



CIRCLE

The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement

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Almost 1.1 Million Citizens Under the Age of Thirty Participate in TX & OH Primaries Young Voters Support Obama and McCain in Texas and Obama in Ohio

Youth Voter Experts Available for Interviews Contact David Roscow at 703-276-2772 x21

Washington, DC – Almost 1.1 million eligible citizens under the age of 30 participated in the Texas and Ohio contests, according to preliminary estimates by CIRCLE (The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement). Over 798,020 young people participated in the March 4 Texas and Ohio Democratic contests compared to roughly 301,782 in the Republican contests. (See Table 2.) As compared to 2000, Texas and Ohio both saw increases in youth turnout, youth turnout nearly tripled in Texas and rose 10 percentage points in Ohio.

In the Democratic contests, Obama won the largest share of the youth vote in both states. In the Republican contests, youth supported McCain in Texas and data was not available in the Ohio Republican primary. (See Table 3.). There was also no data made available from the Vermont and Rhode Island primaries.



**Table 1 –March 4th Presidential Primary Participation in 2008
18-to-29-Year-Old Citizens**

March 4th 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
OH	25%	15%	40 %	37%	479,418	15%
TX	17%	6%	31%	28%	620,384	15%
TOTAL					1,099,802	

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 (3/ 5 /2008; vote counts represent at least 99% of precincts reporting.) Estimated voter turnout is obtained by taking the estimated number of votes cast and dividing it by the estimated population of young citizens and citizens over the age of 30 from the Current Population Survey (2007).

"Young Americans have been turning out to vote at remarkable rates in these primaries. This reflects their deep concern about the critical issues at stake and the impact of this election on our country's future," said CIRCLE Director, Peter Levine. "Since 2000, young people have been volunteering at high rates and are becoming more interested in news and public affairs. Now they are ready to consider voting as a way of addressing major problems. The Millennials are beginning to make their distinctive and lasting mark on American politics."

The results from the Texas and Ohio contests punctuate the findings of national focus groups that CIRCLE conducted last fall. The research showed that college students are deeply concerned about issues, involved personally as volunteers, and ready to consider voting. But they want political leaders to be positive, to address real problems, and to call on all Americans to be constructively involved.

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. "Closed" primaries and caucuses tend to depress turnout since Independents cannot participate.

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Because there is no actual count of the number of votes cast by young people in the primaries, we can only estimate their level of participation. Our turnout estimates are based on early vote tallies reported by the media, the share of voters who are young calculated by the National Election Pool exit/entrance polls, and an estimate of the eligible voting population obtained from the Census Current Population Survey (CPS). The 2008 voter turnout rate may rise as more votes are tallied. (The early vote tally does not include such votes as absentee ballots and provisional ballots.) As a result, our 2008 turnout rate likely underestimates the level of participation in the 2008 Texas and Ohio primaries. The following table provides estimates of youth participation in the each primary by party.



Table 2 – 2008 March 4th Presidential Primary Participation By Party 18-to-29-Year-Old Citizens

State	Democratic Primaries		Republican Primaries	
	Number of Primary Participants	Share of Primary Participants	Number of Primary Participants	Share of Primary Participants
TX	449,173	16%	171,211	13%
OH (ages 17-29)	348,847	16%	130,571	13%
TOTAL	798,020		301,782	



Table 3 – Texas and Ohio Youth Vote Choice by Party

State	Democratic Candidates			Republican Candidates		
	Clinton	Obama	Huckabee	McCain	Paul	
OH	35%	61%	NA	NA	NA	
TX	42%	58%	43%	44%	9%	

Source: www.cnn.com

This increase in youth turnout in the early primary season continues a trend observed in other elections since 2000. In the 2006 congressional elections, the voter turnout rate among 18-to 29-year-olds increased by three percentage points compared to the previous congressional election of 2002. And in the 2004 presidential election, the national youth voter turnout rate rose 9 percentage points compared to 2000, reaching 49 percent. In 2004, under-30-year-olds were registered to vote at the highest rate in 30 years.

Definitions

- Youth:** For the purpose of the March 4th primaries, we define “youth” as citizens between the ages of 18 and 29 on March 4, 2008 in TX and between the ages of 17 and 29 on March 4, 2008 in OH.
- Number of youth who voted:** An estimate of how many youth participated.
- Youth share primary participants:** An estimate of the number of young people who participated in the primaries as a percentage of the number of *all people* who participated in the primaries.
- Youth turnout rate:** An estimate of the number of young people who participated in the primaries as a percentage of the total number of young people who were eligible to participate in either primary.

The youth turnout rate is the best indicator of how young Americans are engaging in the political process. The other statistics—the sheer number of youth participants and the youth share of the electorate—can change because of factors unrelated to youth engagement.

CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) promotes research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. Since 2001, CIRCLE has conducted, collected, and funded research on the civic and political participation of young Americans. CIRCLE is based in the University of Maryland’s School of Public Policy and is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, Carnegie Corporation of New York and several other foundations.