

Understanding California's Vote-by-Mail Ballots

Mindy Romero, Ph.D.
Director
California Civic Engagement Project

UCDAVIS
CENTER FOR REGIONAL CHANGE
California Civic Engagement Project

CCEP Issue Briefs

1. Disparities in California's Vote-by-Mail Use Changing Demographic Composition: 2002-2012
2. California's Uncounted Vote-By-Mail Ballots: Identifying Variation in County Processing
3. Disparities in California's Uncounted Vote-by-Mail Ballots: Youth, Party and Language Preference

CCEP Vote-by-Mail Study

In collaboration with the
Future of California Elections (FOCE)

regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/ccep

Research Identified:

- The demographic composition of VBM voters
- The breakdown of reasons for ballot rejection
- The demographic composition of unsuccessful vote-by-mail voters

Demographic Composition of VBM Voters

Different Sub-Groups Use VBM at Different Rates

Disparities in VBM Use

By Age:

- 2012 - Youth voters – lowest VBM use rate of all age groups – 39%
- By Race/Ethnicity:
 - 2012 - Latino VBM proportional use rate – 37%
 - 2012 – Asian VBM proportional use rate – 58%

Composition of VBM vs Poll Voter Populations

Breakdown of VBM Ballots

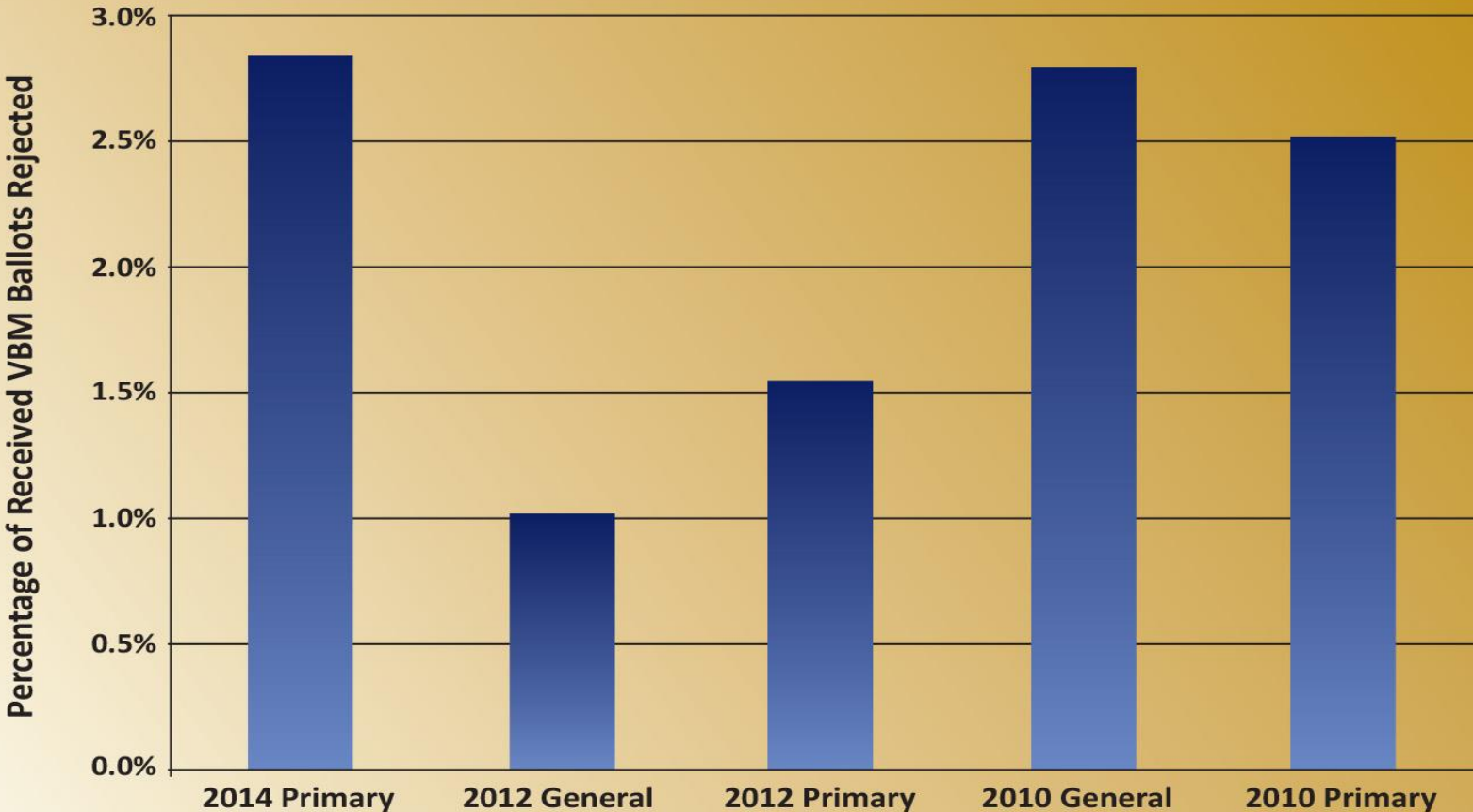
VBM Voters are:

- Older
- Less Latino
- More Asian
- Less Democratic
- Different Regional Patterns

Reasons for VBM Ballot Rejection

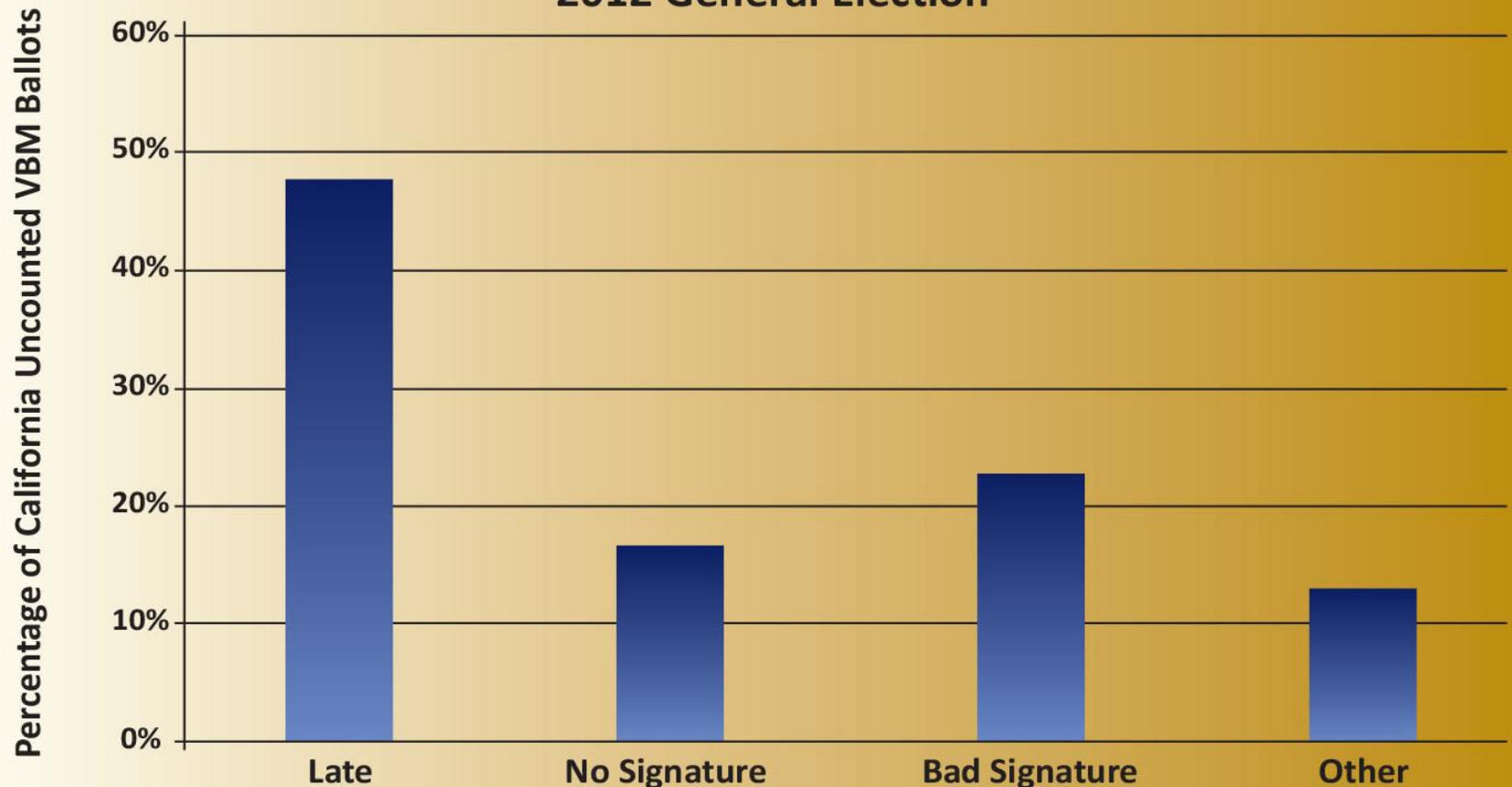
VBM Rejection Rates

VBM Ballot Rejection Rates 2010-2014 Election



Top Three Reasons for Rejection

Reasons for VBM Ballot Rejection 2012 General Election



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Date Source: California Civic Engagement Project (CCEP) 2014 Statewide Survey

