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Civic Learning & Engagement

The Youth Vote in the 2008 Super Tuesday States:

Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Utah

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According to CIRCLE's analysis, released immediately after Super Tuesday, youth turnout rose dramatically in seven Super Tuesday states. In half of the Super Tuesday states, no clear comparison can be made to past years, but estimates of 2008 youth turnout for all states with exit polls are available in Table 1.

This fact sheet contains additional analysis of young voters in the Super Tuesday primaries and caucuses. It reveals a huge gap in turnout between youth who have college experience and those who have not attended college. It also portrays a diverse group of young voters, among whom Whites are a minority. For information on young voters in IA see CIRCLE Fact Sheet "The Youth Vote in the 2008 Iowa Caucus" and for NH, MI, SC, FL and NV, see "The Youth Vote in the 2008 Early Contests." This analysis is based on the entrance and exit polls conducted by Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International.²



**Table 1 –Super Tuesday Presidential Primary Participation in 2008
18-to-29-Year-Old Citizens**

Super Tuesday Primary	Youth Turnout Rate	Youth Turnout Rate in 2000	Turnout Rate of Age 30 and Over	Overall Turnout Rate	Number of Youth Who Voted	Youth as Share of All Voters
AL	19%	N/A	36%	32%	135,597	13%
AR	11%	N/A	29%	25%	48,112	9%
AZ (17-29)	7%	N/A	25%	21%	59,267	7%
CA	17%	13%	32%	29%	873,508	14%
CT	12%	7%	22%	20%	51,436	10%
GA	21%	7%	34%	31%	281,724	14%
IL	18%	N/A	37%	32%	377,996	13%
MA	25%	11%	40%	37%	231,022	14%
MO	21%	7%	35%	32%	190,863	14%
NJ	18%	N/A	32%	29%	187,889	11%
NY	12%	12%	20%	18%	311,833	13%
OK	14%	4%	33%	29%	82,609	13%
TN	15%	3%	30%	27%	139,831	12%
UT	15%	N/A	29%	25%	66,248	16%
TOTAL					3,037,935	

Source: The share of primary voters is obtained from the states respective Republican and Democratic National Election Pool exit polls conducted by Edison/Mitofsky. The numbers of votes cast are obtained from the CNN.com (2/ 6 /2008; vote counts represent at least 95% 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). ID, KS, MT, WV and NM are not included in Table 1 because they only held a Democratic or a Republican contest. AK, CO, ND, and DE are not included because they did not have exit polls for both races. MN was not included because no vote tally was available.

Youth Support Obama in the Democratic Contests, Young Republicans Support Varies by State

Young democratic voters were Senator Barack Obama's strongest supporters. He drew at least 50 percent of the youth vote in 10 of 14 states that had exit/entrance polls. In the Republican contests, the youth vote was mostly split between Huckabee and McCain (6 and 5 states, respectively) with Romney winning three states. No Republican candidate had overwhelming margins of victory like Obama's, however. See Table 2.



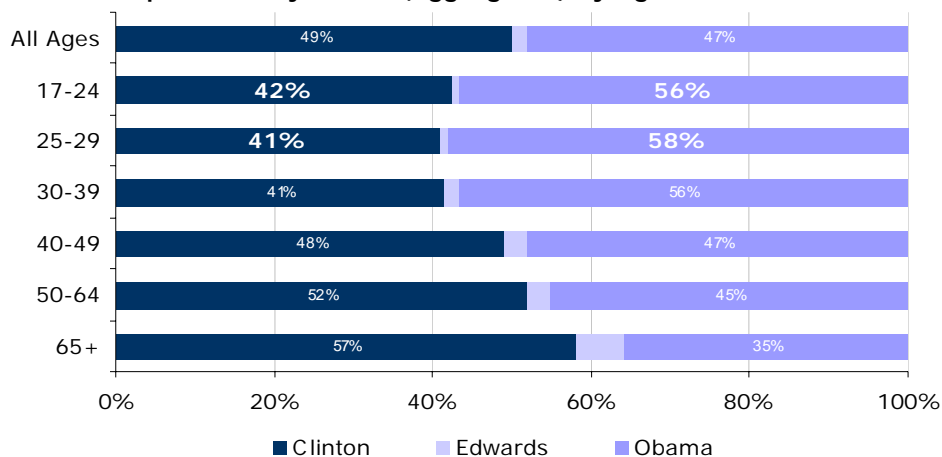
Table 2 – Super Tuesday Youth Vote Choice by Party

