

THE PORTUGUESE AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP PROJECT
A NON-PARTISAN INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC INVOLVEMENT



**SACRED HEART PARISH
TURLOCK, CA**

**EVALUATION
OF
THE 2008 ELECTIONS**

March 9, 2009

SUPPORTED BY THE
LUSO-AMERICAN
FOUNDATION

REPORT CONTENTS

- **STATISTICS AND SUMMARY OF WORK** **3**
- **RESULTS** **4**
- **RECOMMENDATIONS** **8**
- **APPENDIX** **9**

KEY STATISTICS

- **Total number of parishioners: 7,770**
- **Heads of Household registered to vote in Merced County: 2,785**
- **All Household Members registered to vote in Merced County: 4,028**
- **Heads of Household registered to vote in Stanislaus County: 2,384**
- **All Household Members registered to vote in Stanislaus County: 3,498**
- **Heads of Household in Stanislaus Co. voter turnout* in February 2008 – 64% (county-wide turnout 43%)**
- **Heads of Household in Stanislaus Co. voter turnout in June 2008 – 42% (county-wide turnout 22%)**
- **Heads of Household in Stanislaus Co. voter turnout in November 2008 – 84% (county-wide turnout 71%)**

SUMMARY OF WORK

Sacred Heart Parish has been an active participant in the Portuguese American Citizenship Project since late 2002.

For the 2008 February, June, and November elections, postcards in Portuguese, Spanish and English were sent to every registered voter in the organization reminding them of the date and polling hours for each election.

* Voter turnout is the number of citizens voting in an election divided by the total number of citizens registered to vote. Voter turnout for each election is based on Stanislaus county residents only.

RESULTS

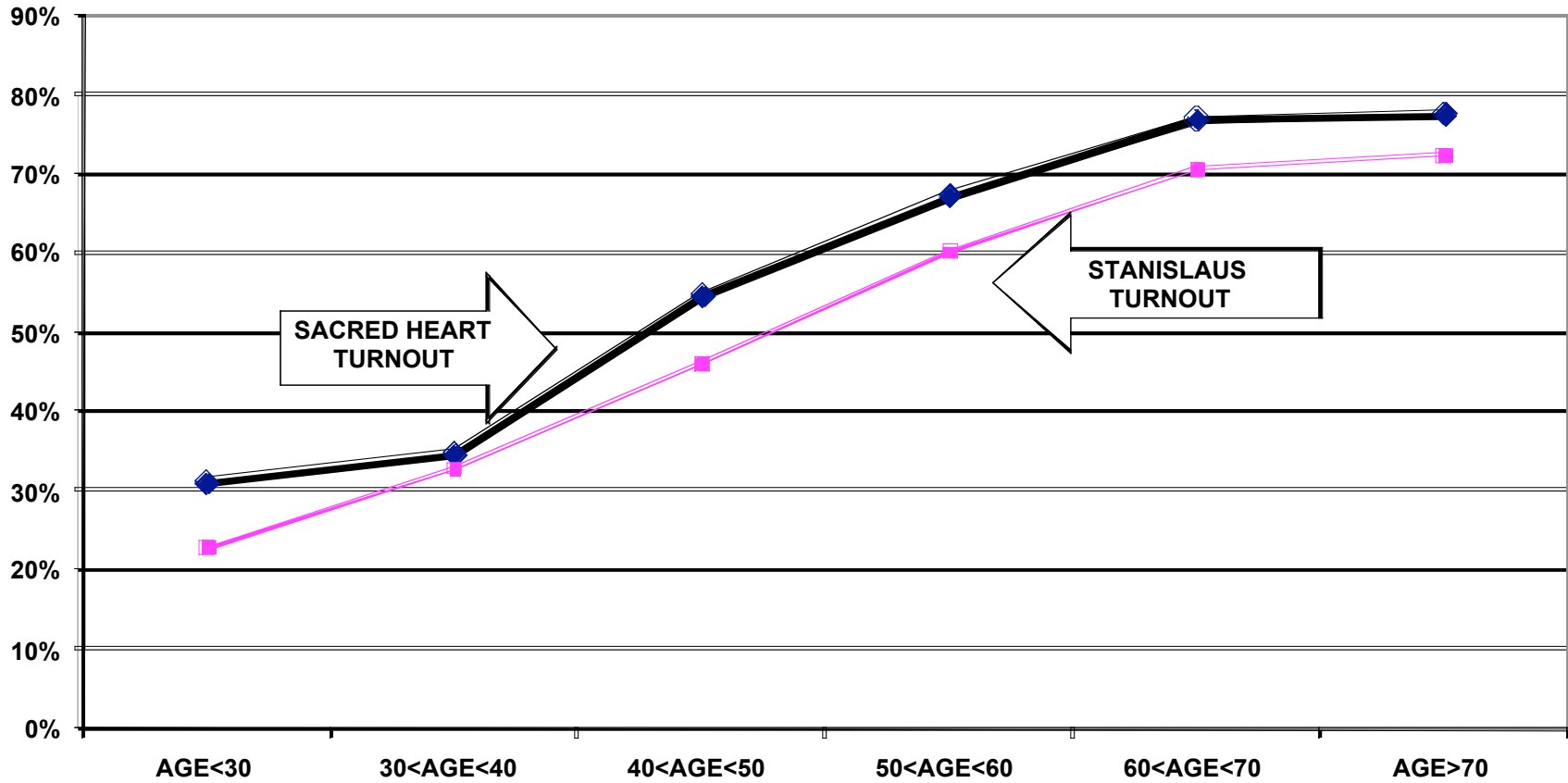
Among parishioners registered to vote in Stanislaus County, Sacred Heart Parish heads of household voter turnout for the 2008 elections was higher than the countywide turnout. Heads of household turnout for the February Presidential Primary elections was 64%, as compared to the countywide turnout of 43%. For the June Primary elections heads of household turnout was 42%, as compared to the countywide turnout of 22%. Sacred Heart Parish heads of household turnout for the November Presidential election was 84%, as compared to the countywide turnout of 71%.

