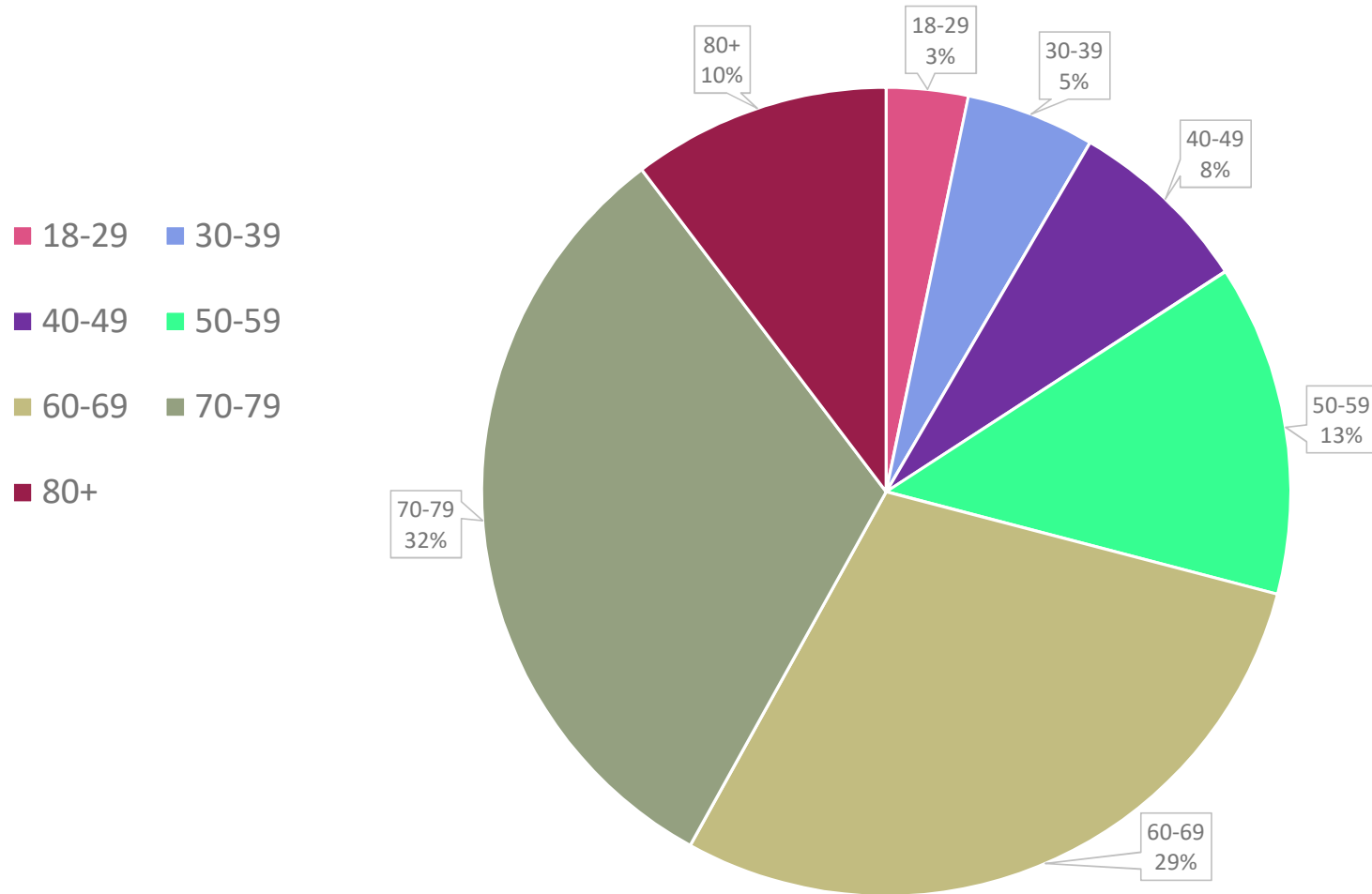
EARLY VOTING BY SITE
GENERAL ELECTION 2023

