

MEDIA COVERAGE

Select Newspaper Reports and Commentary

“‘Turnout was up across the board. Youth turnout increased and kept up with the overall increase,’ said Carrie Donovan, CIRCLE’s young vote director.” - *The Dallas Morning News*, November 3, 2004

“Researchers at the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement estimate that 4.6 million more people under the age of 30 voted this year as compared to 2000, based on exit polls...”
- *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 8, 2004

“The 2004 presidential race, as far as the youth vote was concerned, was a landmark election, bringing out nearly 21 million voters under the age of 30 to the polls, according to Peter Levine, CIRCLE’s deputy director.” - *The Washington Post*, November 9, 2004

“‘We did reach a lot more young people,’ said Mark Lopez, research director of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement ...” - *Sun-Sentinel*, November 7, 2004

“Organizers across the political spectrum were thrilled that 21 million Americans younger than 30 voted Tuesday...according to exit poll information analyzed by the University of Maryland’s Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement.”
- *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 7, 2004

“‘Young people are clearly not monolithically Democrats or monolithically left leaning....They are diverse just like the rest of America,’ [Mark] Lopez said.” - *Star Ledger*, November 4, 2004



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THE 2004 YOUTH VOTE



2004
2000
1996
1992
1988
1984
1980
1976
1972



CIRCLE

The Center for Information & Research
on Civic Learning & Engagement

CIRCLE

The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement – CIRCLE – is an impartial, nonpartisan research organization that promotes research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. CIRCLE conducts and funds research on projects that have practical implications for those who work to increase young people’s engagement in politics and civic life. CIRCLE is also a clearinghouse for relevant information and scholarship. CIRCLE was founded in 2001 with a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts and is now also funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York and other sources. It is based in the University of Maryland’s School of Public Policy.

Voting and Civic Engagement

Although civic engagement can take many forms and be expressed in a wide variety of ways – from involvement in neighborhood and civic organizations to playing an active role in politics and government – voting is a key indicator of citizen engagement in the democratic process. It can show levels of interest, preferences for candidates and political parties, and views on the major public policy issues of the day. Voting by itself does not indicate the depth of engagement by a citizen, but it is necessary for a democracy to flourish.

CIRCLE conducts and funds youth engagement related research on a wide variety of areas including:

- Political participation and voting
 - K-12 civic education
 - Civic knowledge
 - Youth attitudes and beliefs
 - Service learning
- Higher education
 - Concepts of citizenship
 - Race, gender and immigrant status
 - Non-college 18-25’s community participation

CIRCLE staff:

William A. Galston - Director

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A wide array of reports and data is available, including multiple fact sheets on topics covered in this report, on CIRCLE’s Web site at www.civicyouth.org.

The 2004 Youth Vote

At a Glance

The 2004 elections featured a surge in participation by younger voters, not only reversing a trend, but showing the sharpest increase in turnout over 2000 for any age group.

Turnout

- 49 percent of 18-29 year-olds turned out to vote, up from 40 percent in the 2000 election.
- 47 percent of 18-24 year-olds turned out, up from 36 percent in 2000.
- The turnout was the highest among young voters since 1992.
- More than 20.1 million Americans under the age of 30 cast ballots, an increase of 4.3 million compared to 2000. More than 11.6 million under the age of 25 voted, three million more than in 2000.
- 16 percent of the total votes were cast by those under the age of 30. More than nine percent were cast by 18-24 year olds.

Trends and Sub-groups

Gender: The difference in the turnout rate among 18-24 year-old women and men was the widest ever at six percentage points. Nearly half, 50 percent, of young women voted compared to 44 percent of young men.

Race: The turnout rate was higher than it was in 2000 among all racial/ethnic groups, including an increase of seven percentage points for African-Americans age 18-29, and six percentage points for Latinos.

Education: Those 18-24 year-olds with at least some college experience were far more likely to vote than those with no college experience (59 percent versus 34 percent), continuing a trend since 1972.