**Demographic composition of
unsuccessful vote-by-mail voters:**

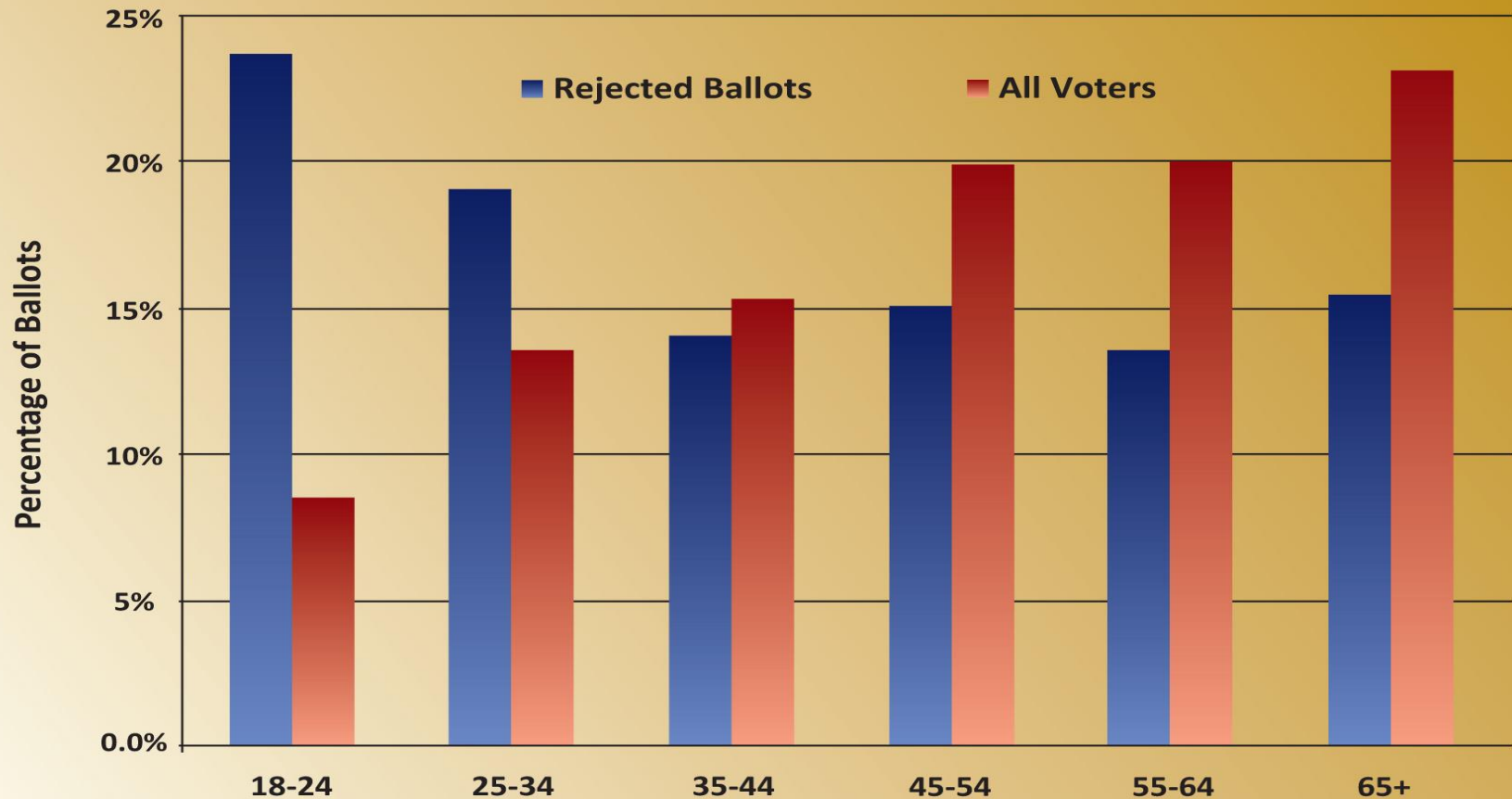
Age

Language Preference

Military Status

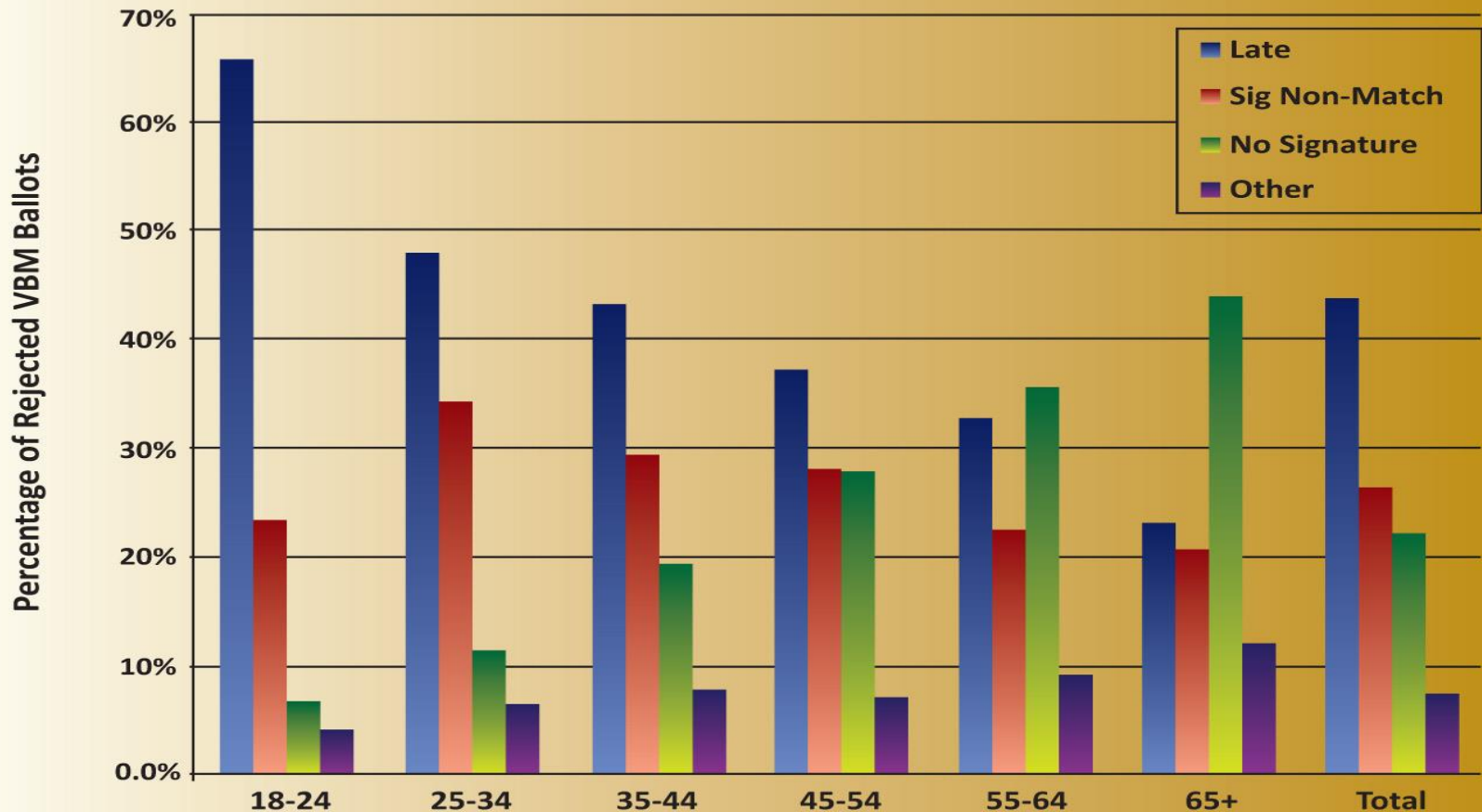
Youth More Likely to Experience VBM Rejection

Rejected VBM Ballots: Overrepresentation of Young Voters 2012 General Election



Rejected Youth VBM Ballots are Late

Rejected VBM Ballots Reasons by Age Cohort 2012 General Election



More Disparities in VBM Rejection

- More non-English language ballots are rejected
- Missing Signature a Major Reason for Rejection of Non-English Ballots
- Military and Overseas Ballots More Likely to be Rejected

Why do disparities in VBM use and rejection rates matter?