Voter turnout is not uniform across age groups. Voters under 30 years of age and even those between 30 and 40 years old had lower turnout rates than the older voters. This is true for the registered voters in the parish and true for the registered voters in the community at large.

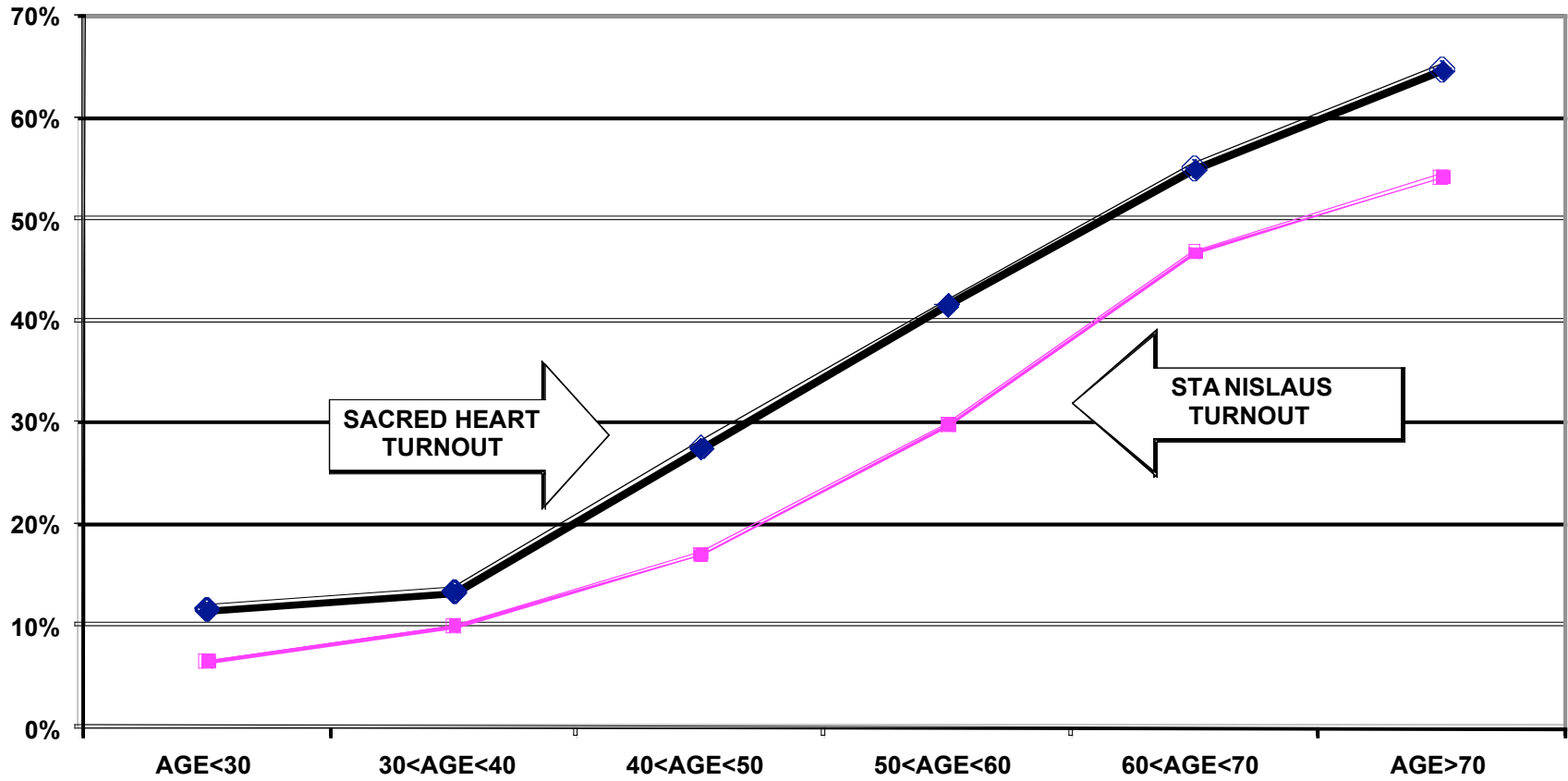
For example, registered voters associated with the parish under 30 years old had a 31% turnout rate in the February elections, while voters between 60 and 70 years old had a 77% turnout rate. For the June elections, the under 30 year old associated voters had a 12% turnout rate compared to a 55% turnout rate for voters between 60 and 70 years old. Voters associated with the parish under 30 years old had a 63% turnout rate in the November Presidential elections, while voters between 60 and 70 years old had a 90% turnout rate.

The following graphs for the February, June, and November 2008 elections illustrate the relationship between turnout rates and age. These graphs refer to all family members associated with the parish, not just heads of household.

