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After the Michael Brown shooting, thousands register to vote in Ferguson

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USA Today's [Yamiche Alcindor reported](#) that, since the shooting, 4,839 people in St. Louis County registered to vote, and 3,287 of those people lived in Ferguson. That's more than the number of people who registered to vote in the two townships, Ferguson and Norwood, with which the city of Ferguson intersects, in 2002, 2006, and 2010, according to a report from the St. Louis County Board of Election Commissioners, according to [a report](#) from the St. Louis County Board of Election Commissioners.

To put that in further perspective: 12,096 people were registered to vote in Ferguson as of April, and unopposed Mayor James Knowles won with just [1,314 votes](#).

The surge in voter registrations won't necessarily translate to thousands of new votes. [Only 1,484 of the 12,096 registered voters](#) cast ballots during local elections in April. But even if 12 percent of new registrants vote, that's 400 more voters — certainly enough to impact a municipal election.

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The rise in registrations could reflect efforts, particularly by St. Louis committeeman Anthony Bell, to sign people up to vote during and after the height of the protests. (In August, Matt Wills, executive director of Missouri's Republican Party, [called](#) the drive "not only disgusting but completely inappropriate.")

Following the Brown shooting, many of Ferguson's residents protested nightly, and part of their concern was that their local government [didn't represent](#) the city's black community. Although 67 percent of Ferguson's population is black, the mayor and police chief are white, one of six council members is black, and no one on the local board of elections is black.

The problem, MSNBC [previously reported](#), is low voter turnout during local elections in March and April." No one collects data on turnout by race in municipal elections. But the overall turnout numbers for Ferguson's mayoral and city council election are discouraging," writes MSNBC's Zachary Roth. "This year, just 12.3 percent of eligible voters cast a ballot, according to numbers provided by the county. In 2013 and 2012, those figures were even lower: 11.7 percent and 8.9 percent respectively. As a rule, the lower the turnout, the more the electorate skews white and conservative."

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