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## **Will Young Voters Turnout for 2010 Midterm Elections?**

**Data Show Increase in National Youth Voter Turnout from 2004 to 2008  
But Majority of States Experience Decrease**

**New CIRCLE Website ([www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org)) Provides State-by-State Data, Youth  
Voter Research & Analysis for Midterm Election Coverage**

**Tisch College, Tufts University** - The volatile turnout of young people will be an important factor in the midterm elections, less than two months away. Research on recent trends on youth voting was released by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) to provide perspective on the upcoming election.

In the 2008 presidential election youth voter turnout rose two percentage points compared to the 2004 election, which saw an increase of nine percentage points compared to the 2000 election. This rise in the youth vote in 2008 was not equally distributed among educational, racial, and gender groups. For instance, young white voters made no gains in voter turnout in 2008 while minority youth turnout increased for all groups.

Despite the youth vote increasing nationally in 2008, the majority of states did not see an increase. Utah – a state which had an increase of 16 percentage points from 2000 to 2004 - saw a decrease of 19 percentage points, while Wisconsin fell 7 percentage points. Some states did experience large increases. Virginia rose 16 percentage points and North Carolina increased by 10 percentage points.

The full fact sheet comparing the 2008 and 2006 elections including state-by-state comparison and other data on young voters can be found on CIRCLE's newly launched website at [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org). The revamped site is a resource for research, data, evaluation tools, maps, and policy analysis on civic youth engagement.

"We have now seen three consecutive presidential elections with substantial increases in youth turnout. In 2008 Obama rallied young people especially minority youth to go to the polls in great numbers," said CIRCLE Director Peter Levine. "However, midterm elections have always seen a significant drop off among voter turnout, especially young people. With the power of Congress at stake, the number of high-profile races and a continuing struggling economy it will be interesting to see the impact young voters will have on this election."

Much like the 1994 and 2006 midterm elections, the 2010 midterm elections will follow a presidential election with high youth voter turnout (the 2008 election had the third highest turnout rate for young people since the voting age was lowered to 18). In 2006 youth voter turnout nationally was 26 percent, while voter turnout for the 30 and over population was 54 percent. This is slightly less than the thirty percentage point gap between youth and adult voter turn seen in the 2002 midterm elections.

In comparing 1994 and 2006, CIRCLE finds slight differences in the national youth turnout rate. However, in some states youth turnout in 2006 increased significantly over the 1994 election, such as Wisconsin (+13% points), Kentucky (+11% points) and Georgia (+10% points). Turnout decreased in New York and California (-12% points) and Utah (-10% points).

“This midterm election the youth voter turnout could also vary widely state-by-state depending on the number and intensity of statewide and local elections,” said Levine. “We saw this before in the 2006 midterms when the national youth voter turnout was 26 percent, but in Minnesota it was 43 percent due to the hotly contested governor’s race, but only 17 percent in Texas, Utah, and West Virginia.”

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***CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement)*** conducts and promotes research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. A part of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University, CIRCLE has received funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts, Carnegie Corporation of New York and several other foundations.

***The Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service***, a national leader in civic engagement, prepares students from all fields of Tufts University to become engaged public citizens and community leaders.

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