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# NY CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 03 - FEB 2024 POST-ELECTION ANALYSIS

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Prepared for AARP New York



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PREPARED BY GOTHAM GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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## Executive Summary

Commissioned by Gotham Government Relations on behalf of AARP New York, this study analyzes voter turnout and patterns in the February 13, 2024 special election in U.S. Congressional District NY-3, which sought a successor to Republican George Santos. Main points from the study are as follow:

- 1. Dominance of the 50-Plus Voting Bloc:** Voters age 50 and older constituted 71.2% of the electorate, reinforcing their status as the most influential voting demographic. Women turned out in marginally higher number than men.
- 2. Cross-Party Strength of 50-Plus Voters:** Voters age 50 and older participated at a significantly higher rate than those younger, whether Democratic, Republican, or unaffiliated.
- 3. Key Voting Blocs:** Democratic women age 50 and older emerged as the most substantial voting bloc, followed by Republican men 50 and over. The underperformance of Republican voters overall, though, especially Republican women 50 and over, contrasted sharply with anticipated participation rates. Participation of the respective groups underscores their critical role in the outcome.
- 4. Registration and Voting Patterns:** Democratic women age 50 and over held a large advantage in registration. This advantage led to higher participation numbers, which had significant impact on the election outcome.
- 5. Comparative Analysis of Voting Methods:** The election witnessed a nearly even split between in-person (51.8%) and alternative (48.2%) voting methods. The preference for alternative voting methods among Democrats 50 and older, coupled with the inclement weather on Election Day, likely had significant influence on turnout and voting patterns.

## Study Parameters

A special election for New York’s 3rd Congressional District (NYCD03) was conducted on February 13, 2024 to fill the vacancy left by Republican George Santos. This analysis, based on certified data from the New York State Board of Elections, explores the outcome, where Democrat Thomas Suozzi (93,183 votes) won against Republican Mazi Pilip (69,778 votes). NYCD03 spans Nassau County and parts of Queens County. The study aims to identify voting patterns and insights, comparing the results with a pre-election forecast by Gotham.

Typically, participation in House special elections is notably low, often not surpassing half the turnout of recent general elections, with many instances seeing less than a quarter. Such trends are exacerbated when elections occur outside the usual political schedule and coincide with extreme weather, like the near blizzard on February 13. Furthermore, shifts in party representation in special elections are uncommon without the backdrop of a scandal, which played a role here with the vacancy left by Santos. The race garnered heightened media attention due to the slim balance of power in the U.S. House of Representatives, potentially boosting voter interest. Additionally, Suozzi's prior tenure as congressman for the district and his recognition contrasted with Pilip's lesser-known status outside of Nassau County — which is home to 4 of 5 of the district’s voters – likely impacted the election.

For our analysis, we scrutinized three key datasets: current voter registrations, certified outcomes of the special election, and a “Likely Voter” model that served as a predictive tool in the pre-election study. This model encompassed individuals who participated in both the 2022 general election and a 2023 election (either a primary or the November general). These criteria were selected to provide a comprehensive view of the election results, facilitate comparisons with the entire voter base, and align with the predicted “Likely Voter” set.

The numbers in these three groups were then examined using graphic visualizations to contrast and compare multiple views of party, gender and age. (Blank registrations are independents who have not chosen a party.) Data on minor political parties and other gender categories have been excluded from the detailed presentation due to their statistical insignificance here. However, these figures are incorporated into the overall population totals used for calculating percentages.

## Key Observations

- 1. Chart 1** (Results by Age, Gender) shows that age 50-plus voters comprised 71.2% of total votes in the special election, demonstrating the consistent strength of this voting bloc. Note also, while under-50 voters were evenly distributed between men and women, 50 and over women voters voted in slightly higher number than 50 and over men.
- 2. Chart 2** (Results by Age, Party) compares the vote across political parties and demonstrates the strength of the 50-plus group across Democratic, Republican and unaffiliated (blank) voters. Age 50-plus Democrats and Republicans voted in the special at a rate greater than 3:1, while unaffiliated voters voted at a rate nearly 2:1.
- 3. Chart 3** (Results by Age, Party, Gender) further delineates from Chart 2 by gender. Democratic women 50 plus were the largest voting bloc, 17.9%, followed by Republican men 50 and over. (14.1%).
- 4. Chart 4** (Registered by Party, Gender, Age) shows registration numbers. The top 3 groups are women, with Democratic women 50 and over (72,408) far outnumbering everyone else, followed by Democratic women under-50 (60,025) and Republican women 50 plus (53,088).
- 5. Chart 5** (Results by Party, Sex, Age) presents data from Chart 3 in bar form, facilitating a clearer comparison of the voting patterns among 50-plus and under-50 groups within the Democratic, Republican, and unaffiliated voters. It distinctly highlights the significant influence of Democratic women ages 50 and over. Notably, Democratic women emerged as

the predominant subgroup. Conversely, in the Republican and unaffiliated categories, men substantially exceeded women, a trend consistent across both age groups.