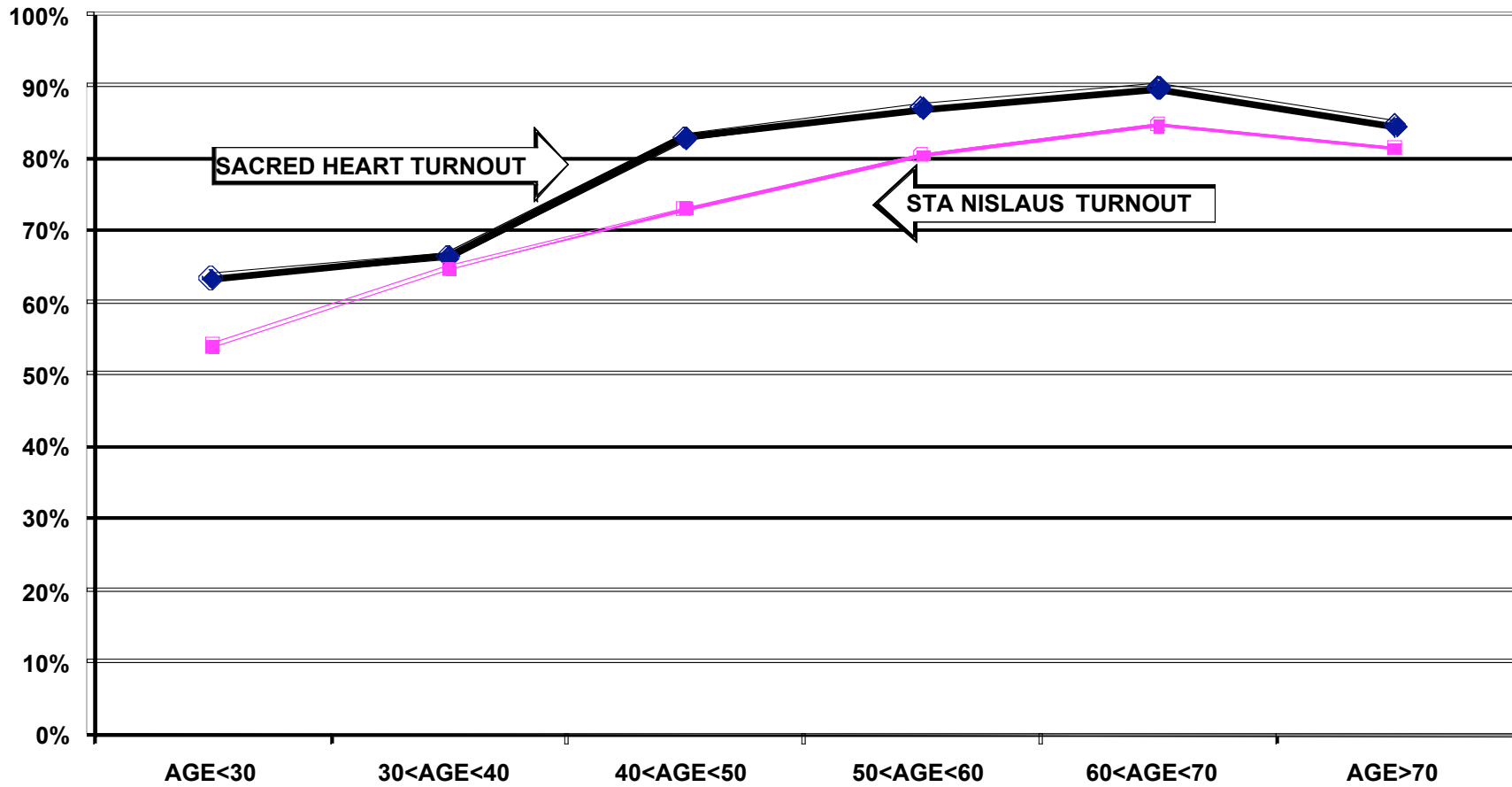
TURNOUT BY AGE FEBRUARY 2008 SACRED HEART PARISH ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



TURNOUT BY AGE JUNE 2008 SACRED HEART PARISH ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