Bush v. Kerry

Young voters supported Senator John Kerry over President George Bush, 54-45 percent among under-30 voters, and 56-43 percent among under-25 voters. They were one of only two age groups (along with those over the age of 75) to back Kerry over Bush.

The presidential preference was driven by the wide margins of African-American and Latino youth who supported Kerry, while white youth favored President Bush.

Political Party Identification Among Voters

Young voters were slightly more likely to identify themselves as Democrats than older voters with 39 percent of 18-24 year-old voters, 37 percent of 18-29 year-old voters, and 36 percent of voters over the age of 30 identifying themselves as Democrats. Nearly a third, 32 percent, of 18-24 year-old voters identified themselves as Republicans, 35 percent of 18-29 year-old voters, and 38 percent of those voters age 30 and over. All three age groups had similar percentages that identified themselves as Independents with 22 percent of 18-24 year-old voters, 21 percent of 18-29 year-olds voters, and 23 percent of voters over the age of 30.

Issues

Young voters’ views about the most important issues were similar to older voters. “Moral values” was chosen as the most important issue followed by economy/jobs, terrorism, and the war in Iraq.



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Youth Vote Up Sharply

In the summer and fall of 2004, experts and other observers predicted a large voter turnout on Election Day, and when Americans went to the polls on November 2 those forecasts came true. The overall voter turnout rate of 64 percent for all adults was the highest since 1968.

More than any other age group, youth voters led the way with the largest gains in turnout over 2000. The surge was especially large among the youngest voters, 18-24 year olds. And increases in youth voter turnout cut across all demographic groups, contributing to the highest youth voter turnout since 1992.

The confluence of extensive voter outreach efforts, a close election, and high levels of interest in the 2004 election played a role in increasing turnout and reversing a long-term trend of declining participation among young people.

Within the youth vote, a few gaps in participation continued to widen, most notably between women and men and between college and non-college young people. White youth continued to vote in larger numbers, and at a higher rate than other racial/ethnic groups, but the growing influence of African-American and Latino youth was clear. They make up

an increasingly significant share of young voters. And, while younger voters as a group supported Senator Kerry over President Bush, that preference was driven by the large margins of support for Kerry among young people belonging to racial minorities.

Turnout

Young people participated in the 2004 election in considerably larger numbers than they had in the previous two presidential elections. Nearly half, 49 percent, of 18-29 year-olds turned out to vote, up nine percentage points from the 2000 election. The turnout rate for 18-24 year-olds was up 11 percentage points to 47 percent, up from 36 percent in 2000. More than 20 million voters under the age of 30 cast votes in 2004, an increase of 4.3 million from 2000. There was also a sizeable increase among 18-24 year-olds, with more than 11.6 million voting, up three million from 2000.

The 2004 elections saw higher turnout rates among all age groups. Despite this overall increase, the share of votes cast by young voters was up in 2004. The percentage of all voters who were 18-24 was 9.3 percent, up from 7.8 percent in 2000, and voters under the age of 30 accounted for 16 percent of all voters, up from 14.3 percent in 2000.

Voter Turnout Among Citizens November 2000 and 2004			
	2000	2004	Percentage Point Difference
18-24	36%	47%	+11 % points
25-34	51%	56%	+5 % points
35-44	60%	64%	+4 % points
45-54	66%	69%	+3 % points
55-64	70%	73%	+3 % points
65-74	72%	73%	+1 % points
75+	67%	69%	+2 % points
All Ages	60%	64%	+4 % points

Source: Authors' tabulations from the CPS Nov. Voting and Registration Supplements, 1972-2004