6. **Chart 6** (Results by Party, Age) places the data from Chart 5 on a percentage axis to display the composition of each group. Partisan voters in the special election were comprised overwhelmingly of those 50 and over, with the highest group by percentage being Republican women (77.9%). The majority of unaffiliated voters, however, were under age 50.
7. **Chart 7** (Results compared) examines special election results across party, gender and age, and compares how those groups voted previously. Special elections are historically low-participation events, so the goal was to get a sense of how each subgroup performed against past participation rates. The upper bound (in orange) was the 2022 general election while the lower bound (in gray) was a “Likely” voter group that had voted in both 2022 and 2023. Results from the special were charted as a blue line. The further away the blue line was from the gray zone, the better the group performed against its presumed baseline. Democratic women 50 and over had the best turnout relative to their historic voting records, followed by Democratic women under 50. The worst performing group relative to previous years was Republican women under 50, followed by Republican men under 50.
8. **Chart 8** examines special election results across party and age to compare the method of voting, whether at the polling site on Election Day or via another method (voting early, absentee, or other). Historically, Republicans have been more likely to vote in person on Election Day. The data shows that just 89,401 (51.8%) of all voters (172,357) voted in person on Election Day while 82,956 (48.2%) voted by some other method. Democrats 50 and over (who were also the largest voting group by number) were the most likely to vote by some other method. Across all three groups, Democrat, Republican and unaffiliated who voted in the special election, under-50 voters were more likely to show up to vote on

Election Day at the polling site than their 50-plus counterparts. The severely inclement weather may have impacted in-person voting disproportionately among older voters.

## Conclusions

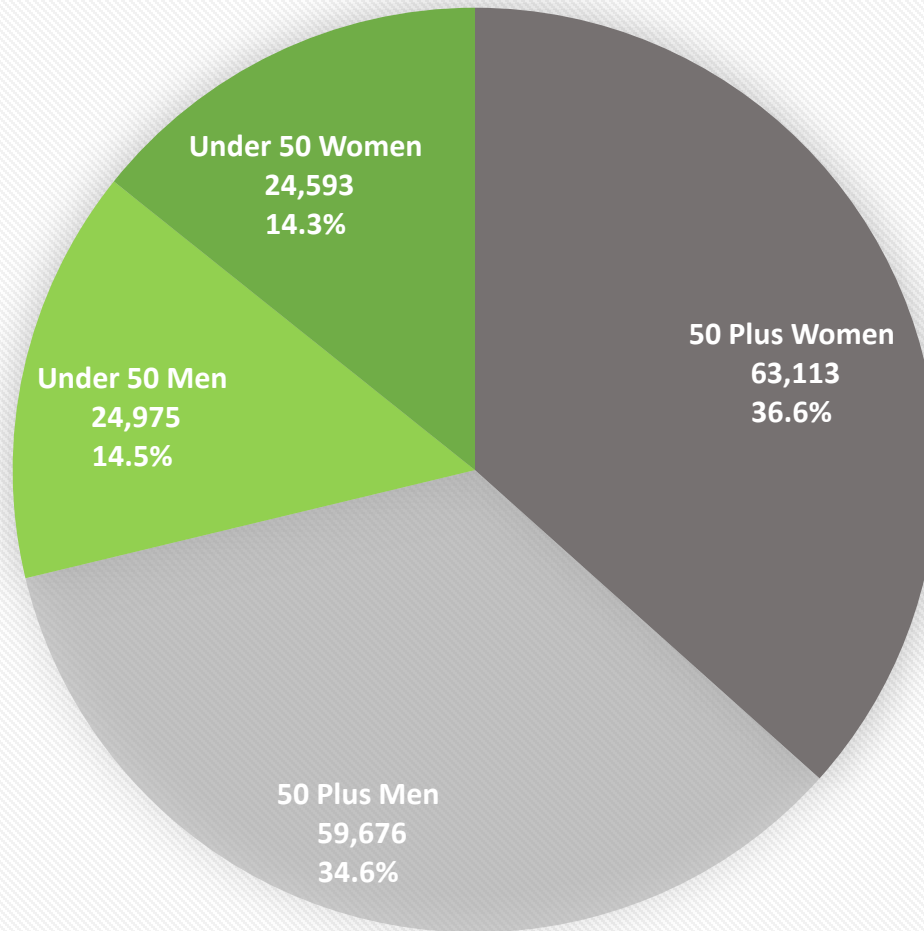
Results of the analysis of the data available shows that:

1. Voters 50-plus demonstrated convincingly that they are the most powerful and reliable voting group, comprising over 7 of 10 voters in the NYCD03 special election. This is in line with previous studies which forecast up to 3 of 4, which is not surprising given previous studies<sup>1</sup> where up to 80% of frequent voters in Nassau County were 50 plus.
2. Democratic women 50 and over were the prime drivers of this election and to a much lesser extent, Democrat women under-50. Considering their substantial numerical advantage in registration over every other group, this is not surprising. In recent prior elections, however, their turnout did not always reflect their proportional advantage.
3. Simply put, Republicans did not turn out in the numbers expected for the Republican candidate to win. Republican Pilip lost to Democrat Suozzi 79,290 to 93,183. While Republican men 50 plus were the second largest voting bloc after Democratic women 50 and older, in order to overcome the nearly 14,000 registration gap, Republicans and sympathetic unaffiliateds would have had to turn out in higher number. Republican women 50 and over pointedly underperformed in the range expected based on past election ratios. The relatively stronger showing of Democratic women 50 and over vs. Republican women 50 plus could reflect interest in a policy issue like reproductive rights or other factors more related to candidate familiarity.

4. Given that the day of the special election was near blizzard conditions, some registered voters may not have made it to the polls as planned. Since Republicans traditionally have preferred in-person election day voting, this may have negatively impacted the number of their voters. Democratic 50-plus voters clearly preferred an alternative form of voting, which may have enabled them to get their votes in prior to the bad weather and thus have less effect on their totals. Interestingly, across all party choices, under-50 voters were more likely to vote at the polling site on Election Day. Again, they might have been more willing to brave bad weather or simply preferred in-person voting, while 50-plus voters preferred alternate means.

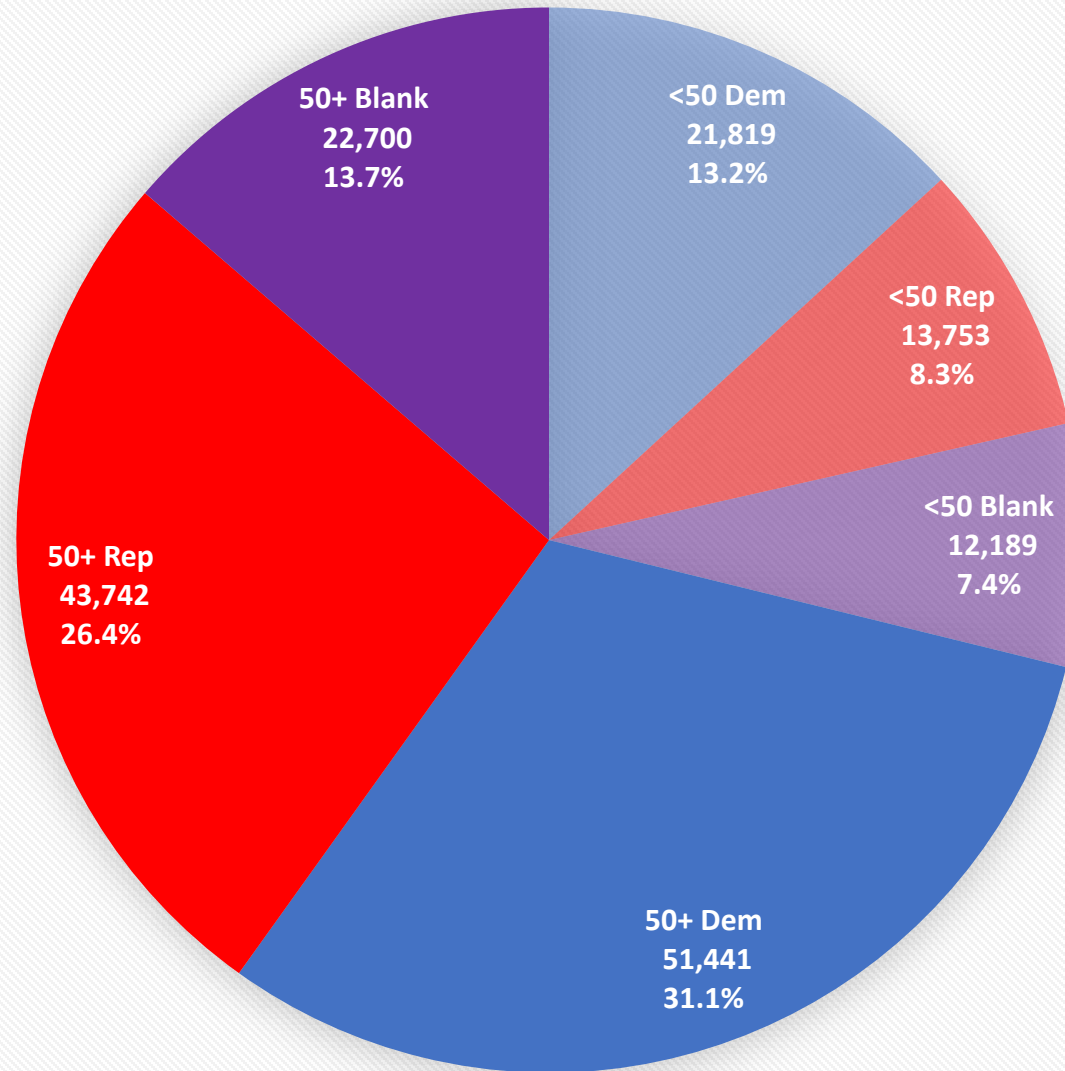
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**Chart 1: NYCD03 Feb 2024 Special Election Results  
by Age, Sex**