State	Democratic Candidates			Republican Candidates		
	Clinton	Obama	Huckabee	McCain	Paul	Romney
AL	32%	64%	51%	22%	4%	24%
AR	56%	43%	68%	16%	6%	7%
AZ	37%	59%	15%	32%	9%	43%
CA	51%	47%	22%	34%	8%	31%
CT	39%	58%	11%	51%	18%	9%
GA	23%	75%	43%	23%	8%	24%
IL	29%	69%	28%	30%	13%	22%
MA	49%	48%	4%	36%	7%	52%
MO	30%	65%	43%	27%	9%	18%
NJ	39%	59%	8%	46%	17%	19%
NY	43%	56%	15%	43%	11%	21%
OK	n/a	n/a	38%	26%	3%	28%
TN	44%	53%	38%	25%	14%	15%
UT	25%	70%	2%	6%	4%	88%

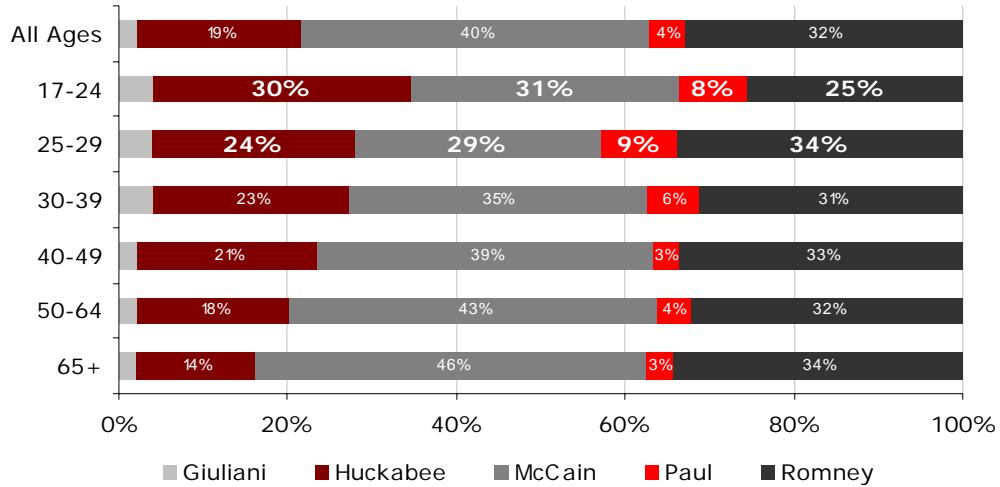
Source: www.cnn.com

Overall, when looking at all Super Tuesday states, Obama won the vote among 17-24-year-olds by a 14-point margin, and the 25-to-29-year-olds by a 17-point margin. There was no majority winner on the Republican side. McCain barely beat Huckabee for the 17-to-24-year-old vote by one point, and Romney won the 25-29 year old vote. See Figures 1A and 1B.

Figure 1A: Democratic Primary Vote Choice in Super Tuesday States (Aggregated) by Age



≡ **Figure 1B: Republican Primary Vote Choice in Super Tuesday States (Aggregated) by Age**