Voter Turnout and Votes Cast in millions						
Year	Votes Cast by 18-24 Year-olds	Turnout 18-24 Year-olds	Votes Cast by 18-29 Year-olds	Turnout 18-29 Year-olds	Votes Cast by Voters 30 and Older	Turnout by Voters 30 and older
1972	12.2	52%	20.7	55%	65	70%
1976	11.4	44%	20.5	49%	66.2	67%
1980	11.2	43%	20.7	48%	72.3	71%
1984	11.4	44%	22	49%	79.8	71%
1988	9.2	40%	18.5	44%	83.7	69%
1992	10.4	49%	20	52%	93.7	72%
1996	7.9	36%	15.6	40%	89.4	64%
2000	8.6	36%	15.9	40%	95	65%
2004	11.6	47%	20.1	49%	105.6	68%

Source: Authors' tabulations from the CPS Nov. Voting and Registration Supplements, 1972-2004

The higher turnout rates among young voters in 2004 reversed a trend of declining youth voter turnout since 1972. In 2004, 18-24 year-olds cast the greatest number of votes since 1972, the first year 18 year-olds were eligible to vote.

Candidates

Young voters favored Kerry over Bush by significant margins with those under the age of 30 supporting Kerry over Bush 54-45 percent, and those 18-24 supporting Kerry 56-43 percent. Those voters 75 and older were the only other age group to favor Kerry over Bush.

Issues

Young voters had similar views on many issues as all voters. Among under-30 voters, for example, 22 percent said "moral values" was the most important issue, the same percentage as all voters. However, on some prominent issues, they differed dramatically. Notably, 41 percent favor gay marriage, compared to 25

percent of all voters. Voters under 30 were also 10 percentage points more likely to believe that "government should do more to solve problems."

Political Party Identification

The youngest voters, those 18-24, were significantly more likely than voters 18-29 to identify themselves a Democrat.

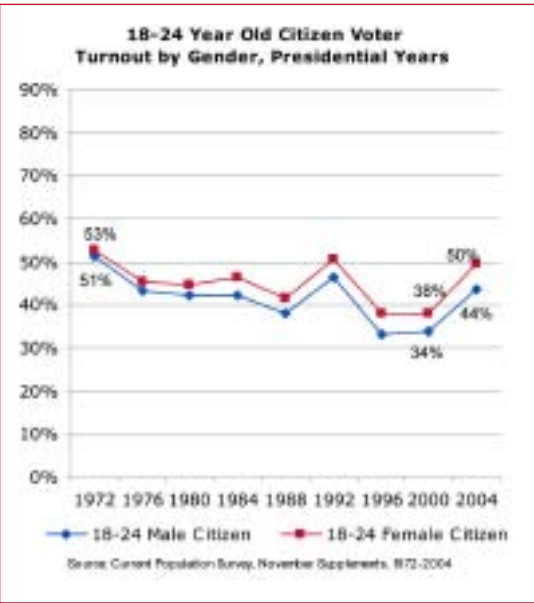
Political Party Identification Among Voters in 2004		
18-24 year olds	18-29 year-olds	Age 30 and over
39% Democrats	37% Democrats	36% Democrats
32% Republicans	35% Republicans	38% Republicans
22% Independents	21% Independents	23% Independents

Source: 2004 National Exit Poll from the National Election Pool

The 2004 Youth Vote

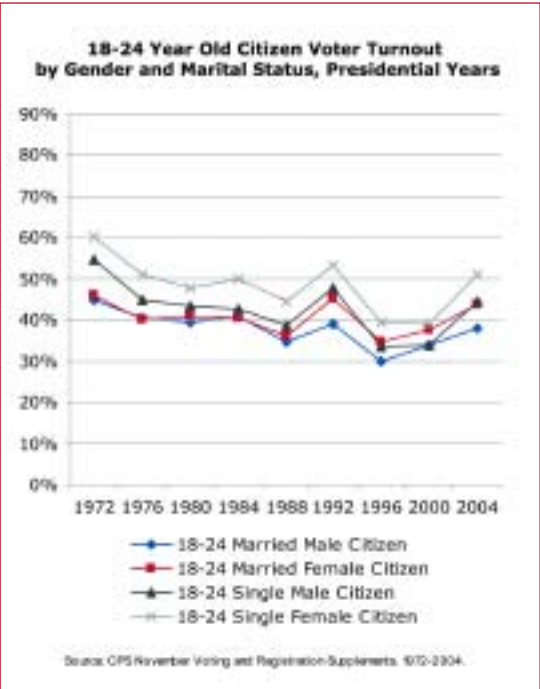
Young Female and Male Voters “Gender Gap” Widens