Impacts:

- Outreach and education to VBM voters and/or future VBM voters
 - Services provided to VBM voters
 - As some counties look to possibly reduce polling places – need to identify if there is disparate impact
- = critical to utilize data in VBM policy discussions

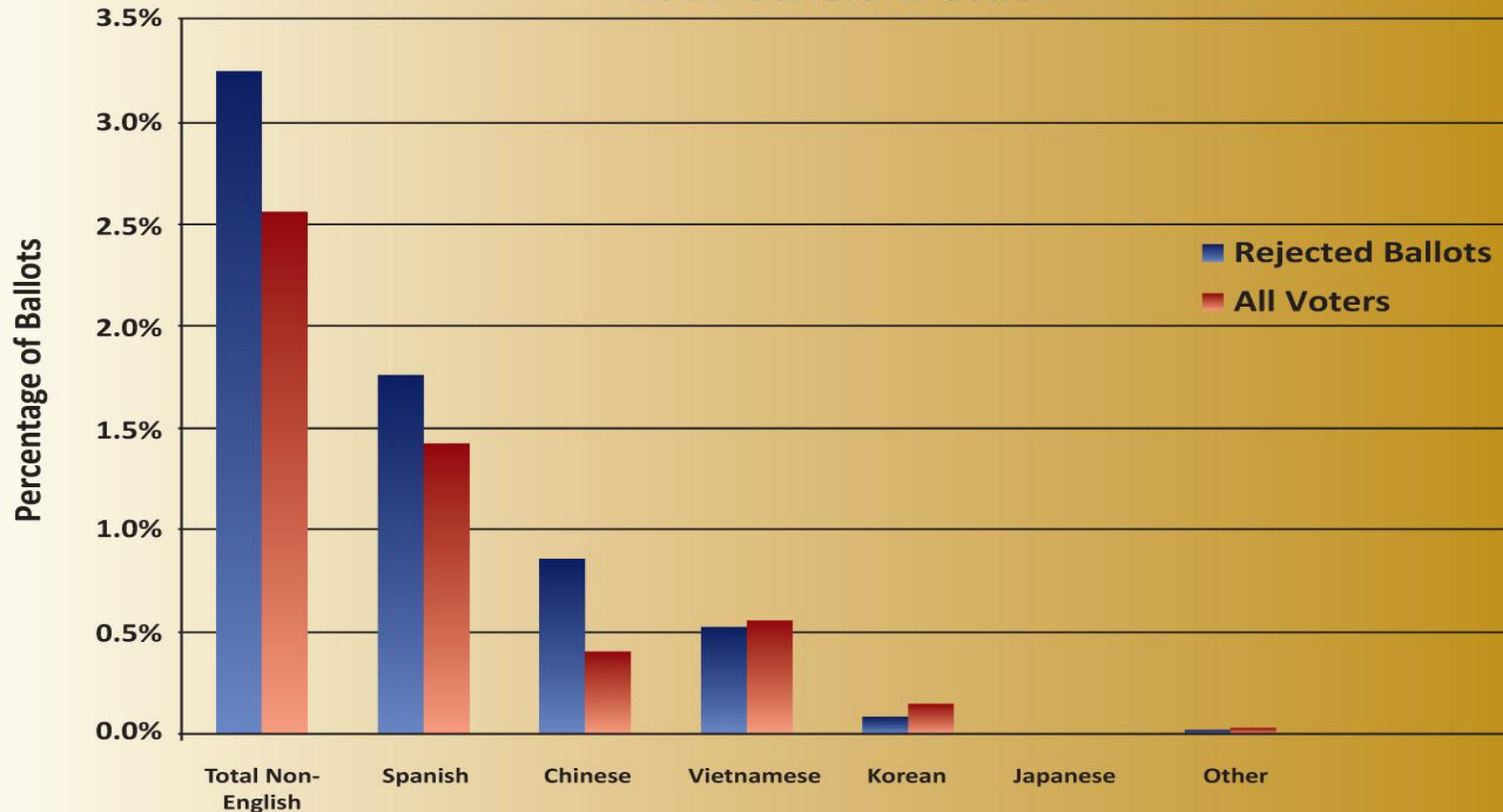
Thank you

Mindy Romero
California Civic Engagement Project
UC Davis Center for Regional Change
msromero@ucdavis.edu
twitter @mindysromero

regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/ccep

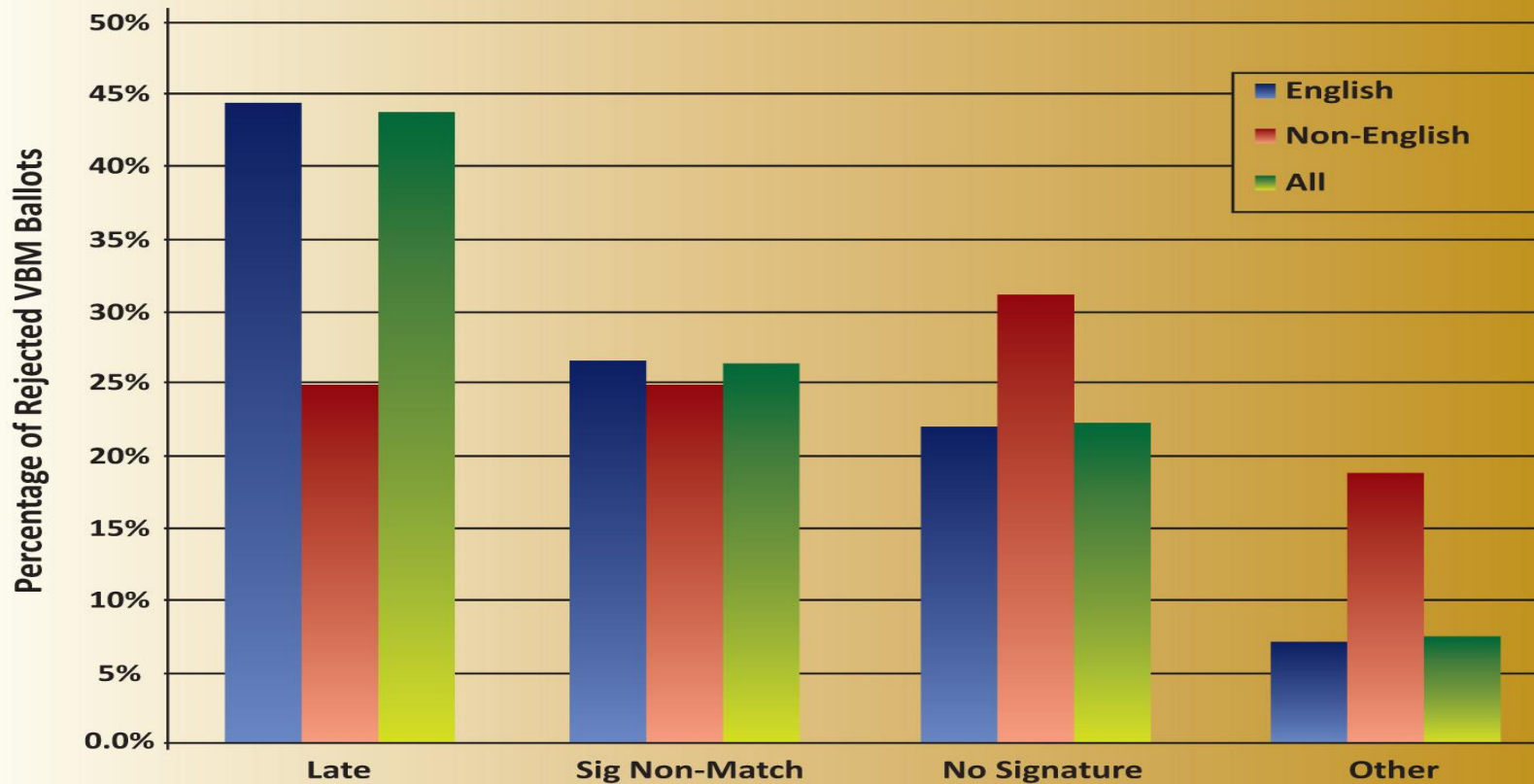
Non-English Language Ballots More Likely to be Rejected