- David F Gantt Community Center (City) 2%
- Monroe County Office Building (City) 2%
- Edgerton Community Center (City) 1%
- Webster Public Library (Town) 10%
- Norton Village Recreation Center (City) 2%
- Sweden Clarkson Community Center (Town) 3%
- Empire State University (City) 12%
- Perinton Square Mall (Town) 17%
- St Theodore's Church (Town) 6%
- Holy Spirit Church (Town) 6%
- North Greece Church of Christ (Town) 9%
- Irondequoit Community Center (Town) 14%
- Henrietta Public Library (Town) 16%
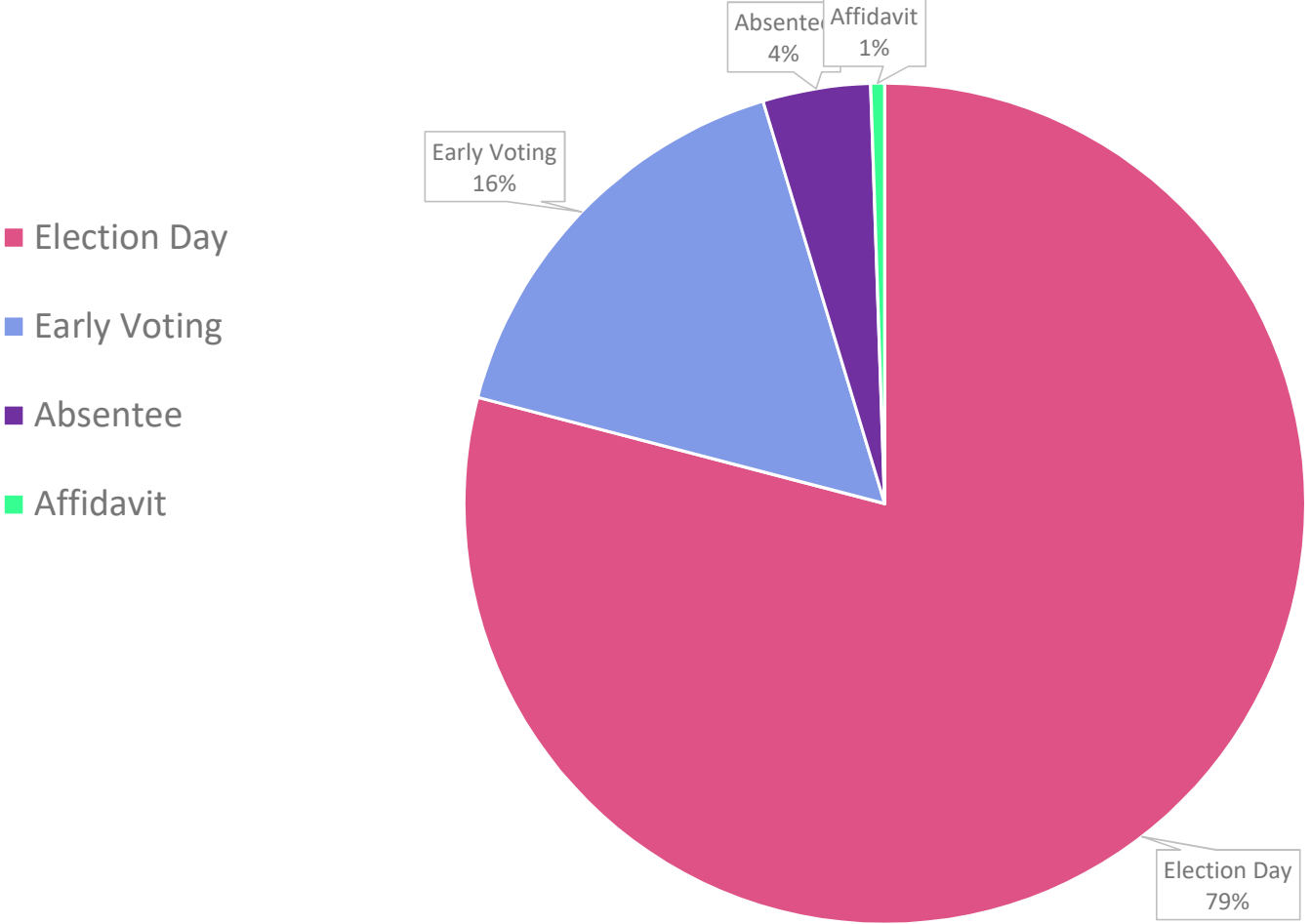
You're Right To Vote.

GENERAL ELECTION STATISTICS

2023

METHODS VOTERS USED TO VOTE
GENERAL ELECTION 2023

- Election Day
- Early Voting
- Absentee
- Affidavit

Absentee
4%

Affidavit
1%

Early Voting
16%

Election Day
79%

34

VOTER TURNOUT FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION
2004 Through 2023

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Voter Turnout	79.6%	39.5%	56.4%	32.5%	80.4%	30.6%	53.8%	32.4%	76.4%	31.6%	46.8%	30.8%	76.0%	38.1%	62.2%	39.8%	78.1%	30.1%	57.0%	29.8%