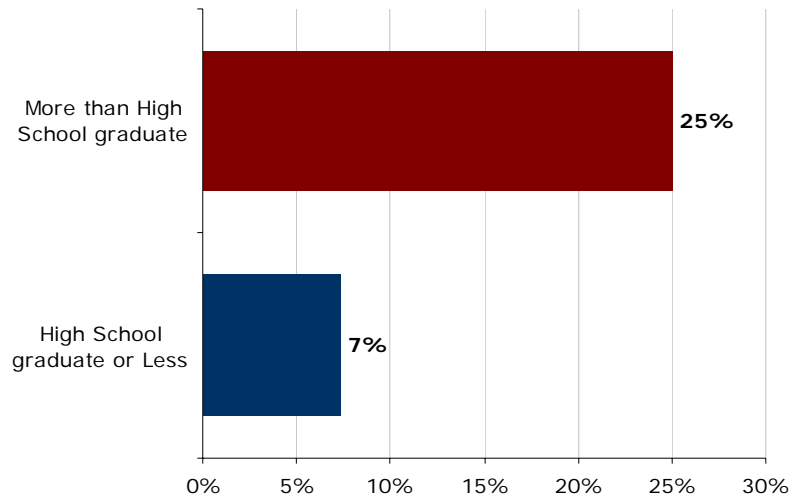


Demographics of Young Voters

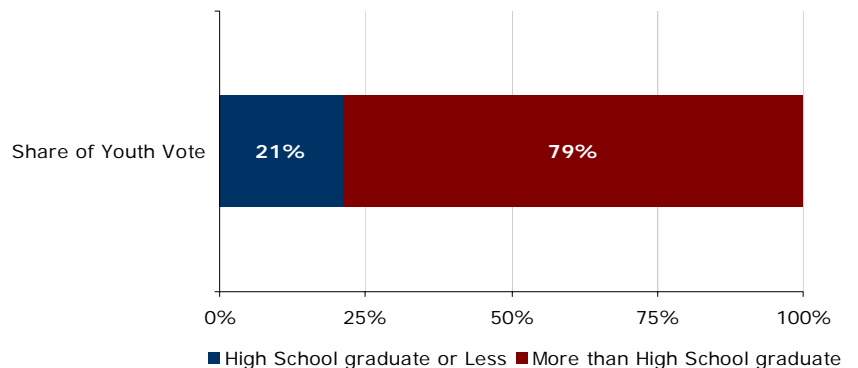
Young People with College Experience More Likely to Vote than Non-College Youth

Young people who have at least some college experience were much more likely to have voted in the Super Tuesday primaries than young people with no college experience. The gap in turnout is substantial: 18 percentage points.³ See Figures 2A and 2B. This gap may be due in part to differences in the quality and quantity of civic education in public schools; high schools with student populations on a college-track receive more civic education and civic skills training than high schools with students who will enter the work force after graduation (Kahne 2008). Moreover, young people with no college experience are more likely to be racial/ethnic minorities.⁴

≡ **Figure 2A: Turnout Rate of Voters Under 30 in 2008 Super Tuesday Primaries, by Educational Attainment**

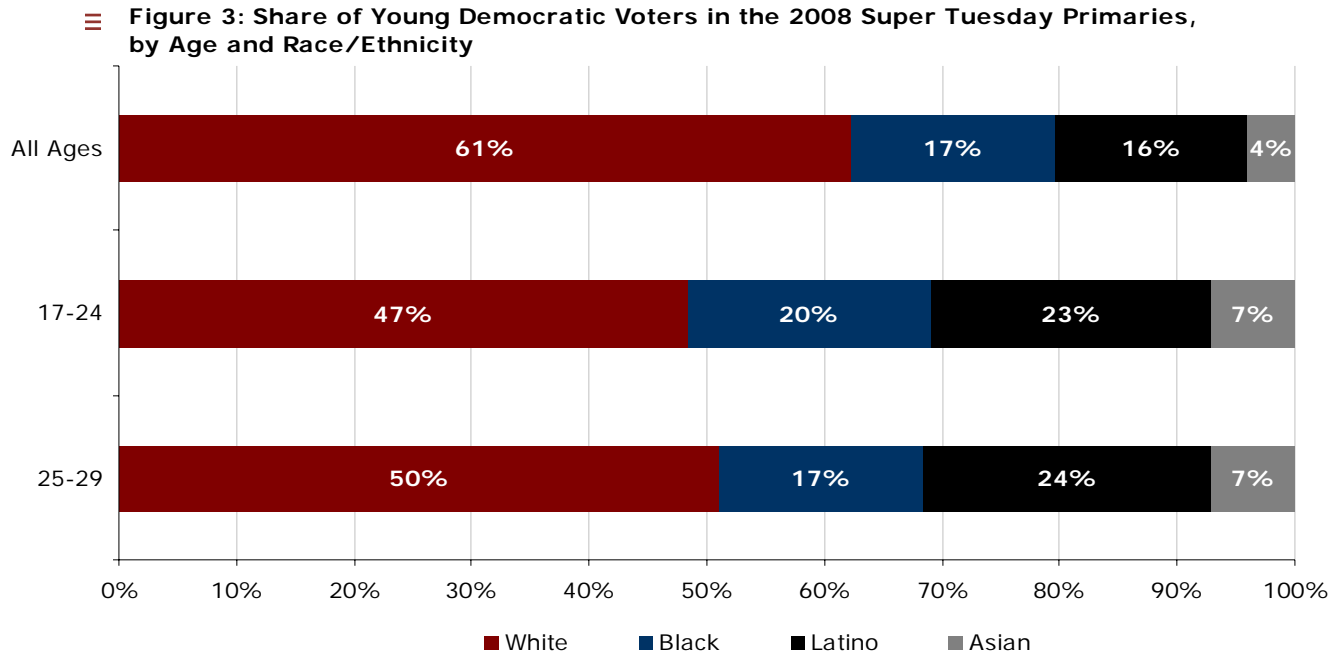


≡ **Figure 2B: Share of All Young Voters in the 2008 Super Tuesday Primaries, by Educational Attainment**