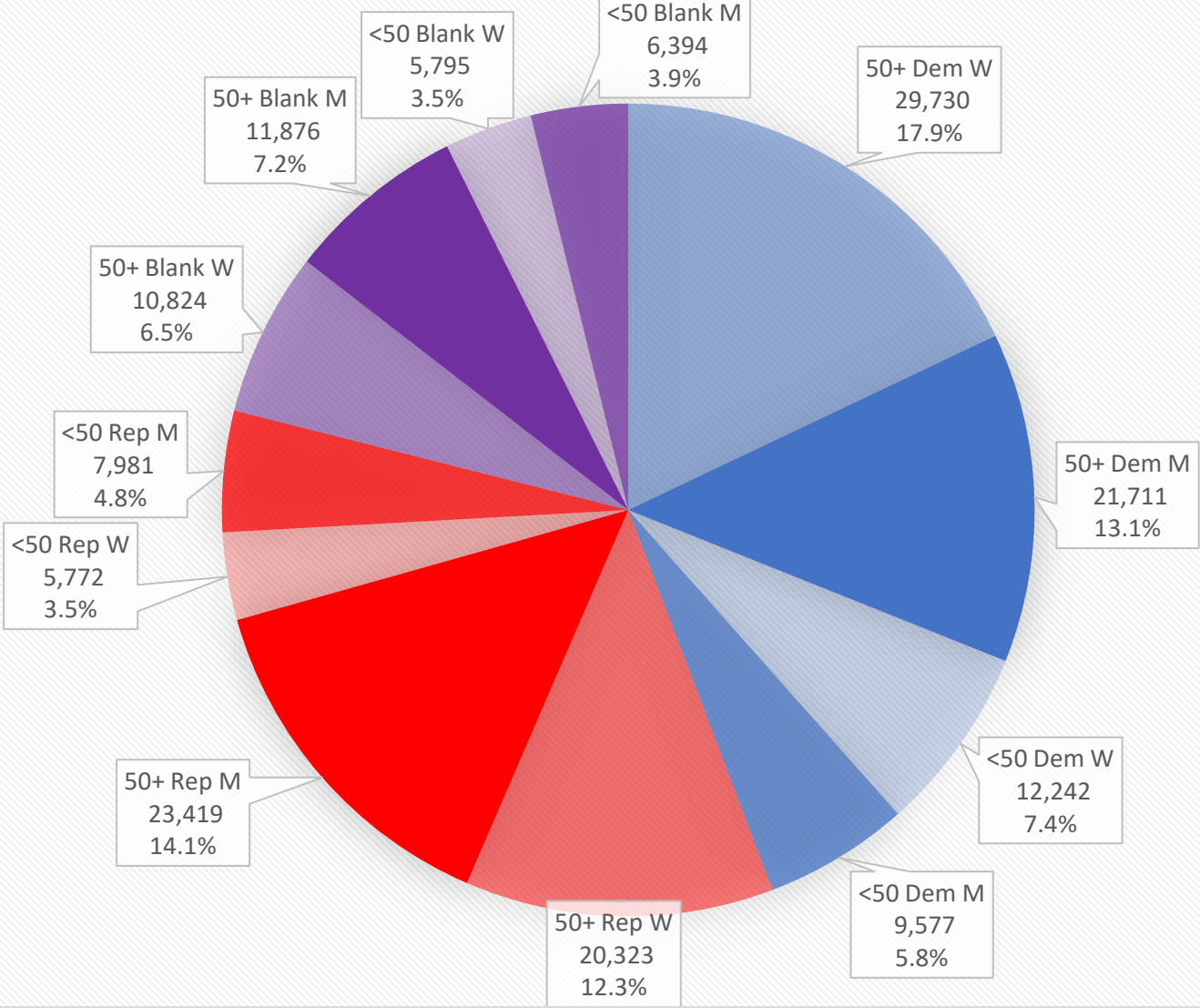




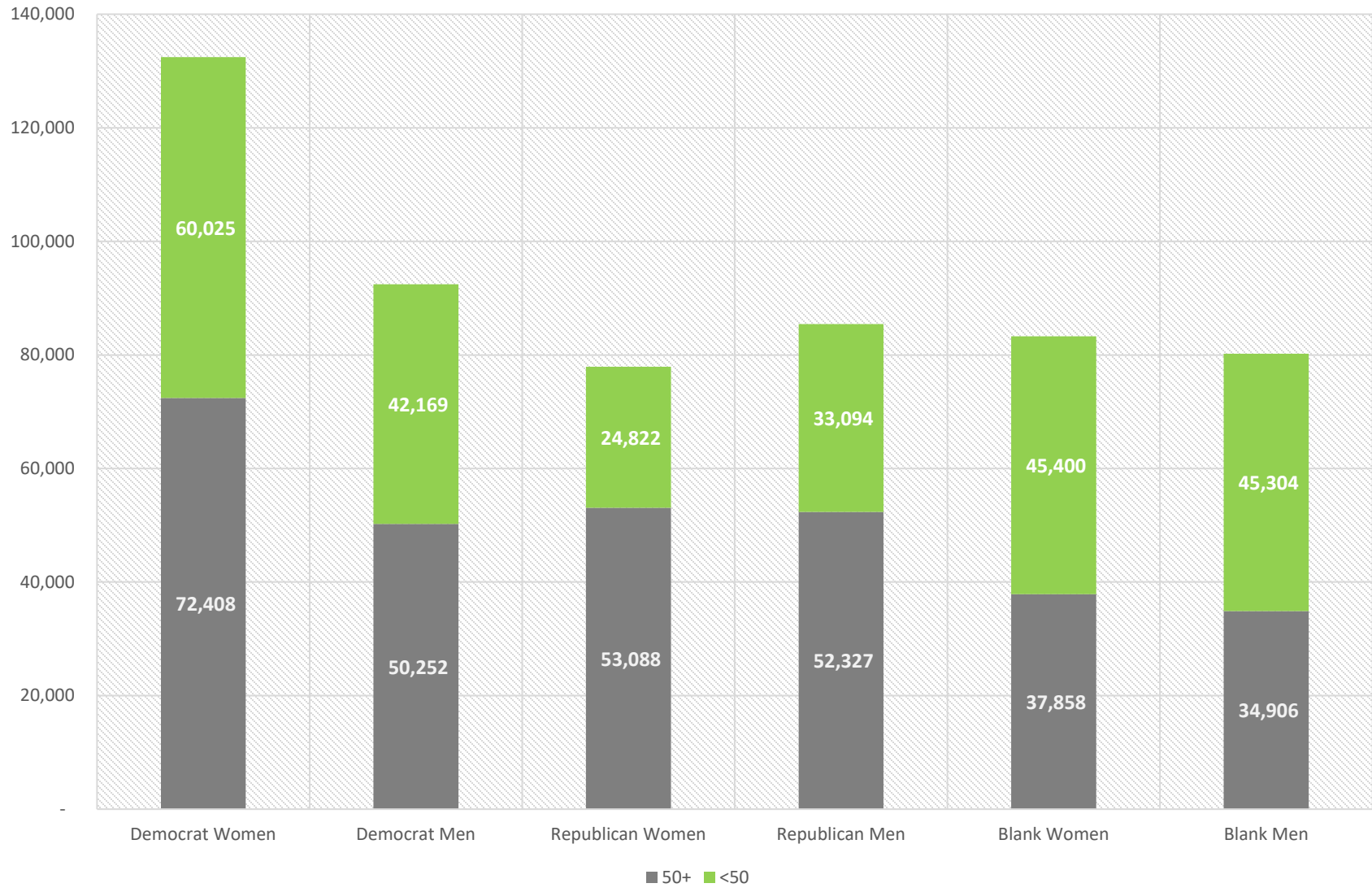
**Chart 2: NYCD03 Feb 2024 Special Election Results  
by Age, Party**