35
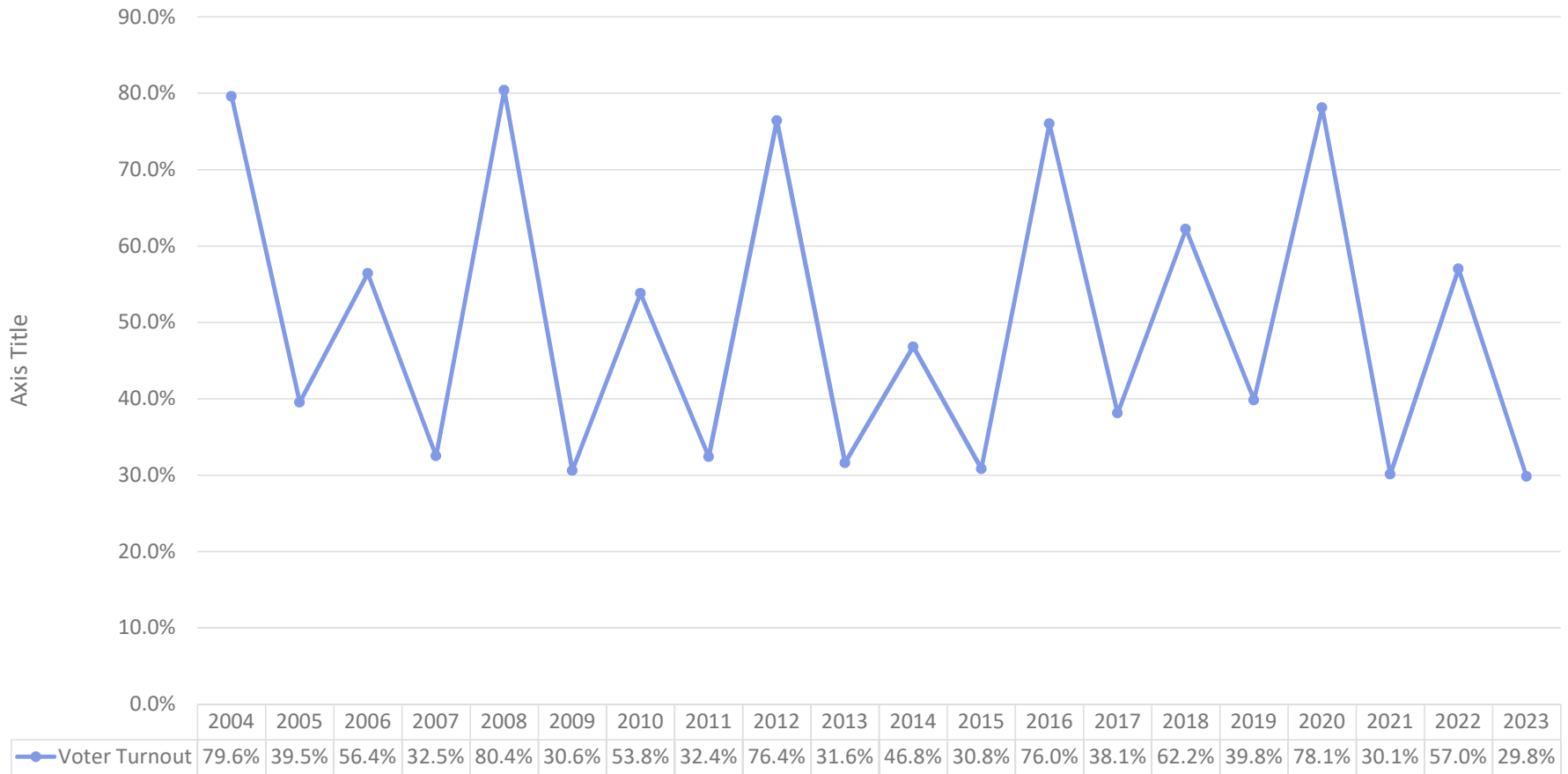
VOTER TURNOUT BY PARTY
2012 Through 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Democrats	78.2%	32.2%	43.7%	29.8%	76.0%	38.1%	63.5%	41.0%	78.4%	29.1%	56.7%	32.0%
Republicans	80.7%	38.2%	58.3%	39.3%	81.3%	45.2%	68.4%	47.7%	83.9%	40.1%	68.6%	37.0%
Blanks	69.2%	24.1%	39.0%	23.9%	70.2%	30.7%	53.3%	29.7%	71.3%	22.1%	47.0%	21.0%