Rejected VBM Ballots by Language Preference 2012 General Election



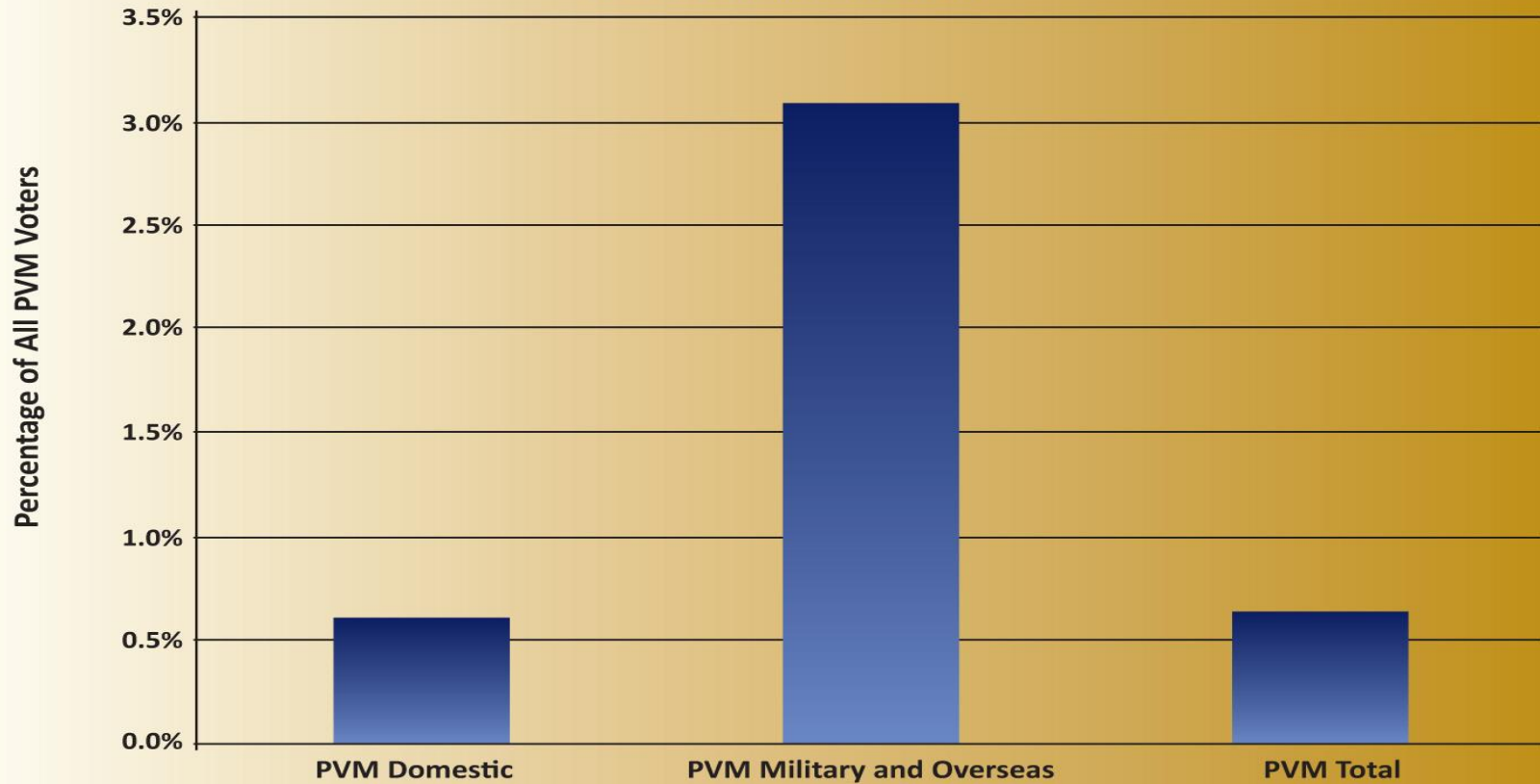
Missing Signature a Major Reason for Rejection of Non-English Ballots

Rejected VBM Ballot Reasons by Language Preference
2012 General Election



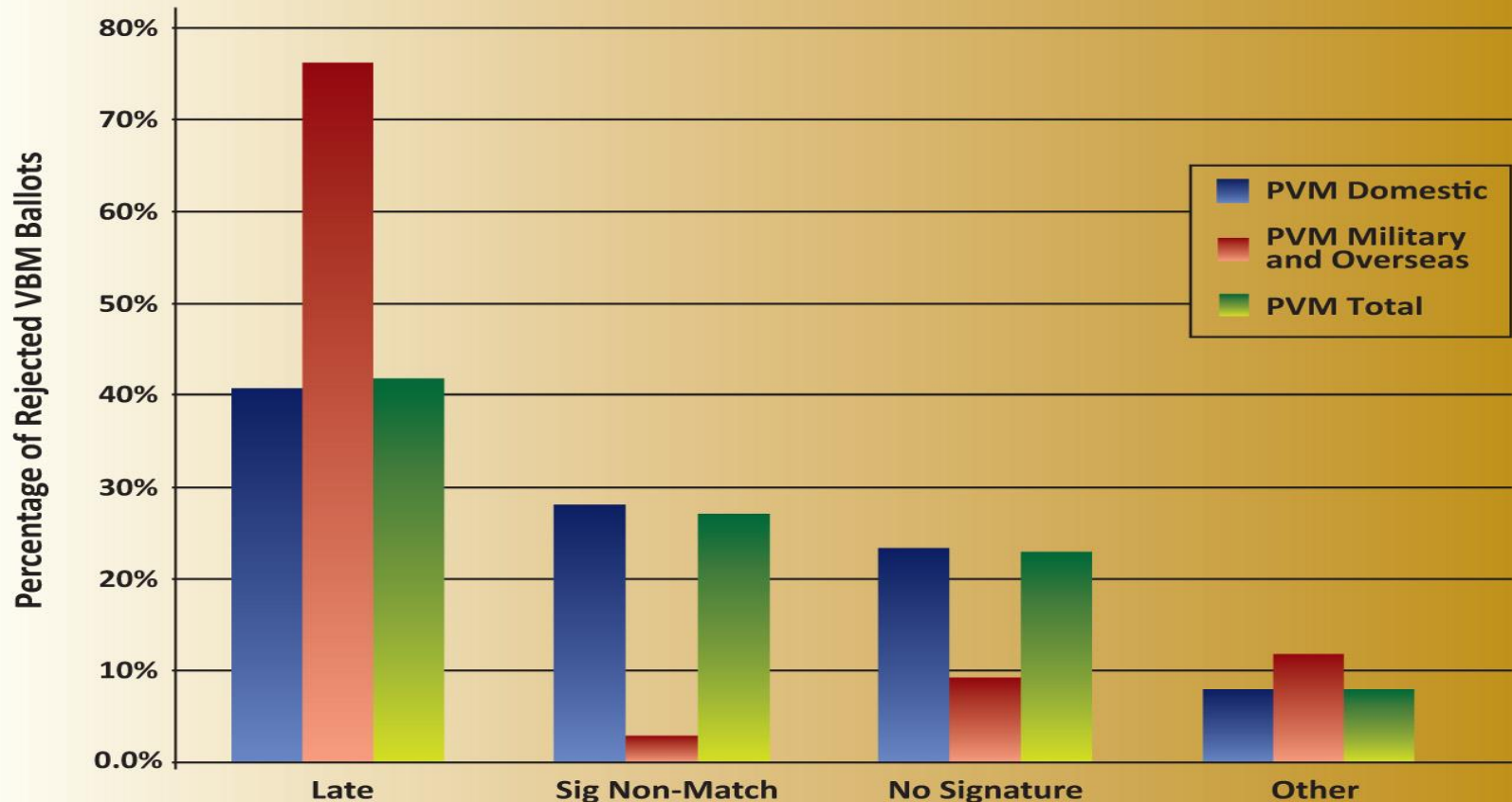
Military and Overseas Ballots More Likely to be Rejected