Young Voters are More Diverse; Young Latinos Largest Minority Voting Bloc

As Figure 3 shows, young Democratic voters were the most racially/ethnically diverse voting bloc in the Super Tuesday primaries. The majority of young voters, ages 17-24, were non-white (53 percent); this reflects a growing trend in the youth population (Lopez and Marcelo, 2006). Young Latinos were the largest minority voting bloc, making up over 20 percent of 17-to-24 and 25-to-29 year-olds.⁵ (Breakdowns of voters by race and ethnicity were not available in the aggregated Republican exit polls for Super Tuesday.)



Young Men and Women Split on Party Primaries

Young men make up the majority of young voters in Republican primaries, while the opposite is true in Democratic primaries. See Figures 4A-B. Furthermore, young Republican voters are more likely to be male than all Republican voters.

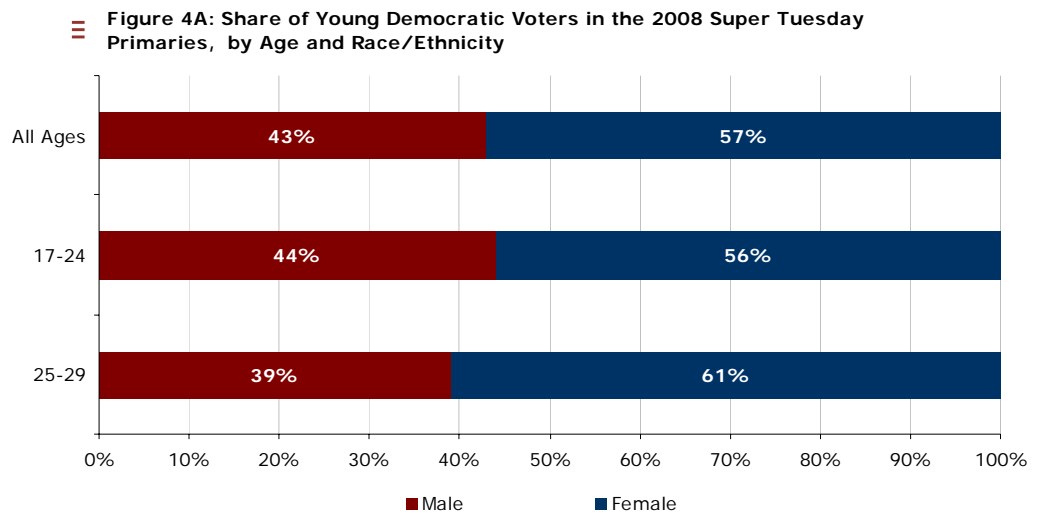
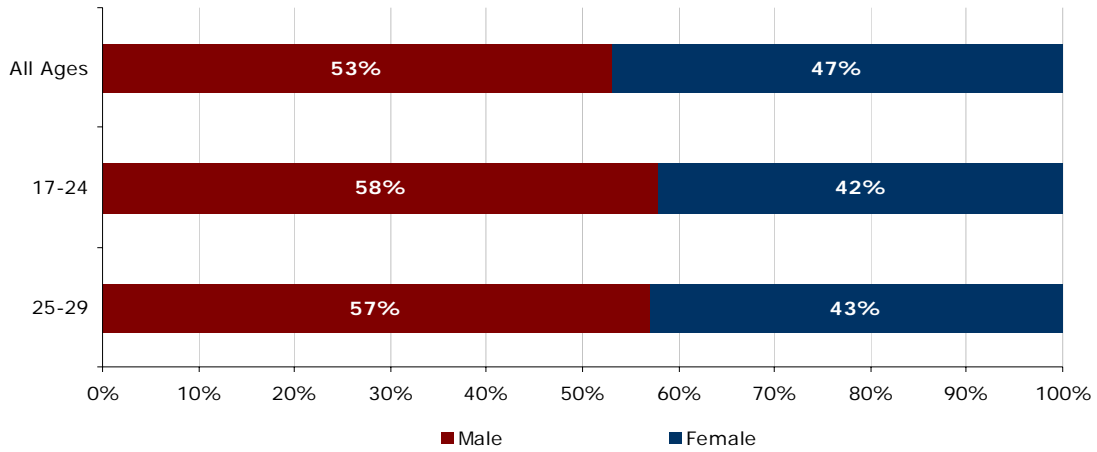