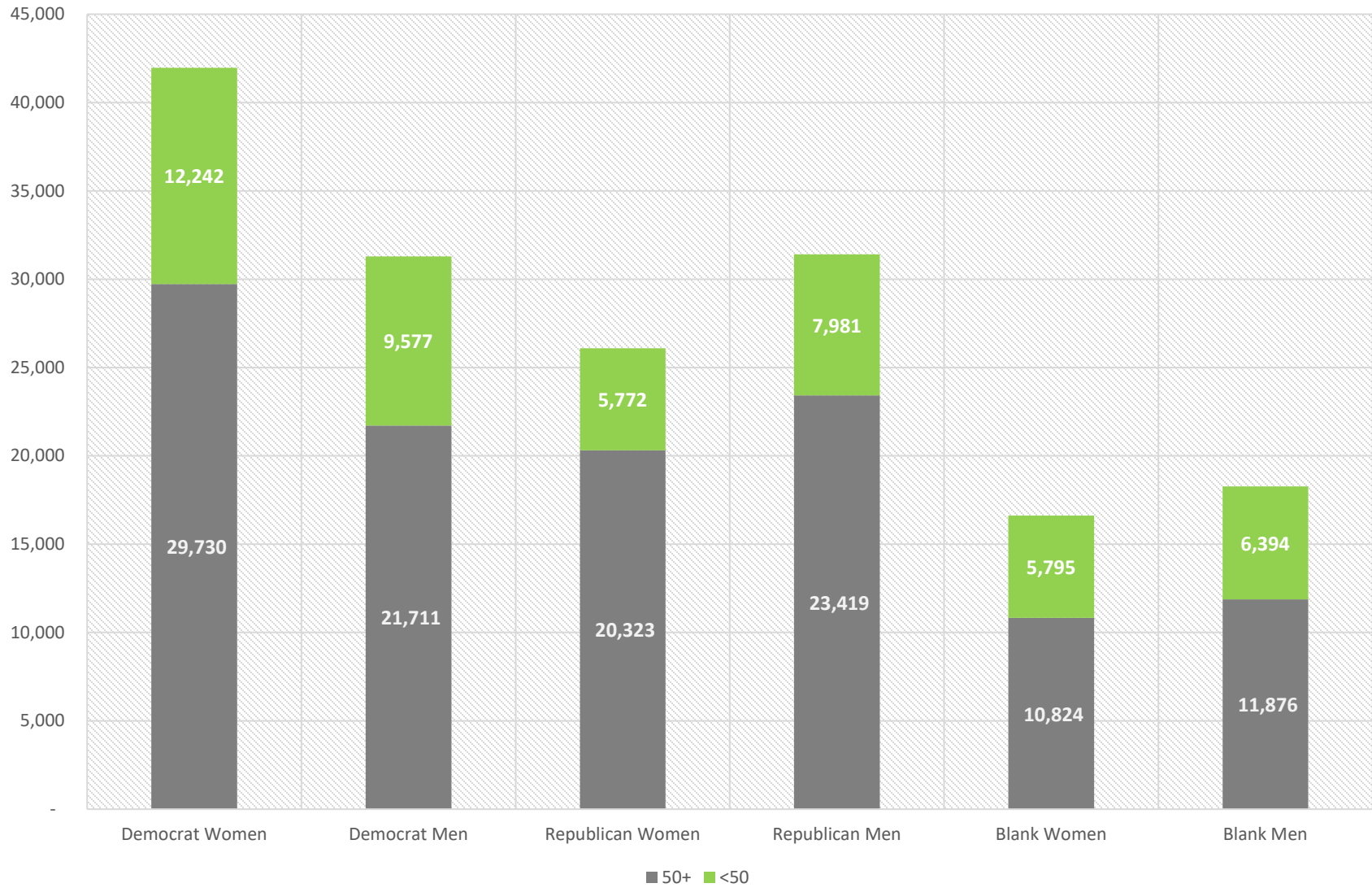
**Chart 3: NYCD03 Feb 2024 Special Election Results  
by Age, Party, Sex**



