

Quick Facts about Young Voters in California: The Presidential Election Year 2008

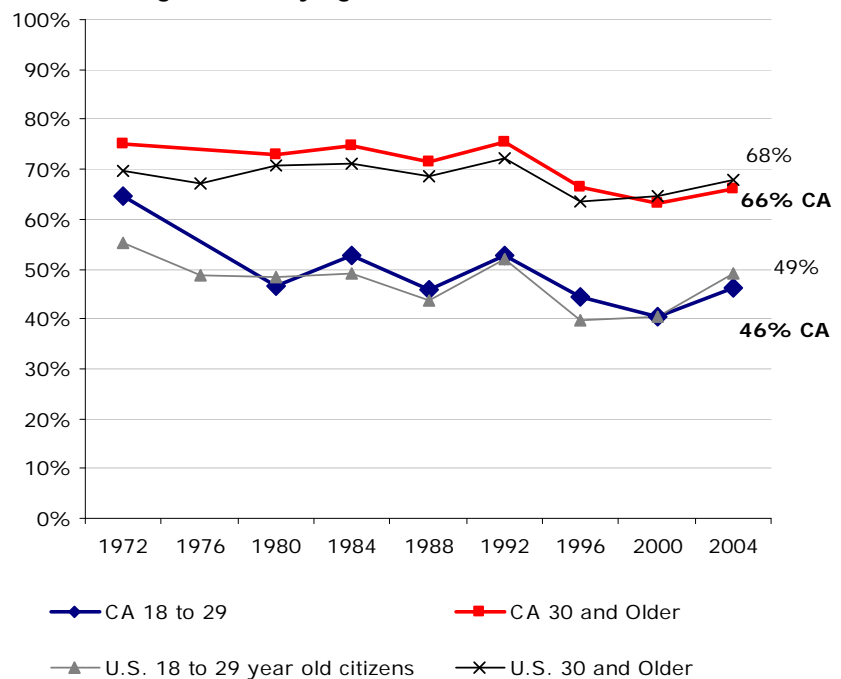
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This year's general election follows a primary season in which more than 6.5 million young people under the age of 30 participated. Moreover, in the 2008 California primary youth voter turnout rose six percentage points compared to the 2000 primary.²

In 2004, turnout among 18-to-29 year-olds in California ranked 36th among all states and the District of Columbia in 2004, and was up six percentage points over 2000. The California young voter turnout for the primaries increased by six percentage points, from 13 percent in 2000 to 19 percent in 2008 (Table 1). However, whether the voter mobilization momentum of 2008 continues into the general election remains unpredictable.

This fact sheet reports the characteristics of young voters for the state of California, including estimates of the number of young voters and voter turnout rates in 2004 and 2000 for various sub-groups of young people.

Figure 1: California Voter Turnout in Presidential Years Among Citizens, by Age



Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, November (Voting) Supplements, 1972-2004. No 1976 data for CA.

Table 1: Summary of Young Voters in the California Primary, 2008 and 2000³
Youth Turnout, Vote Count, and Vote Share

	<u>Turnout Rate</u>	<u>Number of youth who voted</u>	<u>Youth as Share of All Voters</u>
2008	19 percent	951,484	14 percent
2000	13 percent	574,807	10 percent

Young Voters by Party

		<u>2008</u>	<u>2000</u>
Democratic	Number of Primary Participants	700,079	318,494
	Share of Primary Participants	16 percent	12 percent
Republican	Number of Primary Participants	251,405	256,313
	Share of Primary Participants	10 percent	9 percent

Youth Vote Choice by Party

	<u>Democratic Choice</u>		<u>Republican Choice</u>
Clinton	49 percent	Huckabee	20 percent
Edwards	0 percent	McCain	35 percent
Obama	49 percent	Paul	7 percent
		Romney	33 percent

Estimates of Eligible Young Voters, 2008

In 2008, a Presidential election year, there are an estimated 5.0 million young people in California who are eligible to vote in U.S. elections. Table 2 shows voting statistics for the years 2004 and 2000.⁴ California's youth voter turnout rate was in the middle of all states in 2004, but it had the sixth highest turnout rate among youth in 2000 among all 50 states and the District of Columbia.⁵