Figure 4B: Share of Young Republican Voters in the 2008 Super Tuesday Primaries, by Age and Race/Ethnicity



Independents Make Strong Showing in Both Primaries

Young Independents provided a larger share of young voters in the Republican primaries than in the Democratic primaries. See Figures 5A-B.

Figure 5A: Share of Young Democratic Voters in the 2008 Super Tuesday Primaries, by Age and Party Identification

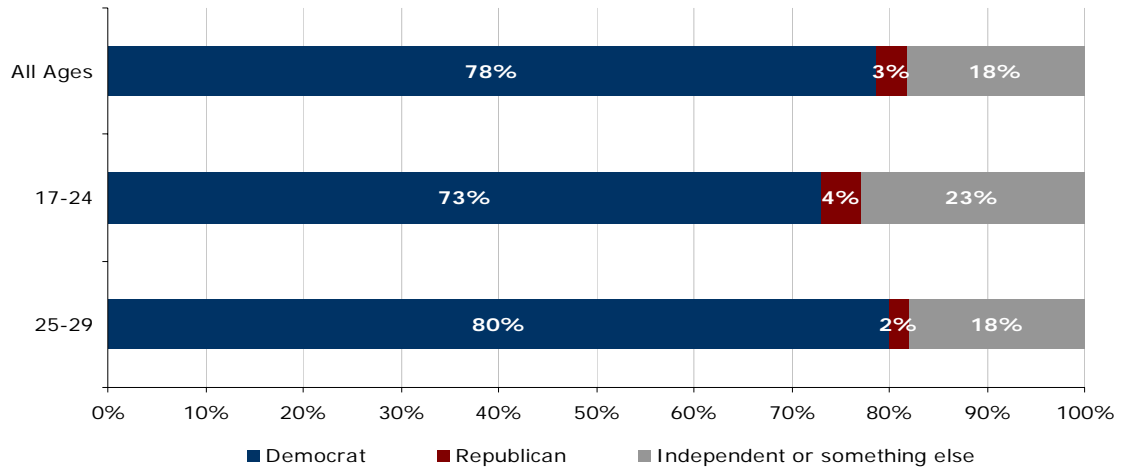
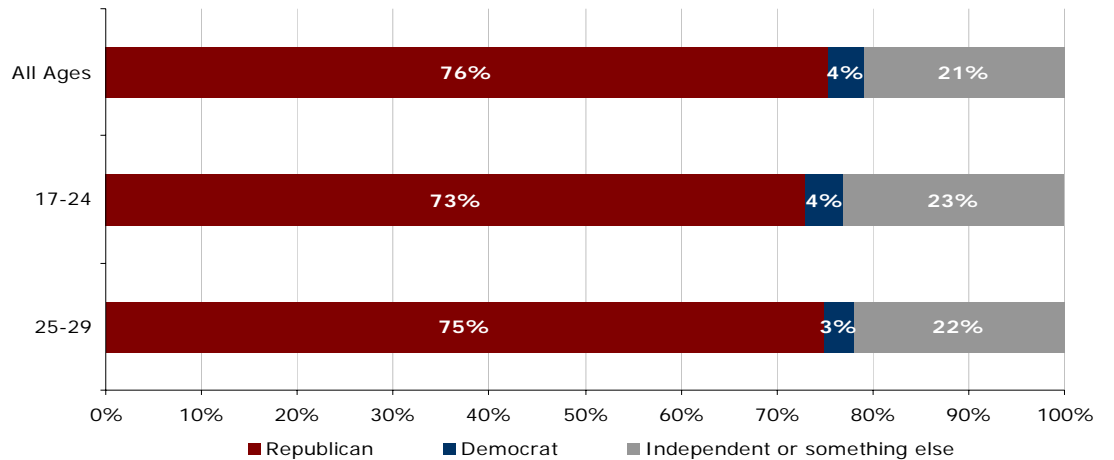


Figure 5B: Share of Young Republican Voters in the 2008 Super Tuesday Primaries, by Age and Party Identification