The gap between the turnout rates of young women and men was the widest ever among the youngest voters in the 2004 election. Nearly 50 percent of the 12.5 million 18-24 year old female citizens and 44 percent of the 12.4 million male citizens voted in the 2004 elections. The difference in turnout rate between men and women, the so-called gender gap, widened to nearly six percentage points among this age group. That is the largest margin since 18-year-olds began voting in 1972, when there was virtually no difference between the turnout rates of young women and men. The gap in 2004 is nearly two percentage points wider than in 2000. For the 18-29 age group, the gender gap has widened to seven percentage points.



Single and Married

The percentage of single young men and women who went to the polls grew at twice the rate as their married counterparts. The turnout rate among single women age 18-24 led the way and increased 12 percentage points, or about a third, since 2000. Single young men's voter turnout rate jumped nearly 10 percentage points. But the turnout rates for young married women only grew by six points and for young married men by four points.



Candidates and Political Party Identification

Young women were more likely to favor Kerry over Bush than young men. Young women voters under the age of 30 favored Kerry over

The 2004 Youth Vote

Bush 56-43 percent, while young men favored Kerry over Bush 51-48 percent. Female voters who were 18-29 were much more likely than males in that age range to identify with the Democratic Party, with males more likely to identify themselves as Republican or Independent.

Political Party Identification - 18-29 Year-old Voters

Women	Men
43% Democrat	30% Democrat
32% Republican	37% Republican
18% Independent	25% Independent
7% other	8% other

Source: 2004 National Exit Poll from the National Election Pool

Racial/Ethnic Voters Higher Turnout Rates Among all Racial/Ethnic Groups

While it was lower than the turnout of whites, the turnout among young African-Americans and Latinos rose substantially in the 2004 elections over 2000. These groups accounted for more than half of the 4.3 million additional under-30 voters who went to the polls in 2004 compared to 2000.

Compared to 2000, the turnout rate for African-Americans age 18-29 was up more than seven percentage points, the rate for Latinos was up more than six percentage points, and the rate among whites was up nearly 10 percentage

2004 Voter Turnout Rates by Race/Ethnicity	
18-24 year olds	18-29 year-olds
47% of African-Americans	50% of African-Americans
33% of Latinos	36% of Latinos
50% of whites	52% of whites
36% of Asians	32% of Asians
37% of Native Americans	35% of Native Americans

Source: Authors' tabulations from the CPS November Voting and Registration Supplements, 1972-2004. Please see note 1 in methodology section.

points. The overall turnout rate among 18-29 year-olds grew by nine percentage points between 2000 and 2004.

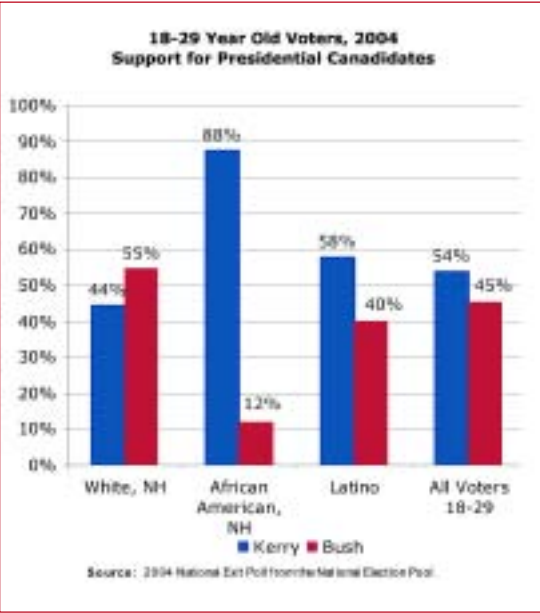
Voter turnout rates for women improved for all ethnicities/races in 2004. Prior to 2004, turnout rates for young white women in the 18-24 year-old age group had consistently fallen since 1972, with one spike in 1992. Turnout rates for African-American women in this age range had generally improved since 1972 with a large spike in 1984.