Table 2 – California Voter Turnout Statistics, 2008, 2004, and 2000

	<u>Young People 18 to 29</u>	<u>Adults 30 and Older</u>
2008		
Number of Citizens Eligible to Vote in 2008	5.0 million	16.7 million
2004		
Number of Votes Cast	2.0 million	10.8 million
Voter Turnout Rate	46 percent	66 percent
Share of all Voters	16 percent	84 percent
2000		
Number of Votes Cast	1.8 million	9.7 million
Voter Turnout Rate	40 percent	63 percent
Share of all Voters	16 percent	84 percent

Source: Authors' Tabulations, Current Population Survey, March Supplement 2008 and November Supplement 2004 and 2000.

Voter Turnout Rates in 2004 and 2000 Among Eligible Young Citizens

Table 3 displays voter turnout rates for various groups of young people in 2004 and 2000 in California. 2004 was a year of high voter turnout for all youth groups in California relative to 2000. But relative to the nation as a whole in 2004, youth in California were slightly less electorally engaged.

Table 3 – California Voter Turnout Rates Among Young Citizens ages 18 to 29, 2004 and 2000

Voter Turnout Rate Among:	2004	2000
National Youth Rate	49 percent	40 percent
CA Youth Rate	46 percent	40 percent
CA Registered Voter	83 percent	79 percent
<i>Race/Ethnicity⁶</i>		
White non-Hispanic	55 percent	45 percent
Black non-Hispanic	56 percent	47 percent
Hispanics	38 percent	30 percent
Asian non-Hispanic	34 percent	36 percent
Native American non-Hispanic	***	***
<i>Gender</i>		
Women	49 percent	42 percent
Men	43 percent	39 percent
<i>Educational Attainment</i>		
Less than High School	18 percent	14 percent
High School	37 percent	29 percent
Some College	52 percent	45 percent
BA or more	61 percent	61 percent
<i>College Experience</i>		
No experience	31 percent	25 percent
At least some experience	55 percent	50 percent
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single Men	42 percent	39 percent
Single Women	50 percent	40 percent
Married Men	45 percent	39 percent
Married Women	47 percent	48 percent

Source: Authors' Tabulations from the 2004 and 2000 November Supplements of the Current Population Survey. '***' indicates that a sample size is too small to produce a reliable estimate.

Notes

¹ We thank Mark Hugo Lopez for his 2006 fact sheet series on which this fact sheet is based. We also thank Peter Levine, Abby Kiesa, and Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg for comments on previous drafts of this fact sheet.

² Comparisons to other caucuses and primaries must be made with caution, because turnout is affected by the date of the primaries and by the nature of the Democratic and Republican Presidential campaigns, which are different in every state.

³ The share of primary voters is obtained from the 2008 California Republican and Democratic exit polls conducted by Edison/Mitofsky. The numbers of votes cast are obtained from the CNN.com (3/14 /2008; 100% of precincts reporting.) Estimated voter turnout is obtained by taking the estimated number of votes cast and dividing it by the estimated population of 18-to 29-year-old citizens and citizens over the age of 30 from the Current Population Survey (2007).

⁴ For a full discussion of the different ways voter turnout can be calculated please see "CIRCLE Working Paper 35: The Youth Voter 2004: With a Historical Look at Youth Voting Patterns 1972-2004." All voter turnout estimates presented in this fact sheet are calculated for U.S. citizens only, and according to the "Census Citizen Method" described in CIRCLE Working Paper 35.

⁵ For state-by-state comparisons of voter turnout rates, see the CIRCLE fact sheet "Youth Voter Turnout in the States during the 2004 Presidential and the 2002 Midterm Elections."

⁶ We have defined racial/ethnic groups in the CPS November Supplements by defining anyone with Hispanic background as Latino; individuals who cite a single non-Hispanic race or ethnicity are identified as non-Hispanic white, African American, Asian American or Native American.