36
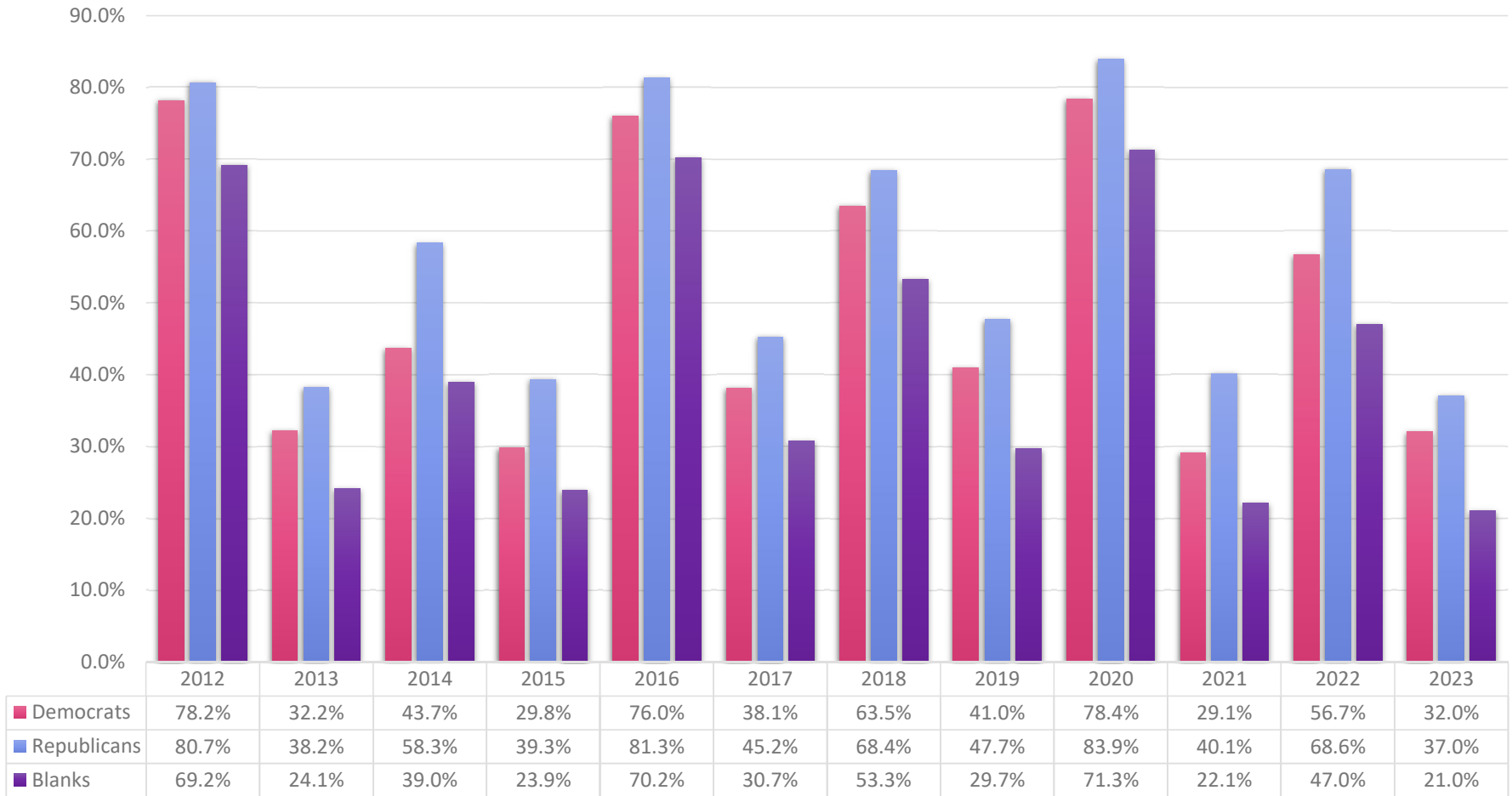
TOTAL VOTE BY GENDER
2023 GENERAL ELECTION