Since 1972, the share of 18-24 year-old citizens who are white dropped from 87 percent to 62 percent in 2004, while the share of young African-Americans grew from 12 percent to 15 percent. Since 1976, the share of young Latino citizens grew from five percent to 12 percent in 2004. In 2004, there were 16.8 million white 18-24 year-old citizens, 3.6 million African-American citizens, and three million Latino citizens in this age range.

The 2004 Youth Vote

Candidates

The overall support of under-30 voters for Kerry over Bush was driven by young Latino and African-American voters. Young Latino voters supported Kerry over Bush 58-40 percent, and young African-American voters backed Kerry by 88-12 percent. White voters under the age of 30 were the only group of young voters to favor Bush over Kerry, 55-44 percent.



Political Party Identification

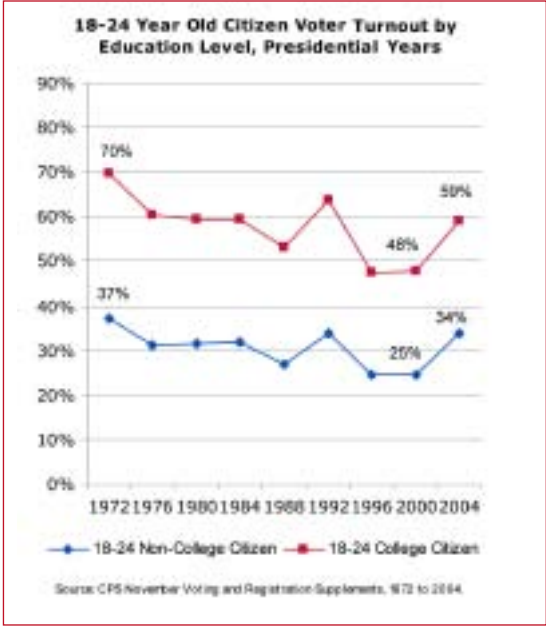
African-Americans voters who are 18-29 years-old were the most likely to identify themselves as Democrats and least likely to identify themselves as Republicans. For those voters 18-29, 70 percent of African-Americans identified themselves as Democrats, followed by 43 percent of Latinos, and 28 percent of whites. Young white voters had the highest percentage that identified themselves as Republicans, 44 percent, followed by Latinos at 21 percent and African-Americans at eight percent.

Educational Differences

Turnout Rate Gap Widens Between College and "Non-College" Voters

Since 1972, the first year 18 year-olds were eligible to vote, those under the age of 25 who have a high school education or less ("non-college attending") have consistently voted at levels much lower than those who are currently enrolled in college or those that have at least some exposure to college level courses or technical/vocational programs ("college attending").

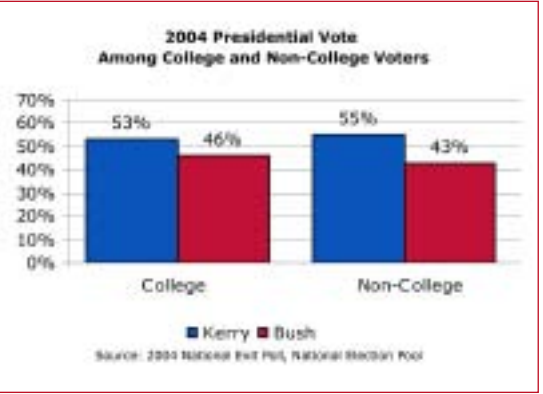
In 2004, 59 percent of college attending 18-24 year-olds voted, up 11 percentage points from 2000, and 34 percent of non-college attending youth voted, up nine percentage points from 2000.