Rejection Rate of PVM Ballots
2012 General Election



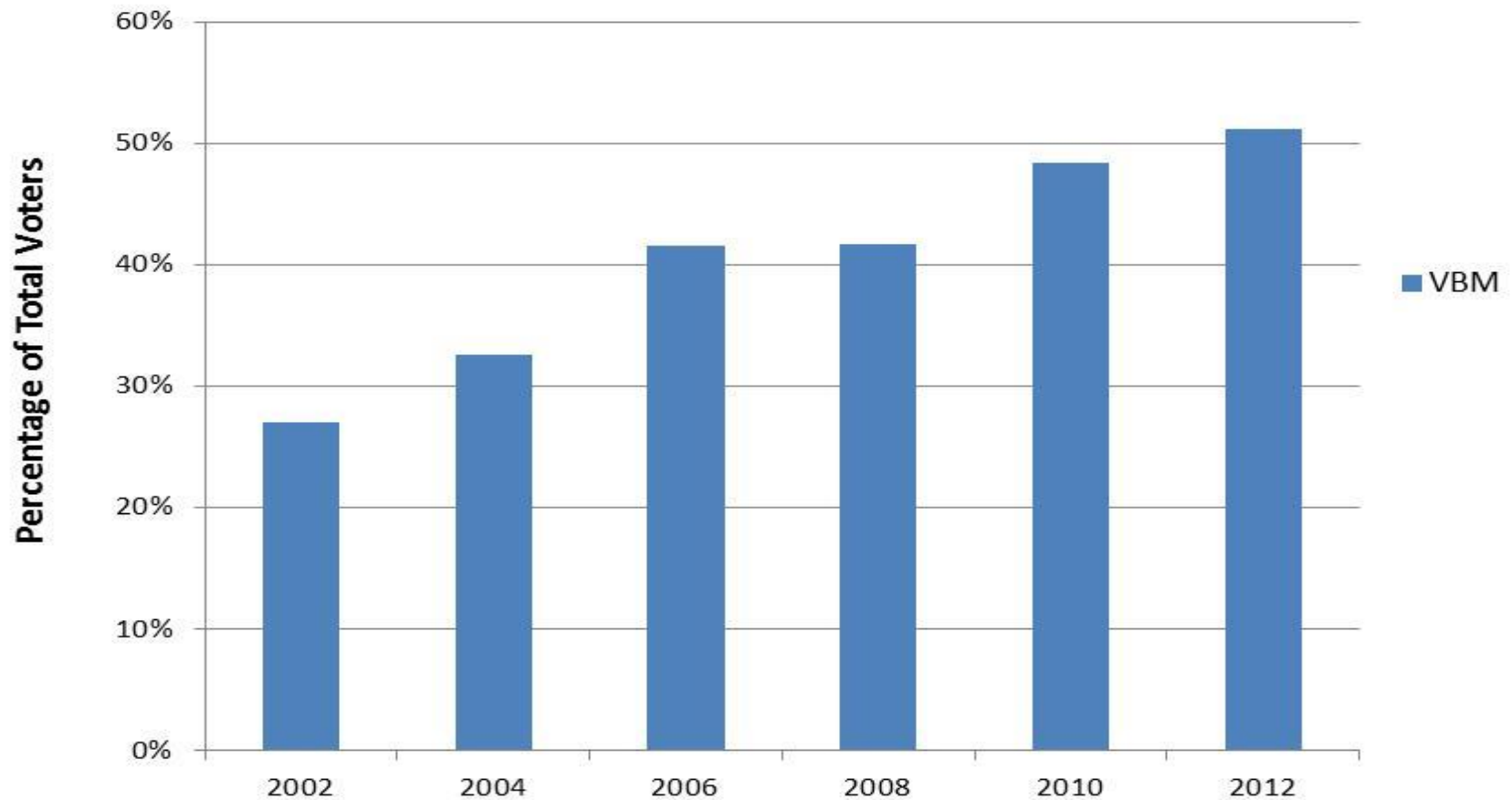
Military and Overseas Ballots are Late

Rejected VBM Ballots Reasons by PVM Status 2012 General Election



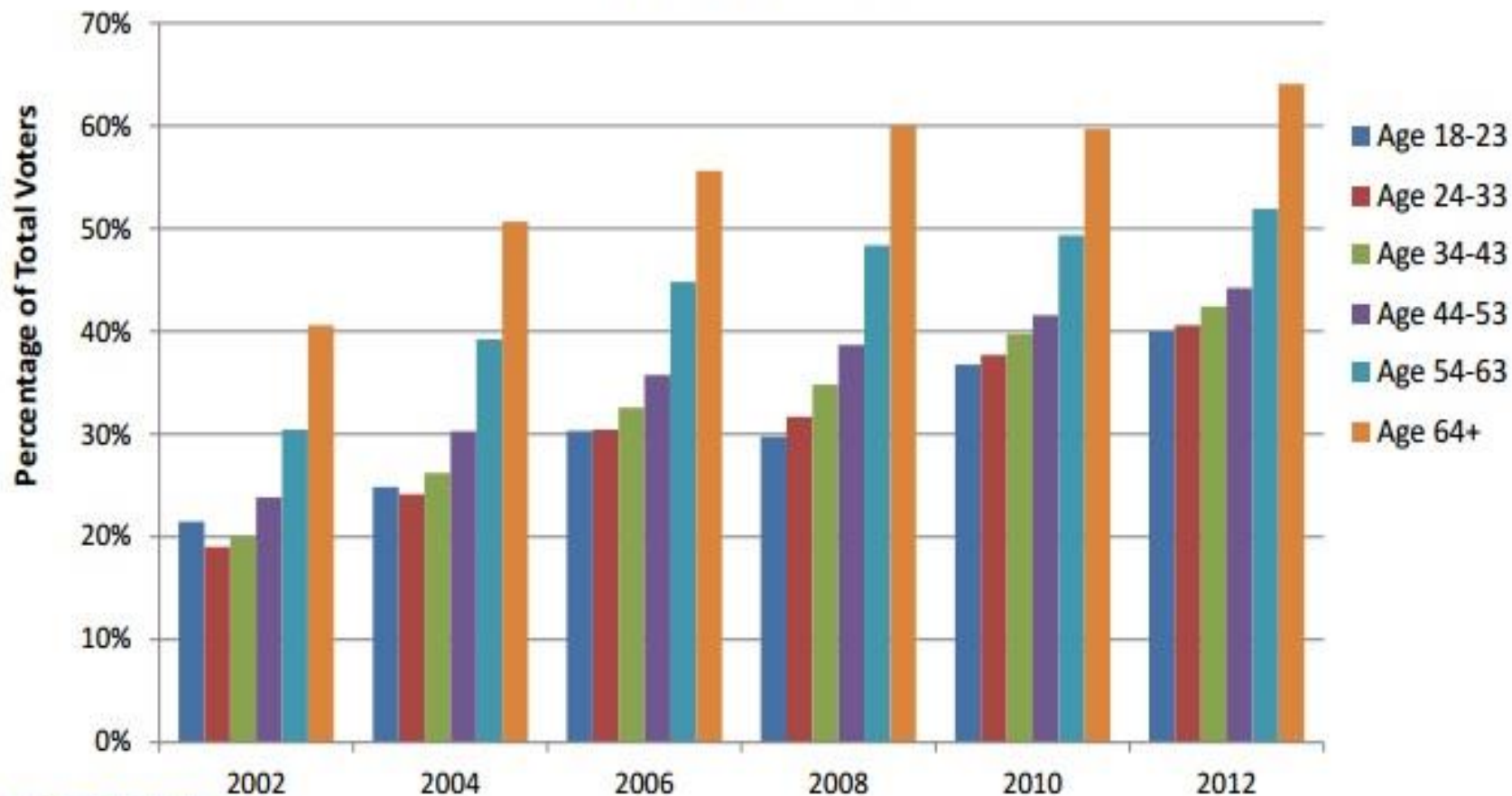
Strong Growth in the VBM Use