- Females
- Males
- X
- Intersex
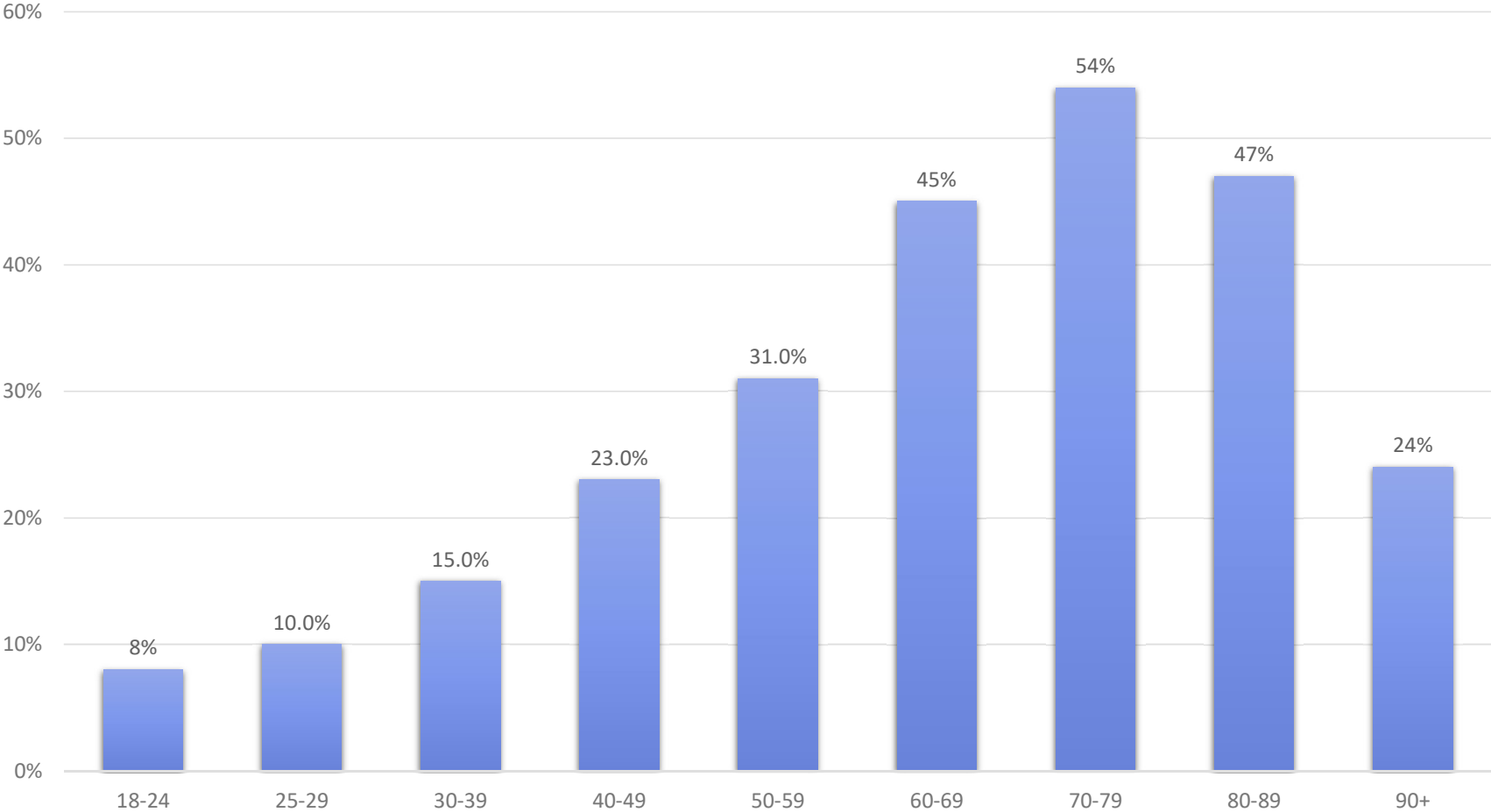