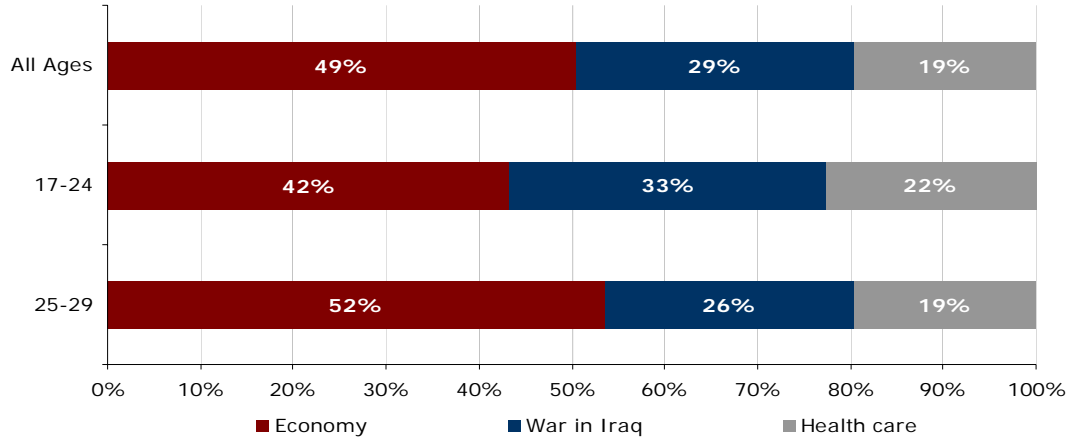


Issues of Young Voters

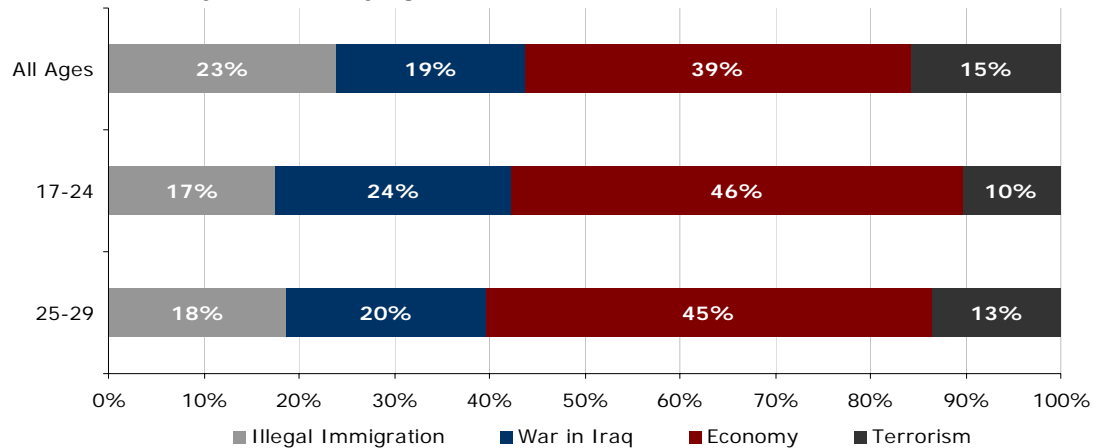
'Economy' Still #1 Youth Issue; 'War in Iraq' #2

The plurality of youth still list the Economy as their top issue.⁶ The youngest voting bloc for both parties (ages 17-24) are the most likely to list the War and Iraq as their main issue when compared to adults. See Figures 6A-B.

≡ **Figure 6A: Main Issues of Young Democratic Voters in the 2008 Super Tuesday Primaries, by Age**



≡ **Figure 6B: Main Issues of Young Republican Voters in the 2008 Super Tuesday Primaries, by Age**



References

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- Joseph Kahne and Ellen Middaugh. (2008). *CIRCLE Working Paper 59: Democracy for Some: The Civic Opportunity Gap in High School*. CIRCLE Working Paper Series. www.civicyouth.org.
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- Mark Hugo Lopez and Karlo Barrios Marcelo. (November 2006.) "2006 Youth Demographics." CIRCLE Fact Sheet Series. www.civicyouth.org

Notes

¹ Research Associate and Senior Research Associate, respectively. We thank Peter Levine and Abby Kiesa for comments on earlier drafts of this document. All errors in fact or interpretation are our own.