California Vote by Mail Use: 2002-2012
General Elections



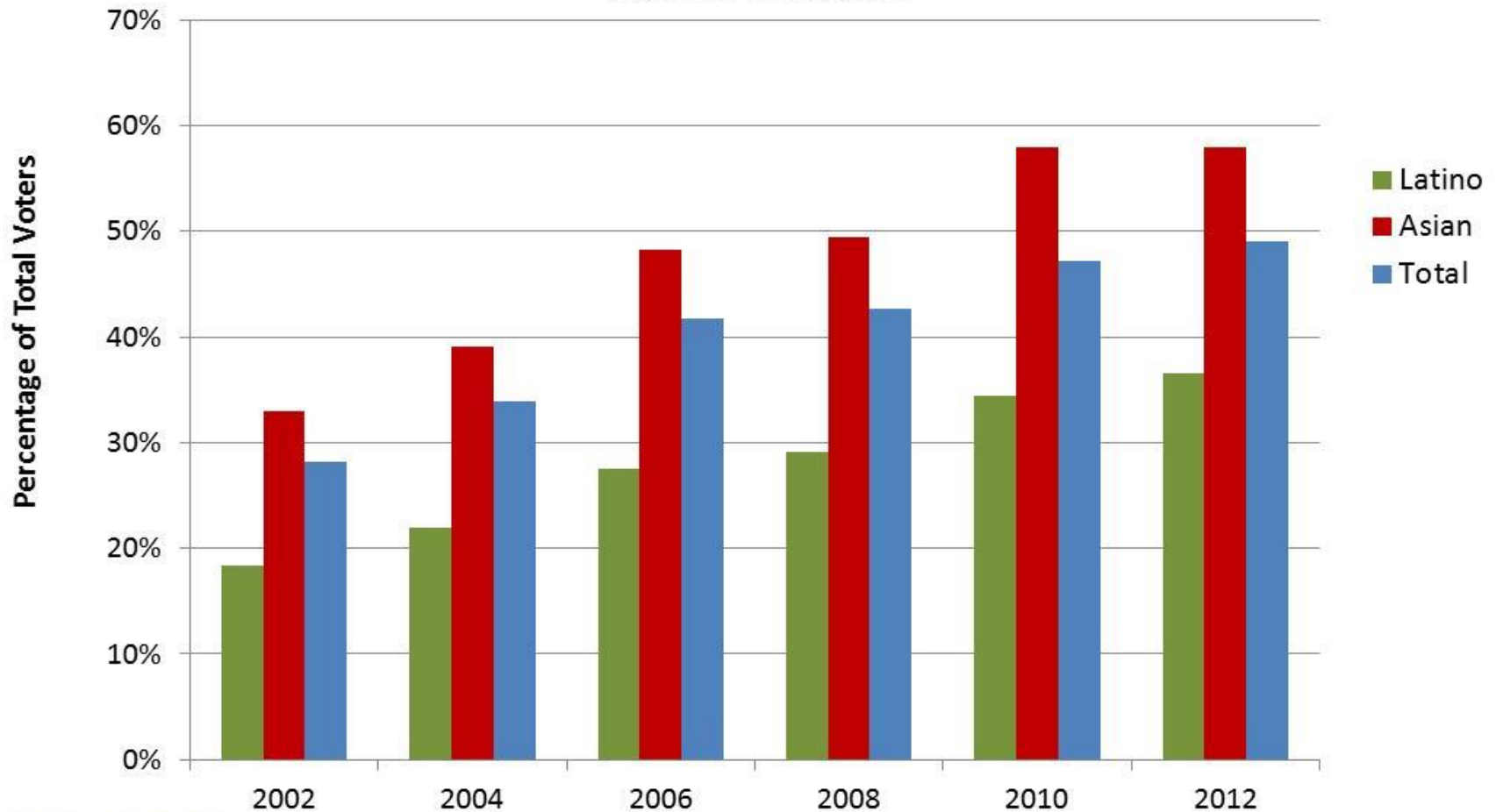
Older Voters Driving State's 50% Use Rate

California Age Cohort Vote: Percent Vote by Mail General Elections



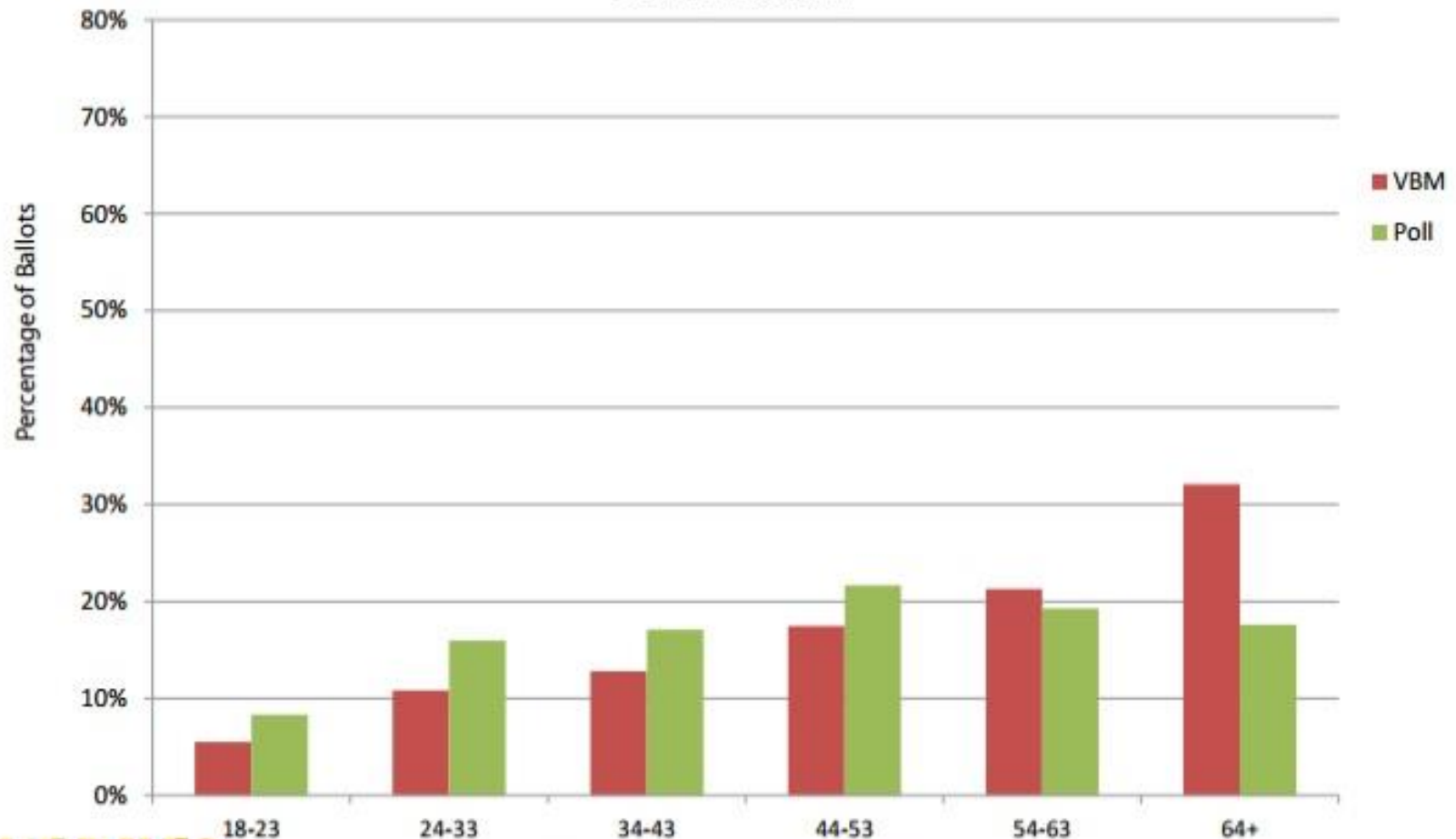
Latinos and Asians: Disparities in VBM Use

