



NEWS

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Record Number of People with Disabilities Voted in 2008 Election

Increase Due to Help America Vote Act, According to Jim Dickson of AAPD

WASHINGTON, DC – June 29, 2009 – New numbers released show Americans with disabilities voted in record numbers in the 2008 presidential election, according to the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), the country's largest cross-disability membership organization.

According to a study by Lisa Schur and Douglas Kruse, professors at the School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers University, who have conducted numerous studies on voting and people with disabilities, 3.8 million more people with disabilities voted in the 2008 presidential election than the 2000 presidential election.

According to the study, 14.7 million Americans with disabilities voted in the 2008 presidential election. About 10.9 million Americans with disabilities voted in the 2000 presidential election.

"The 2002 passage of the Help America Vote Act, which mandates voting be accessible, created enormous energy in the disability community," said AAPD's Vice President for Organizing and Civic Engagement Jim Dickson. AAPD has been leading nonpartisan voter registration and education drives amongst the nation's 56 million people with disabilities since 2001.

Kruse and Schur analyzed data from the federal government's Current Population Survey Voting Supplement for November 2008 to calculate the number of voters with disabilities in the 2008 election.

According to Kruse and Schur, the turnout of people with disabilities was only 7 percentage points lower than that of people without disabilities in the November 2008 election. Among the voting eligible population (citizens age 18 or older), 57.3 percent of people with disabilities voted, compared to 64.5 percent of people without disabilities.

"While the voting numbers among people with disabilities in 2008 indicates that they continue to face barriers in registration and voting, the fact that 14.7 million people with disabilities voted shows that they play an important role in the political process," said Schur.

The numbers of voters with disabilities in 2008 shows voters with disabilities are just as large of a voting bloc as other minorities as compared to 15.9 million African-Americans and 9.7 million Hispanic voters in the 2008 election.

For more information, contact Douglas Kruse at 908-616-7841 or Jim Dickson at 202-262-8240.

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The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), the country's largest cross-disability membership organization, organizes the disability community to be a powerful voice for change – politically, economically, and socially. AAPD was founded in 1995 to help unite the diverse community of people with disabilities, including their family, friends and supporters, and to be a national voice for change in implementing the goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To learn more, visit the AAPD website: www.aapd.com.