TURNOUT BY AGE NOVEMBER 2008 SACRED HEART PARISH ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



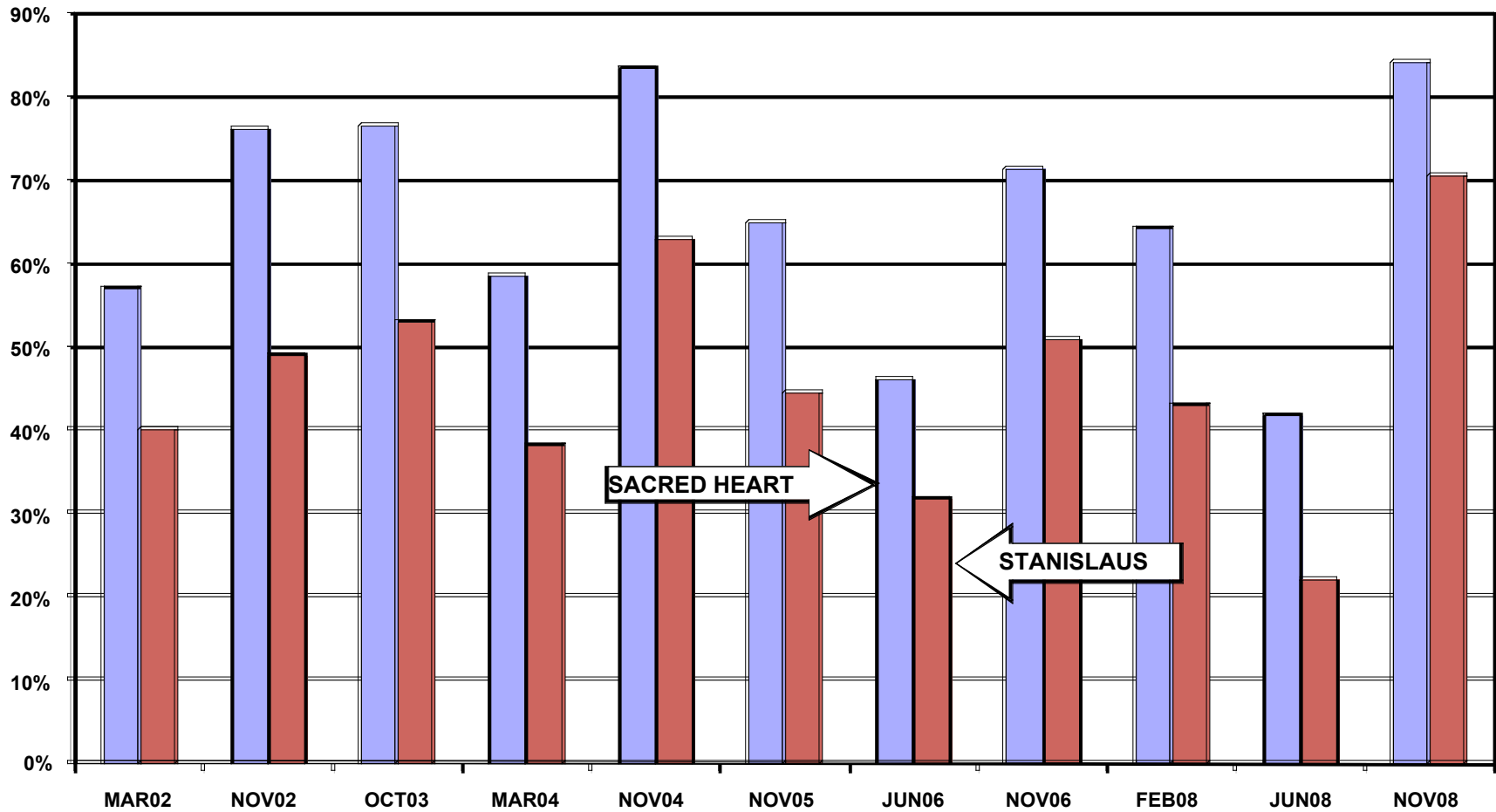
RECOMMENDATIONS

- The parish must determine if and how it will provide funding for the costs of participation in the Citizenship Project. The Luso American Foundation has completed 10 years of financial support for the Project but will terminate this support for 2009 and beyond. In 2009, the Project will continue to provide data processing and assist in the preparation of voter cards. With a mailing permit, the cost of printing and mailing the cards for a June Primary, and November City elections is approximately \$2,600.
- If the parish cannot provide the financial support for this mailing and/or cannot accomplish the logistics of printing and mailing the voter cards, interested members of the community should examine the accomplishments of the past ten years and determine how to build on these achievements using alternative methods of promoting civic participation.
- The voter registration rate for the parish's head of household – 31 percent – is low compared to most other parishes participating in the Portuguese American Citizenship Project. Many members are probably not U.S. citizens, and many who are U.S. citizens have not yet registered to vote. These two problems must be addressed both for the benefit of the parish, but also for the benefit of the individuals themselves. In order to encourage increased voter registrations and revive parish commitment to strong voter turnout, Sacred Heart should consider reviving its Faithful Citizenship ministry by sending letters to every parish family, reminding them of the parish's commitment to civic involvement and encouraging voter registration for members who are citizens but have not yet registered.