California Latino and Asian Vote: Percent Vote by Mail General Elections



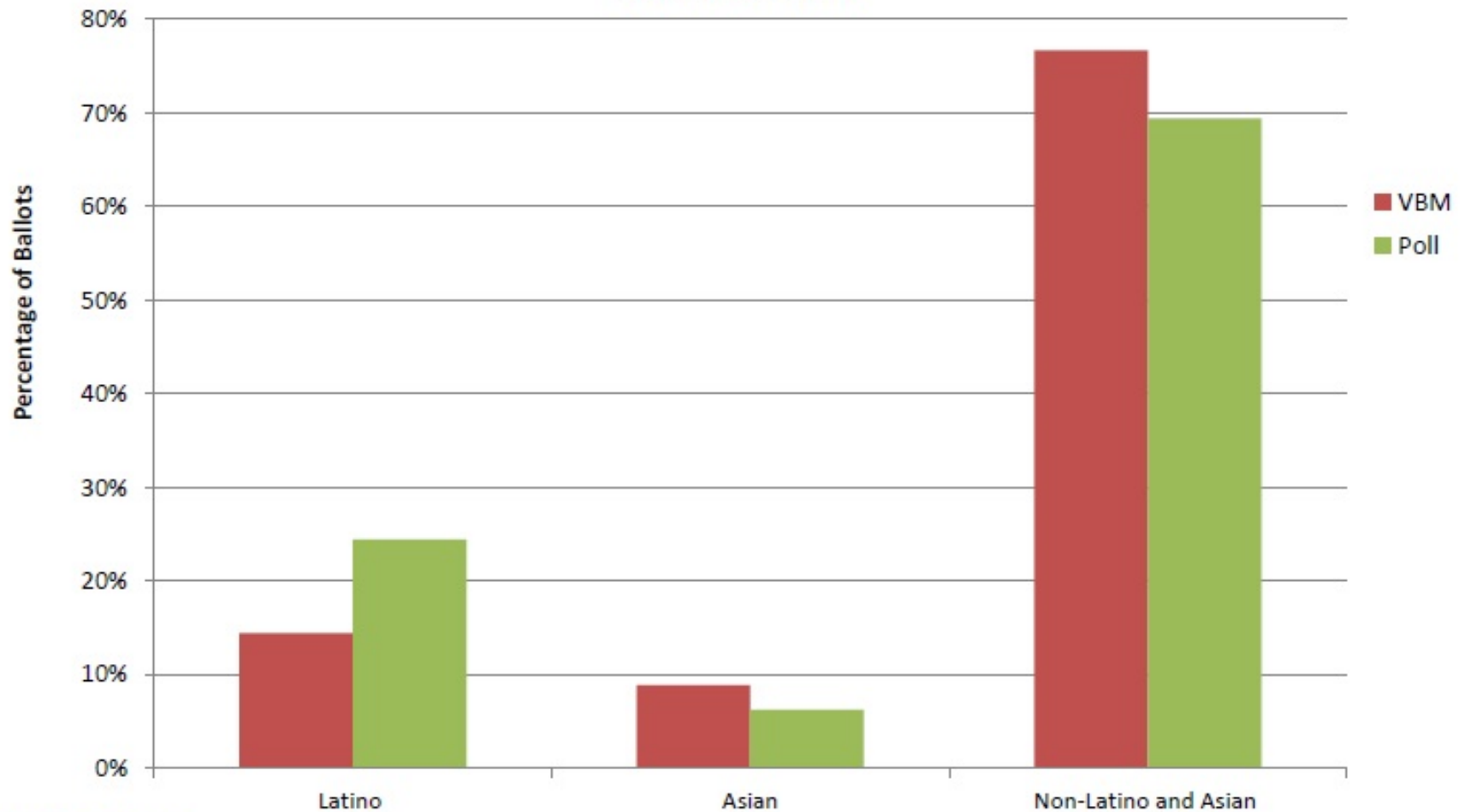
VBM: Greater Proportions of Older Voters