The 2004 Youth Vote

Political Party Identification

In 2004, 37 percent of college and 36 percent of non-college youth voters under the age of 30 identified themselves as Democrats. Those with at least some college were more likely to identify themselves as Republican, 36 percent, than non-college youth at 31 percent.



Importance of Voting

Those 18-25 with at least some college are more likely to view voting as important compared to non-college youth (85 percent versus 73 percent), according to earlier CIRCLE research.

Engagement

According to an earlier 2004 CIRCLE survey, young Americans with at least some college experience are more likely to feel like they can make a difference in their communities than non-college youth, with 44 percent of college attending youth and 33 percent of non-college attending saying they can make a great deal or somewhat of a difference in their communities. Those with some college are much more likely to discuss politics with their parents (70 percent) than non-college youth (51 percent).

Turnout in the States

Rates Vary Widely Among the States

The youth voter turnout rate varied considerably among the states in the 2004 elections. Among 18-24 year-olds, Minnesota had the highest turnout rate at 69 percent, followed by Wisconsin at 63 percent, Iowa at 62 percent, and Maine at 59 percent. The lowest turnout rates among 18-24 year-olds occurred in Arkansas at 36 percent, Tennessee at 38 percent and Texas at 39 percent.

Many states saw significant gains in turnout among 18-24 year-old voters. In four states, New Hampshire, Kentucky, Minnesota, and Missouri, the turnout rate was at least 20 percentage points higher than it was in 2000. Three states, Connecticut, Virginia, and Arkansas experienced a decrease in the youth turnout rate compared to 2000.

Among all states, turnout rates for those under 25 was almost 20 percentage points lower than those 25 and older. Kentucky had the smallest difference in turnout rate among these age groups at 10 percentage points, while Kansas and Oregon had the highest difference at 28 percentage points.

Voter Turnout Among Citizens in 2004, by State						
State	Voter Turnout Among 18-24 year old Citizens in 2004	Voter Turnout Among 25 year old and older Citizens in 2004	Voter Turnout Among 18-24 year old Citizens in 1972	Voter Turnout Among 18-24 year old Citizens in 2000	Change in Youth Voter Turnout between 2000 and 2004 ⁵	Change in Youth Voter Turnout Between 1972 and 2004 ⁶
Alabama	44%	66%	42%	40%	+4% points	+2% points
Alaska	***	***	***	***	***	***
Arizona	42%	67%	44%	26%	+17% points	-2% points
Arkansas	36%	62%	40%	36%	-1% points	-4% points
California	45%	64%	63%	37%	+8% points	-18% points
Colorado	48%	70%	59%	30%	+18% points	-11% points
Connecticut	41%	66%	57%	43%	-2% points	-16% points
Delaware	***	***	***	***	***	***
D.C.	***	***	***	***	***	***
Florida	46%	67%	47%	35%	+10% points	-1% points
Georgia	45%	58%	39%	33%	+13% points	+6% points
Hawaii	***	***	***	***	***	***
Idaho	48%	64%	65%	36%	+12% points	-17% points
Illinois	42%	69%	59%	40%	+2% points	-17% points
Indiana	41%	61%	55%	33%	+8% points	-14% points
Iowa	62%	73%	65%	47%	+15% points	-3% points
Kansas	40%	68%	59%	36%	+4% points	-19% points
Kentucky	56%	66%	44%	34%	+22% points	+12% points
Louisiana	48%	67%	40%	44%	+4% points	+8% points
Maine	59%	73%	39%	51%	+8% points	+20% points
Maryland	51%	67%	52%	39%	+12% points	-1% points
Massachusetts	46%	72%	60%	40%	+6% points	-14% points
Michigan	54%	69%	52%	37%	+17% points	+3% points
Minnesota	69%	81%	64%	46%	+22% points	+5% points
Mississippi	52%	63%	41%	43%	+8% points	+11% points
Missouri	53%	71%	55%	31%	+22% points	-2% points
Montana	***	***	***	***	***	***
Nebraska	42%	69%	61%	32%	+9% points	-19% points
Nevada	44%	61%	28%	31%	+13% points	+16% points
New Hampshire	58%	73%	45%	35%	+23% points	+13% points
New Jersey	50%	68%	54%	36%	+15% points	-4% points
New Mexico	42%	67%	49%	24%	+17% points	-7% points
New York	45%	62%	58%	34%	+12% points	-12% points
North Carolina	43%	64%	34%	31%	+12% points	+8% points
North Dakota	***	***	***	***	***	***
Ohio	56%	68%	53%	38%	+18% points	+3% points
Oklahoma	44%	66%	51%	36%	+7% points	-7% points
Oregon	49%	77%	45%	41%	+8% points	+4% points
Pennsylvania	43%	67%	45%	32%	+12% points	-1% points
Rhode Island	***	***	***	***	***	***
South Carolina	43%	66%	37%	38%	+5% points	+6% points
South Dakota	***	***	***	***	***	***
Tennessee	38%	58%	46%	24%	+14% points	-8% points
Texas	39%	60%	46%	32%	+7% points	-7% points
Utah	51%	71%	70%	40%	+11% points	-19% points
Vermont	***	***	***	***	***	***
Virginia	41%	66%	41%	43%	-2% points	-1% points
Washington	52%	70%	54%	40%	+12% points	-2% points
West Virginia	46%	59%	49%	33%	+13% points	-4% points
Wisconsin	63%	78%	54%	51%	+12% points	+9% points
Wyoming	***	***	***	***	***	***
National	47%	66%	52%	36%	+11% points	-5% points