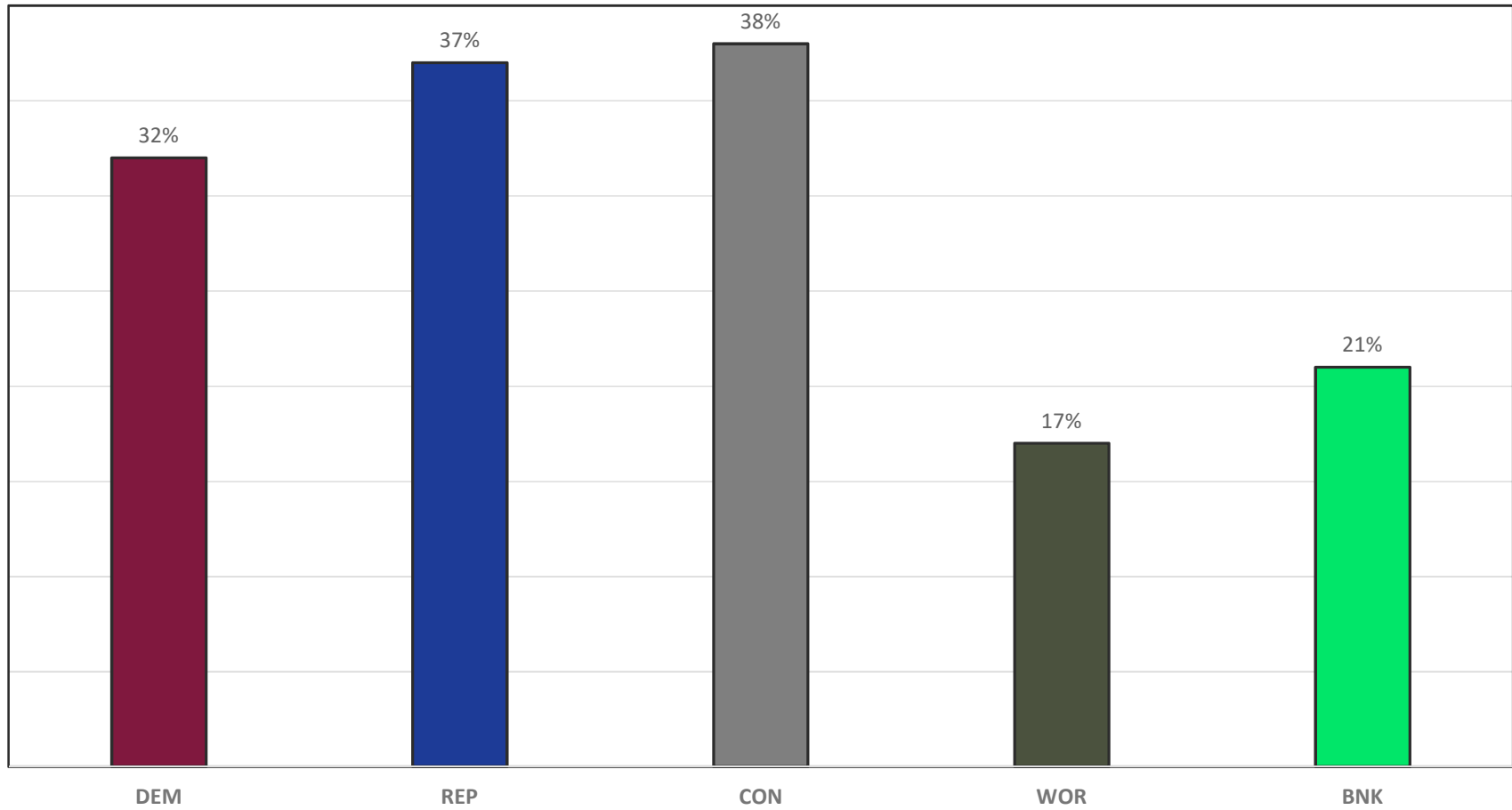- Undeclared