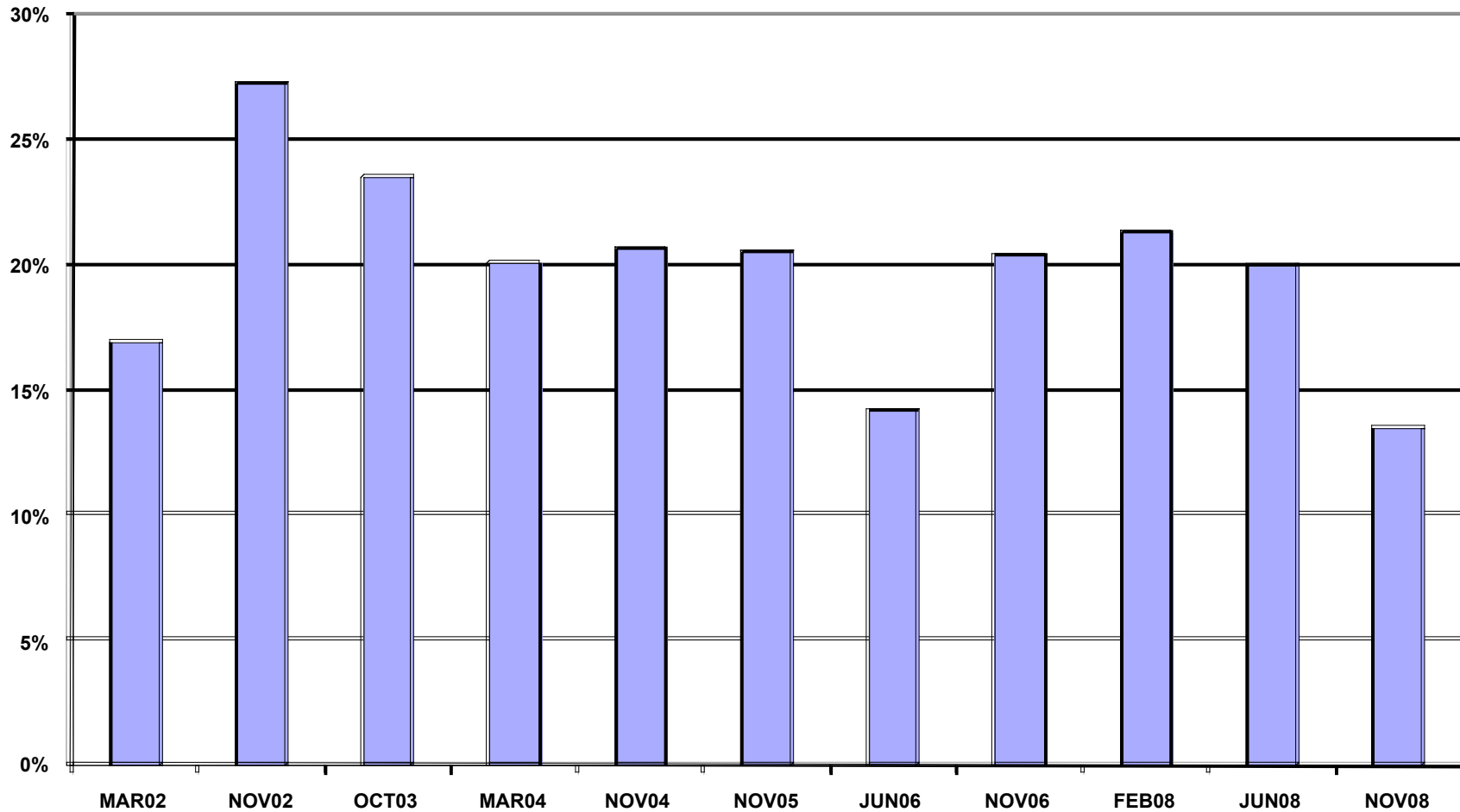
APPENDIX

- Historical Data 10
- Registered Voter Turnout Graph 11
- Difference in Voter Turnout Graph 12
- Registered Voters vs. Actual Voters February 2008 Graph 13
- Registered Voters vs. Actual Voters June 2008 Graph 14
- Registered Voters vs. Actual Voters November 2008 Graph 15