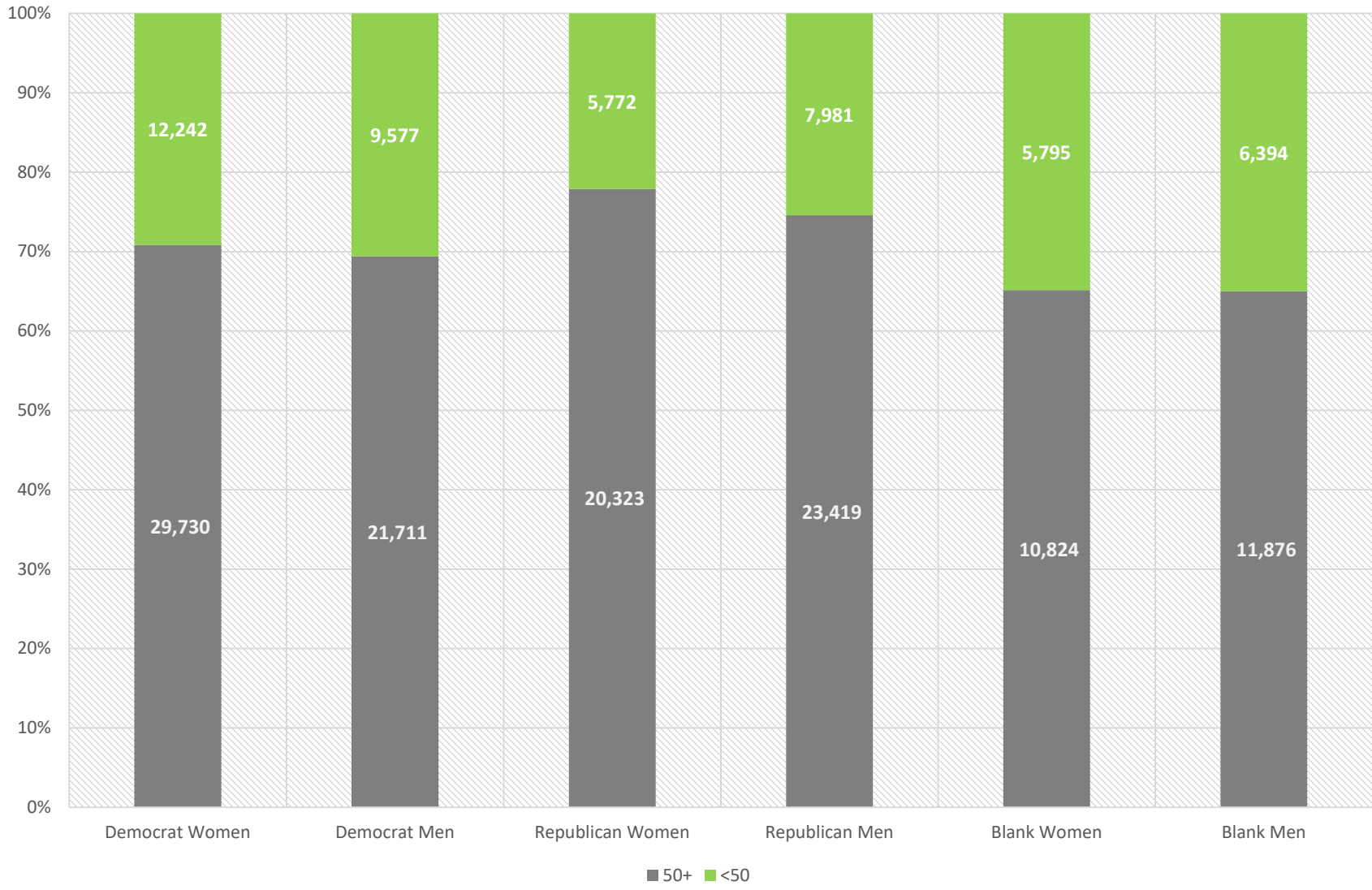
**Chart 4: NYCD03 Registered Voters  
March 2024 by Party, Sex, Age**