2012 California Ballot Type: Percent by Age Cohort
General Election



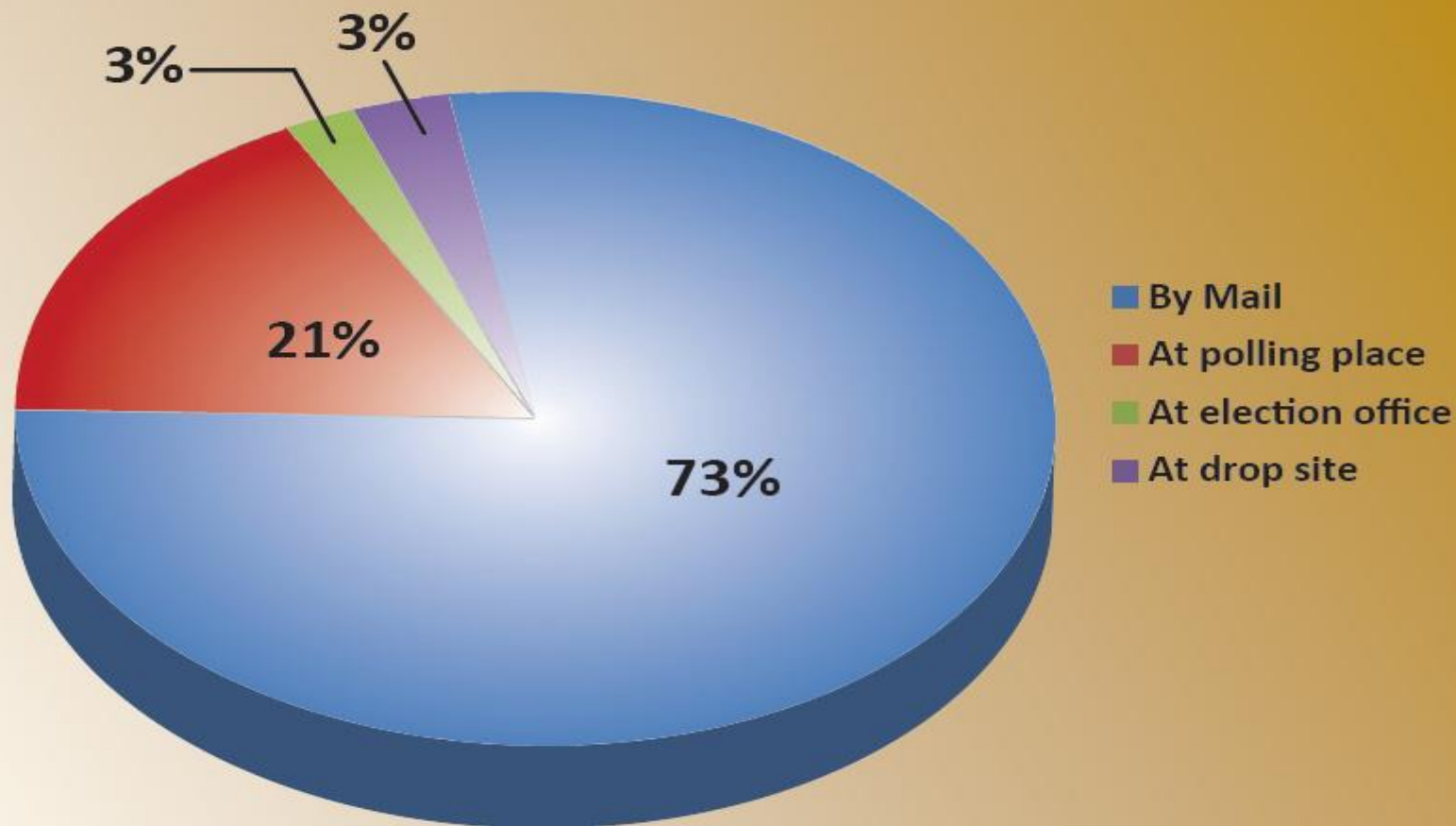
VBM Voters: Few Latinos and More Asians

2012 California Ballot Type: Percent Latino and Asian
General Election



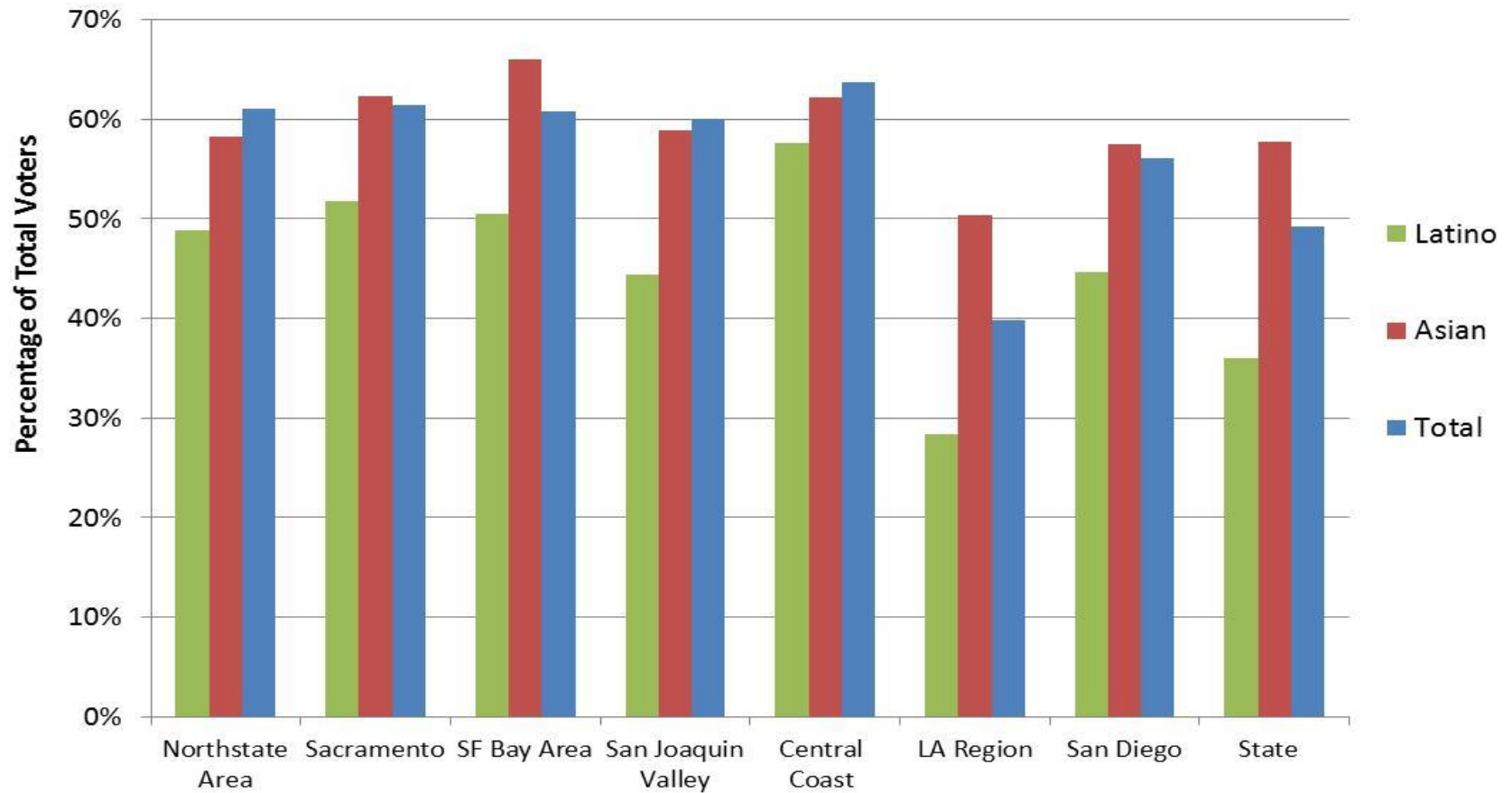
VBM Voters: Few Latinos and More Asians

Locations of Received VBM Ballots
2012 General Election

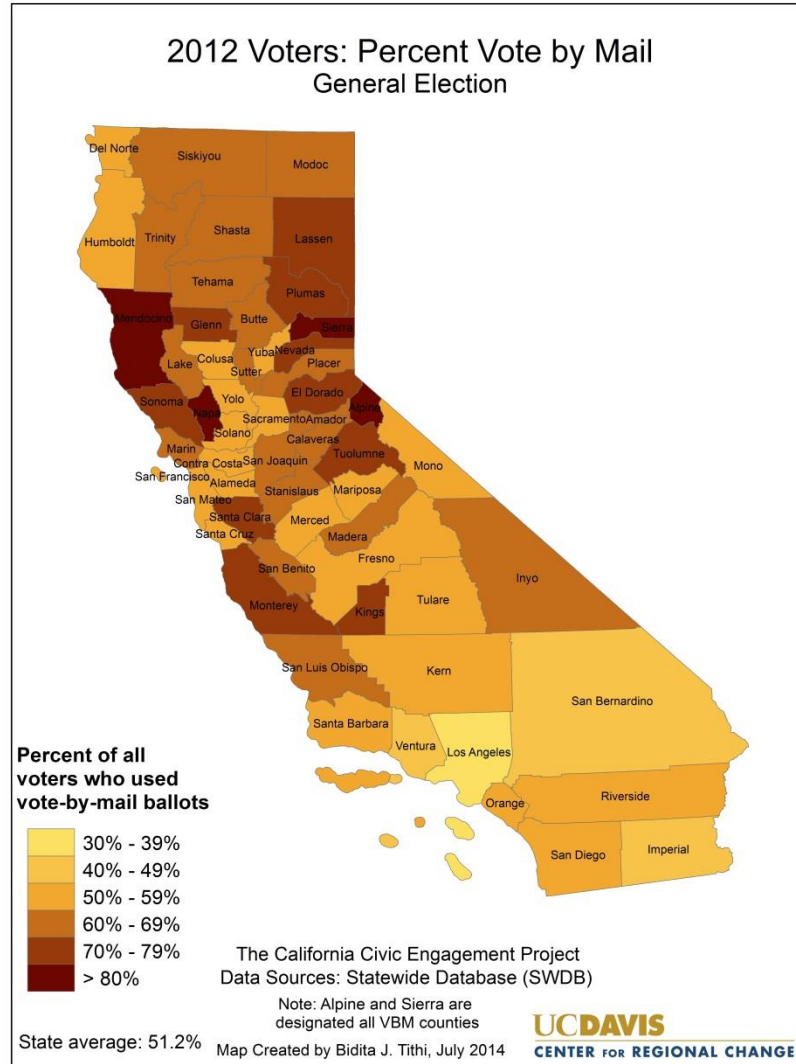


VBM: Regional Variation

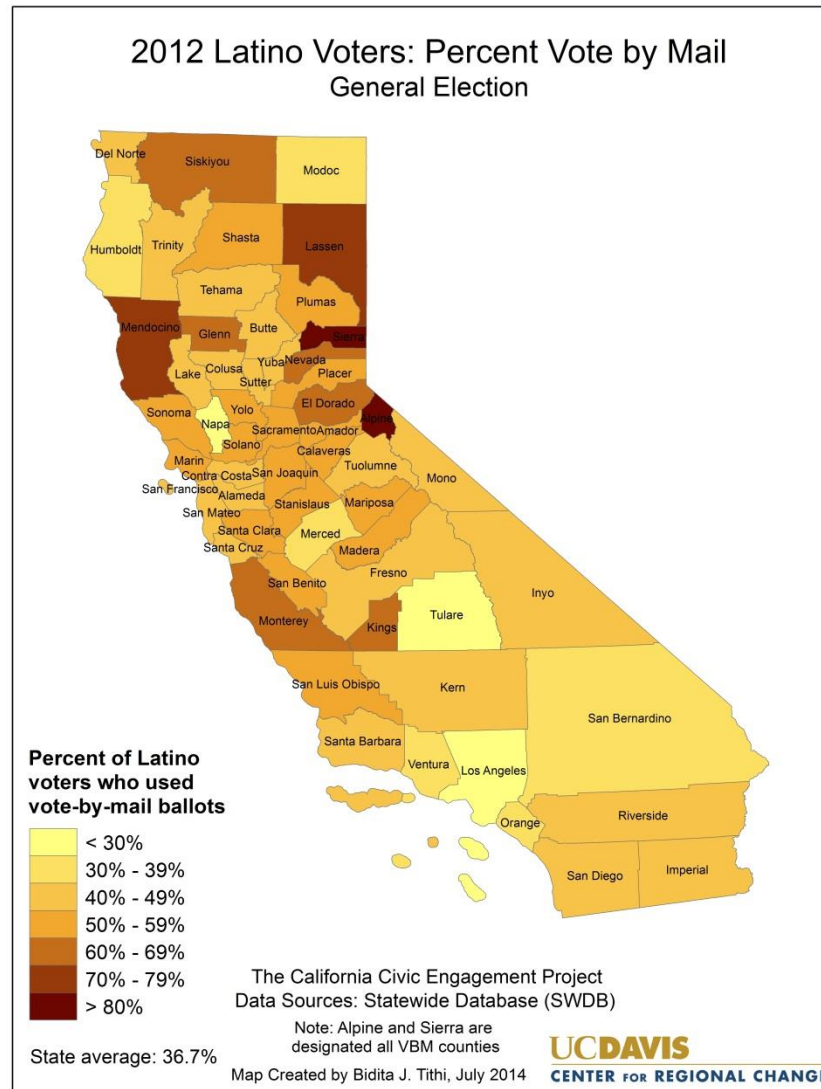
2012 Regional Vote by Mail Use General Election



VBM Use: County Variation



Latino VBM Use: County Variation



Asian VBM Use: County Variation