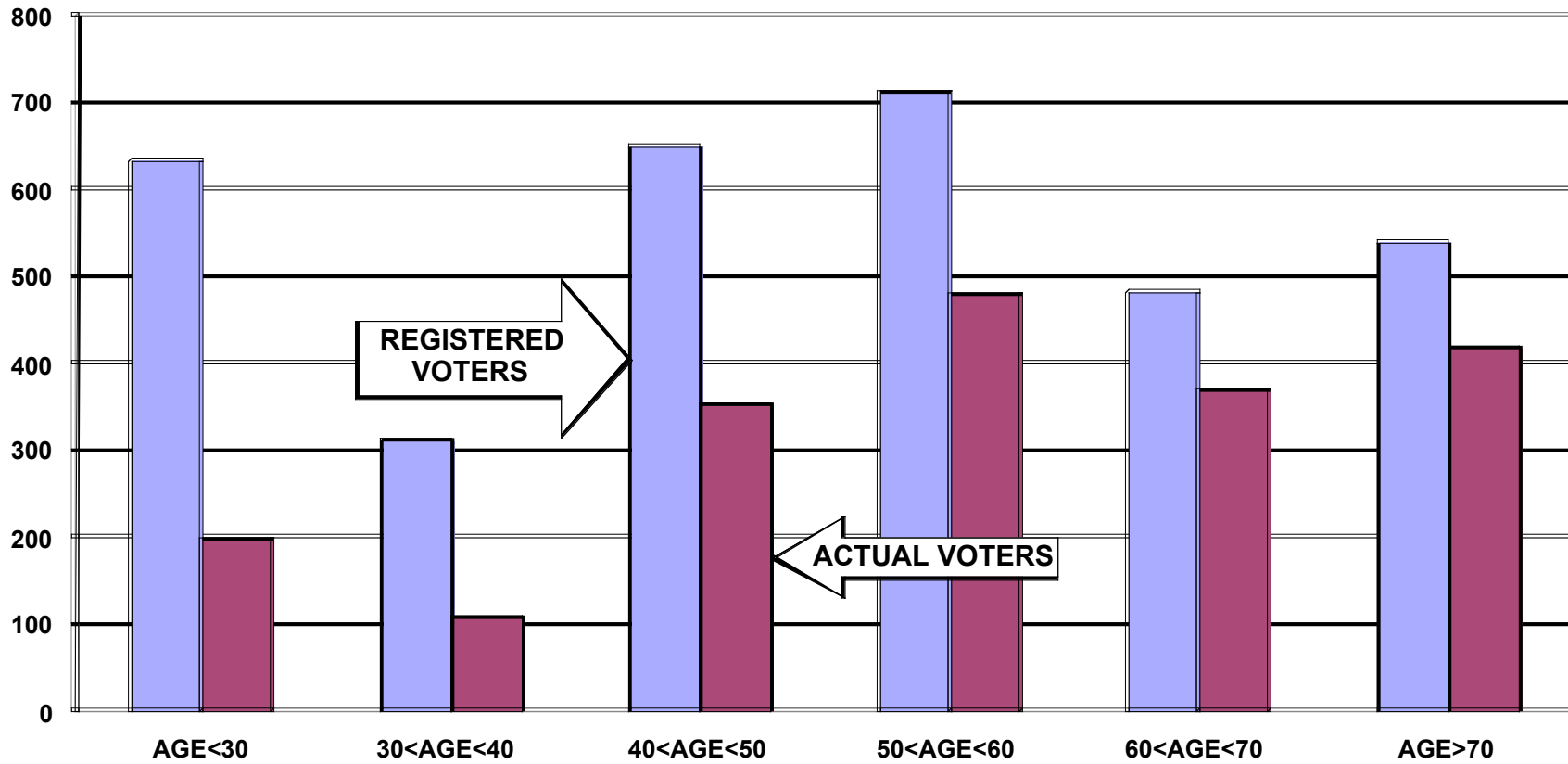
REGISTERED VOTER TURNOUT COMPARISON OF STANISLAUS COUNTY AND SACRED HEART PARISH HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD