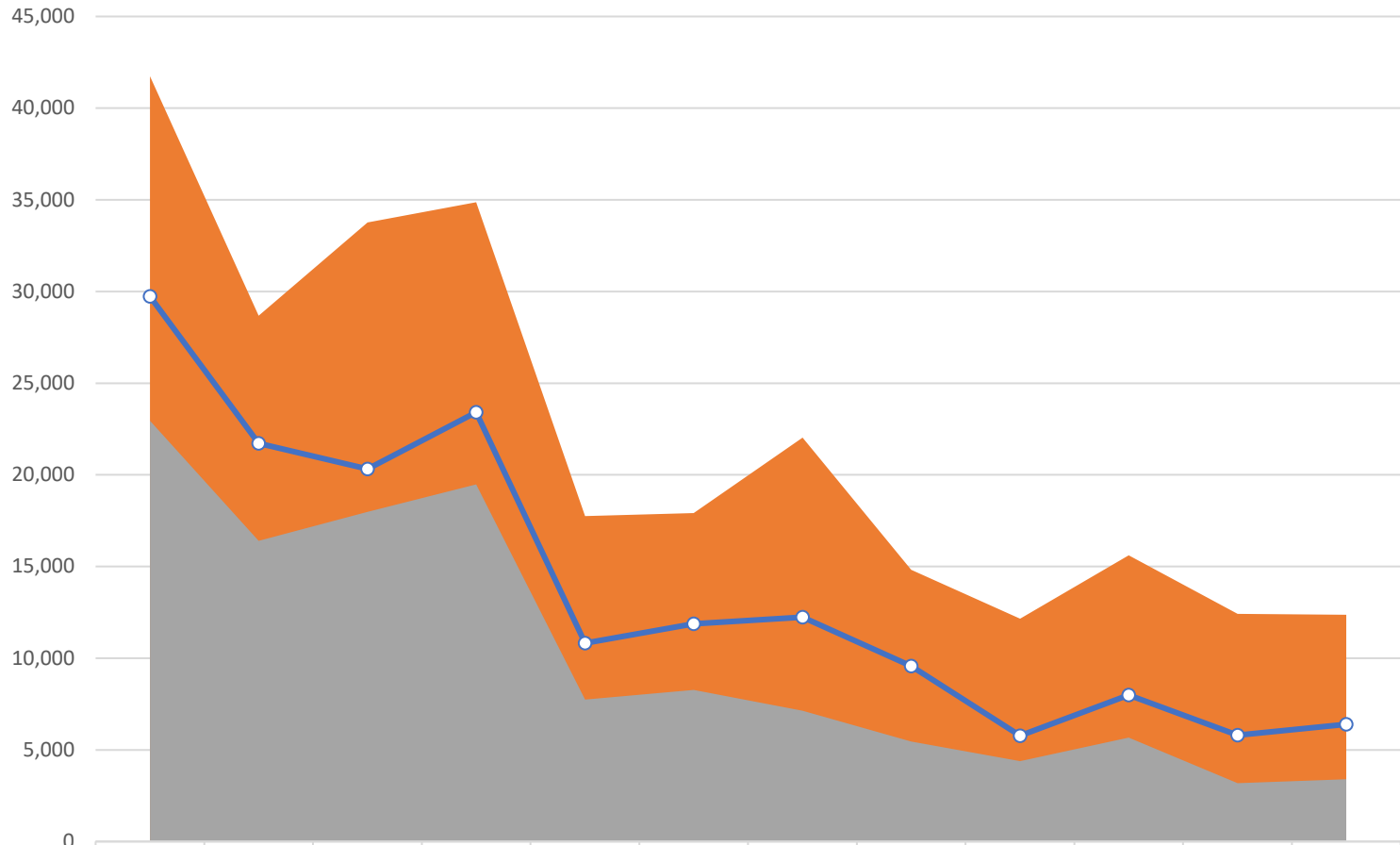
**Chart 5: Feb 2024 Special Election Results  
by Party, Sex, Age**



**Chart 6: Feb 2024 Special Election Results  
by Party, Sex, Age (% Axis)**



**Chart 7: NYCD03 Feb 2024 Special Election Results  
Comparing Turnout to General and Likely Voters**



	50+ Dem W	50+ Dem M	50+ Rep W	50+ Rep M	50+ Blk W	50+ Blk M	<50 Dem W	<50 Dem M	<50 Rep W	<50 Rep M	<50 Blk W	<50 Blk M
<span style="color: orange;">■</span> Voted 2022 General	41,742	28,677	33,773	34,863	17,749	17,916	22,032	14,828	12,147	15,609	12,424	12,375
<span style="color: grey;">■</span> Voted in 2022+2023	22,951	16,405	17,973	19,483	7,739	8,268	7,139	5,452	4,388	5,662	3,186	3,401
<span style="color: blue;">○</span> Voted 2024 Special	29,730	21,711	20,323	23,419	10,824	11,876	12,242	9,577	5,772	7,981	5,795	6,394

**Chart 8: NYCD03 Feb 2024 Special Election Results  
by Voting Method (% Axis)**