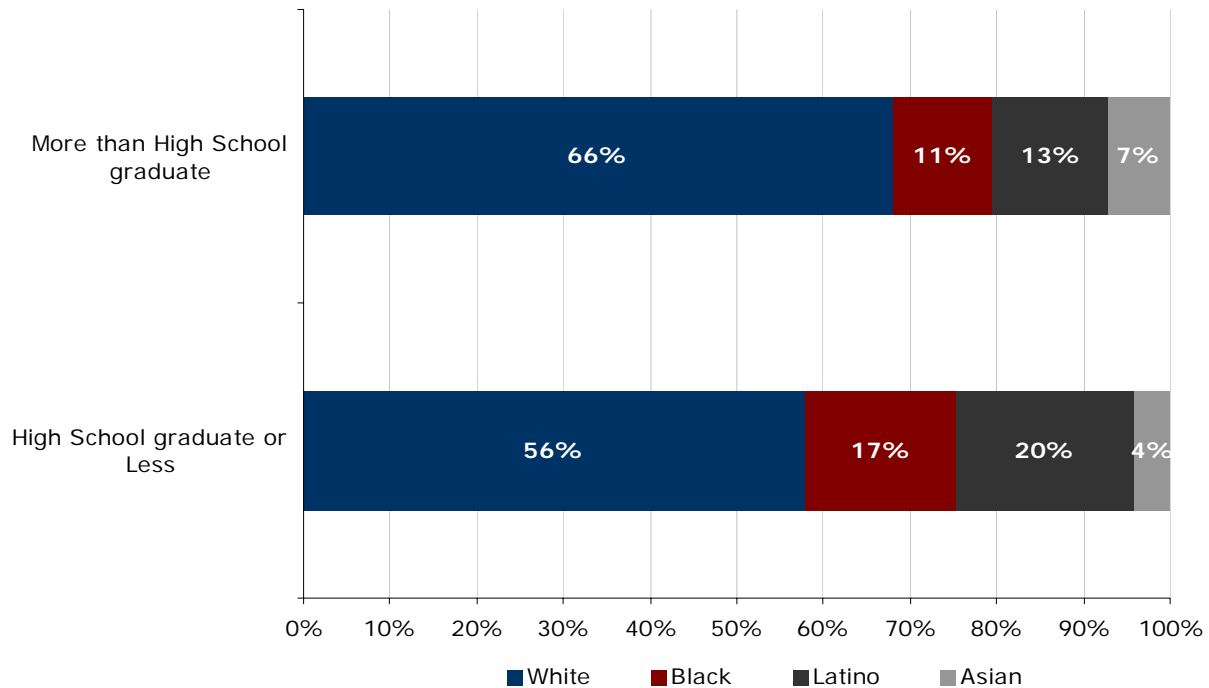
² Analysis in this fact sheet is limited to Super Tuesday states with exit polls for both parties: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Utah.

³ Voter turnout is calculated by taking the number of voters in each of the two educational categories (both Democratic and Republican primary voters) and dividing it by the population estimates of those same educational categories (citizens only) from the Current Population Survey, March (Demographic) Supplement, 2007. To project 2008 population estimates for ages 18-29 and 30+, I allow for a one-year difference (17-28 and 29+) when using 2007 data. 2007 estimates for ages 18-29 and 30+ are available upon request.

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, according to the "Census Citizen Method" described in CIRCLE Working Paper 35. www.civicyouth.org

⁴ Figure E1 shows that 64 percent of young people with no college experience are racial/ethnic minorities. When using the Current Population Survey, we have defined racial/ethnic groups by defining anyone with Latino background as Latino (Hispanic), single race or ethnicity individuals who are non-Latino (non-Hispanic) as white, African-American, and Asian-American. We do not include Native Americans, because of their small sample sizes.

≡ **Figure E1: Race and Ethnicity Share of Young People (Ages 18-29) in the 2008 Super Tuesday Primary States, by Educational Attainment**



Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, March (Demographic) Survey, 2007.

⁵ For a discussion on the growing size of the Latinos in the United States, see the Pew Hispanic Center's report entitled "U.S. Population Projections: 2005—2050," by Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn: <http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=85>

⁶ For a compilation of 2007 and 2008 issue polls of young people, see a February 2008 joint report from CIRCLE and Rock the Vote, entitled, *Young Voter Registration and Turnout Trends*, by Karlo Barrios Marcelo, Mark Hugo Lopez, Chris Kennedy, and Kat Barr. www.civicyouth.org