Source: Authors' tabulations from the CPS November 1972- 2004 Supplements.
*** Sample sizes are too small to estimate voter turnout rates.

Methodology

Measuring young people’s turnout is a complex process, and as a result there is not a single clearly correct turnout figure for youth in any given year. CIRCLE calculates voter participation using multiple data sources as there is no way to count the actual number of votes cast by young people in any national election. Because age data are not recorded for voters in all states, we rely on polls and surveys to estimate voter turnout for different age groups.

The available sources include several separate national voting polls, plus Census data on the number of young citizens. Using any of the available polls, one can derive three metrics of voter participation. First, one can estimate the traditional voter turnout rate by taking the number of votes cast and dividing it by the number of age-eligible citizens in the population. Second, one can estimate the share of all votes that young people represented. Third, one can estimate the raw number of votes cast by a particular group. According to all three metrics, young people voted in far greater numbers in 2004 than in 2000.

While there is no one correct way to estimate youth voter turnout, in this document CIRCLE employs the most commonly-used measure, the “Census Citizen Method.” Using the Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey, November Voting and Registration Supplement, we

derive the voter turnout rate by calculating the percentage of young people who said that they voted (treating non-responders as non-voters). We multiply that number by the Census estimate of the young citizen population, to derive an estimate of a count of young voters. In previous reports on youth voter turnout, we excluded non-responders from the sample instead of assuming that they did not vote. We called this approach the “CIRCLE Method,” in contrast to the “Census Method” that is used in this report and widely in the literature on voting.

We have defined racial/ethnic groups in the 2004 CPS November Supplements by defining anyone with Hispanic background as Latino, single race or ethnicity individuals who are non-Hispanic as white, African-American, Asian American or Native American, and those of mixed race/ethnicity as a separate category. Since 2003, the CPS has allowed survey participants to mark more than one racial/ethnic category in describing their backgrounds. This potentially means that 2000 and 2004 may not be entirely comparable when identifying race and ethnicity categories of survey respondents.

For additional information on methodology, please see CIRCLE’s Web site at www.civicyouth.org.