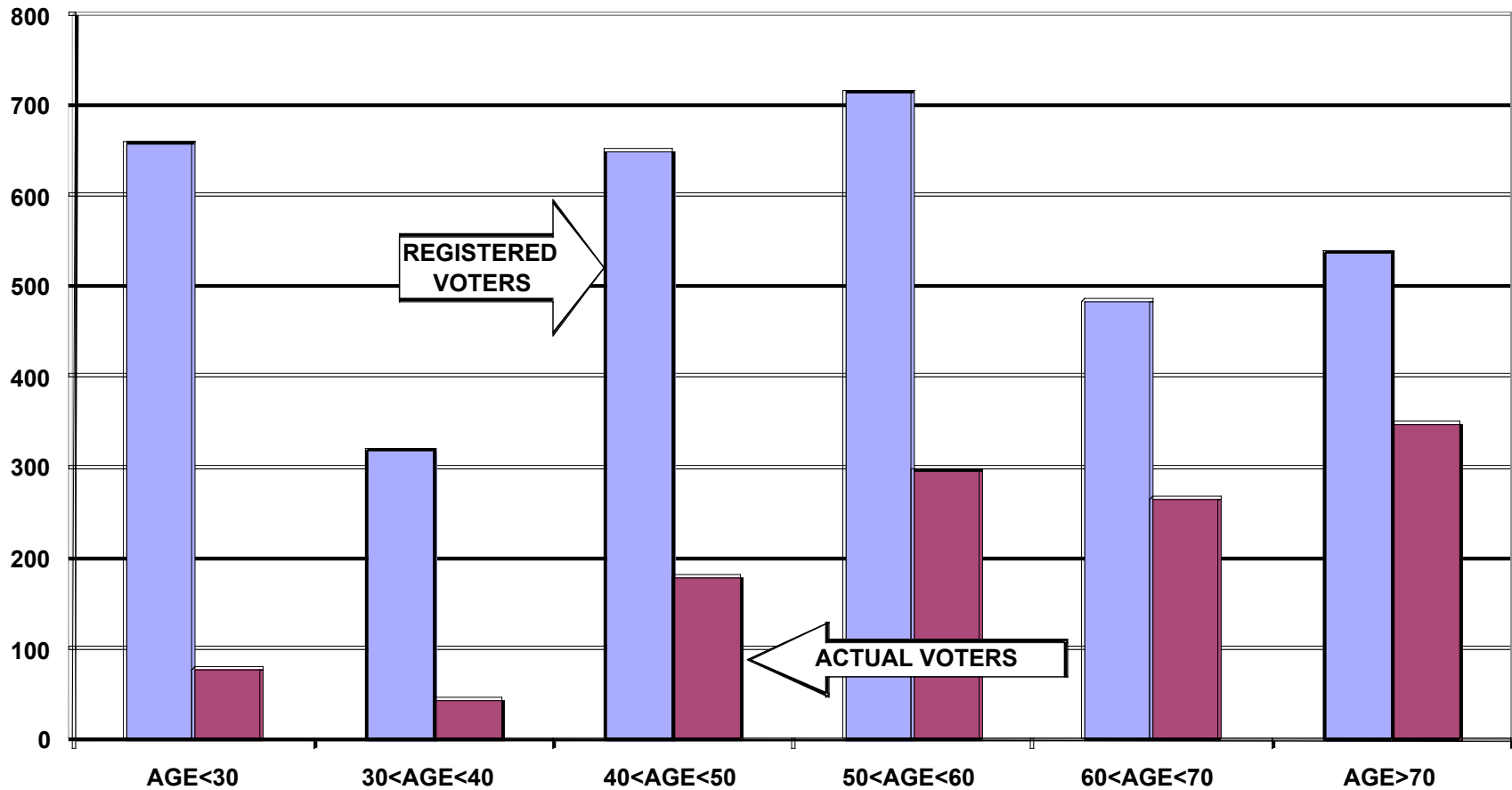
**DIFFERENCE IN VOTER TURNOUT BETWEEN
STANISLAUS COUNTY VOTERS
AND SACRED HEART VOTERS
HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD**



**REGISTERED VOTERS VERSUS ACTUAL VOTERS FEBRUARY 2008
SACRED HEART PARISH
ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS**



REGISTERED VOTERS VERSUS ACTUAL VOTERS JUNE 2008 SACRED HEART PARISH ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



REGISTERED VOTERS VERSUS ACTUAL VOTERS NOVEMBER 2008 SACRED HEART PARISH ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