0.1%

48.2%

51.8%
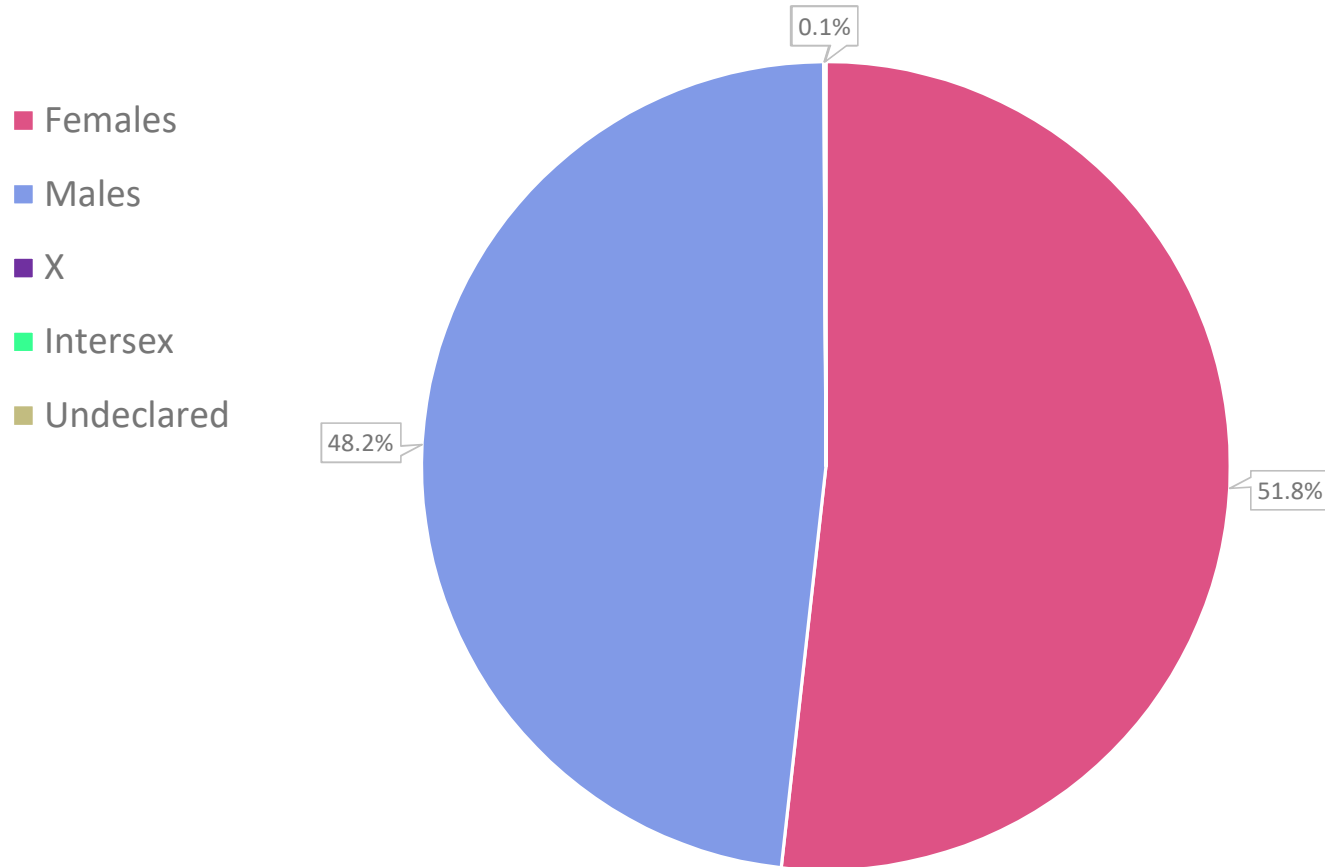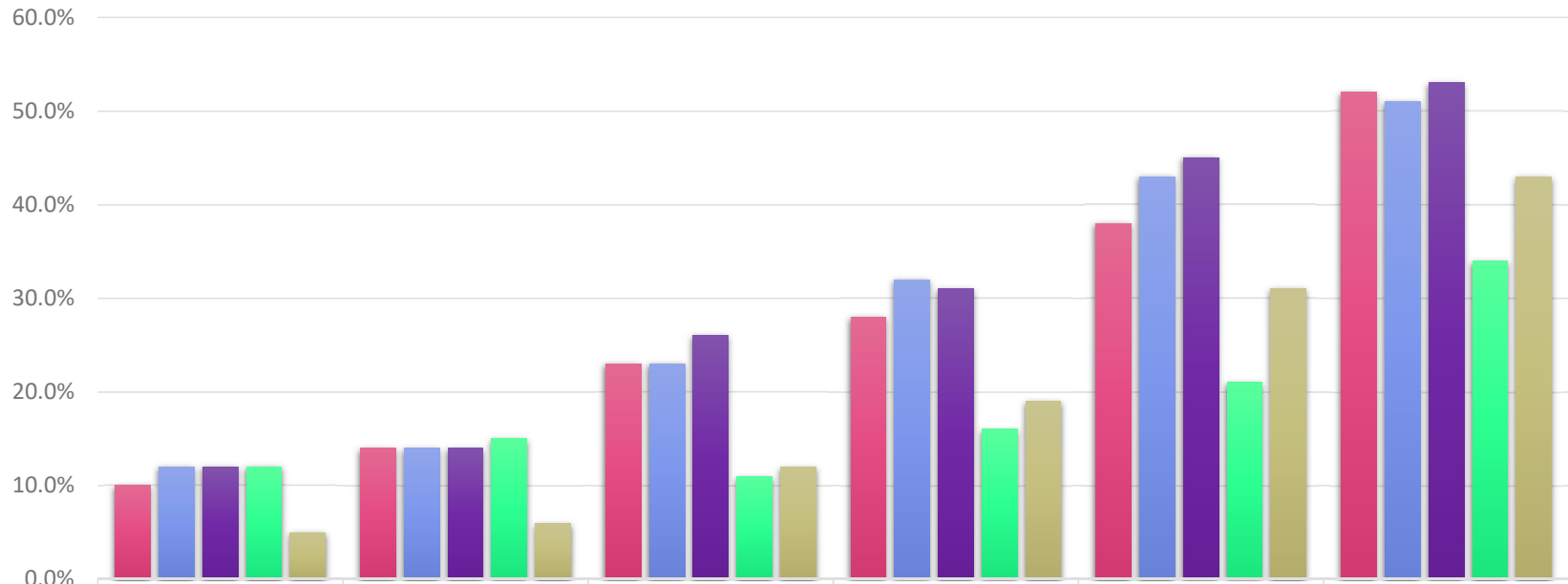
VOTER TURNOUT BY GENDER
2023 GENERAL ELECTION
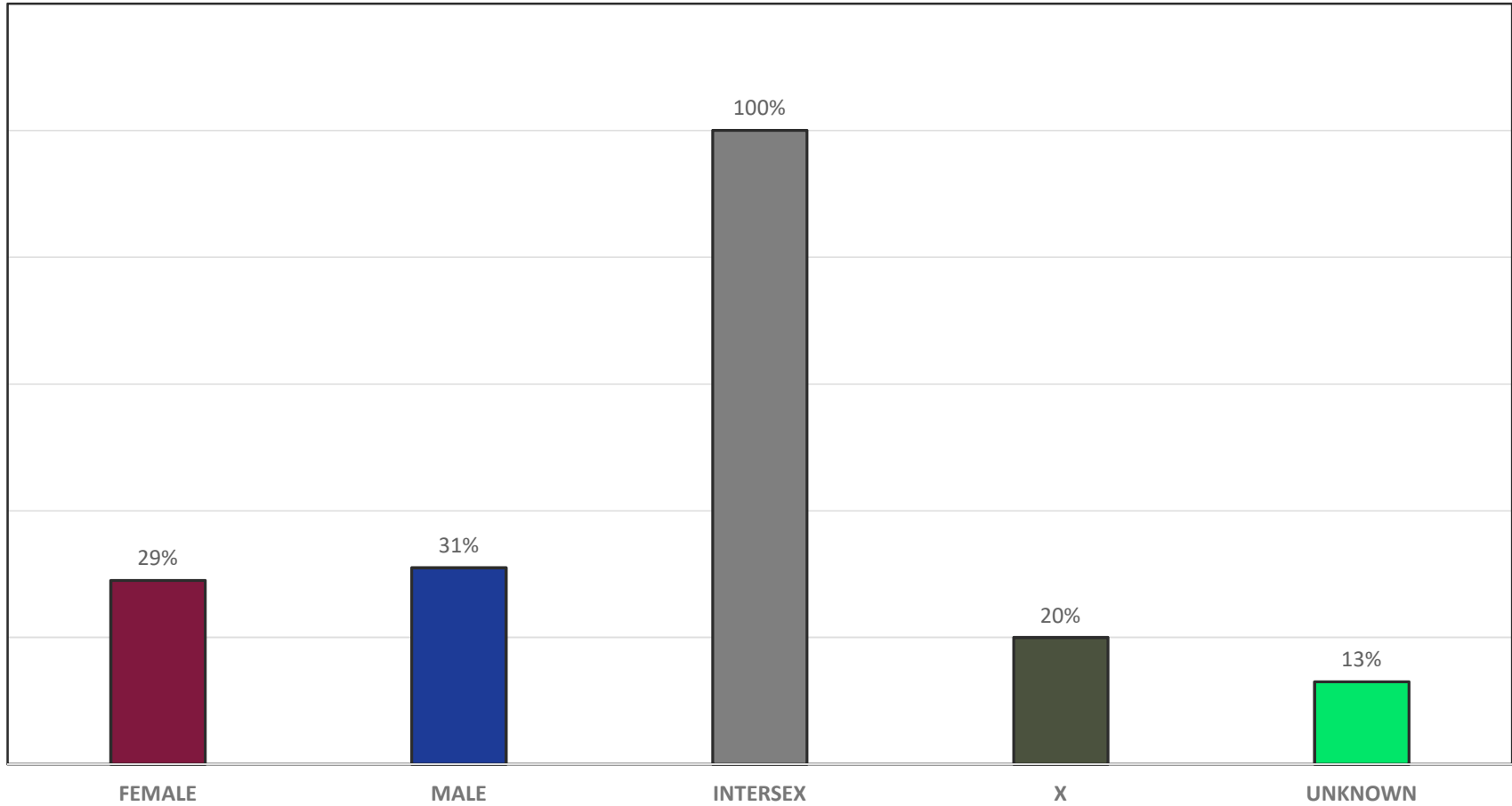
VOTER TURNOUT BY AGE
2023 GENERAL ELECTION

VOTER TURNOUT BY PARTY
2023 GENERAL ELECTION

COMPARISON OF TURNOUT BY AGE GROUP
PERCENTAGE OF ENROLLED VOTERS
2023 GENERAL ELECTION

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Democratic	10.0%	14.0%	23.0%	28.0%	38.0%	52.0%
Republican	12.0%	14.0%	23.0%	32.0%	43.0%	51.0%
Conservative	12.0%	14.0%	26.0%	31.0%	45.0%	53.0%
Working Families	12.0%	15.0%	11.0%	16.0%	21.0%	34.0%
Blank	5.0%	6.0%	12.0%	19.0%	31.0%	43.0%

Monroe County Board of Elections
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