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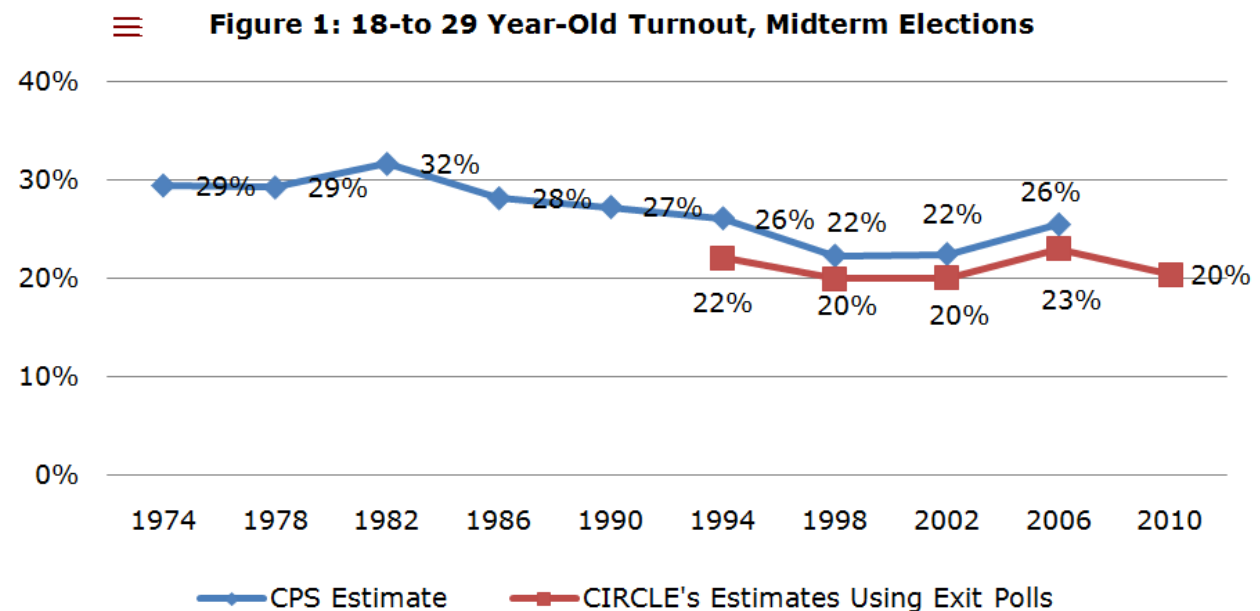
November 3, 2010

**Youth Turnout About 20%, Comparable to Recent Midterm Years**

**Young Adults (age 18-29) Represented 11% of All Voters, Compared to 12% in 2006 and 11% in 2002**

**Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service, Medford, MA** – An estimated 20.4 percent of young Americans under the age of 30 voted in Tuesday’s midterm elections, compared to 23.5 percent in the last midterm election (2006). The change in the turnout rate is outside the margin of error (+/-2%), according to Tufts University’s Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), the nation’s premier research organization on the civic and political engagement of young Americans. Almost nine million Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 voted. Almost 10 million people in the same age group voted in 2006.

The estimated turnout the day after elections is based on exit polls along with the number of ballots counted and demographic data from the US Census. When voting data from the US Census (its Current Population Survey, November 2010 Voting Supplement) become available next year, it will be possible to see with greater certainty whether turnout rose, fell, or stayed the same. It is already clear, however, that turnout was in the typical range for a midterm election.



CIRCLE’s exit-poll-based method has tracked the Census data in past elections (see Figure 1) but does not yield identical results.<sup>1</sup>

“Youth turnout was fairly typical for a midterm election,” said Peter Levine, director of CIRCLE, based at Tuft’s Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service. “But youth turnout increased in states targeted for youth voter outreach more than in other states. Young people vote when asked to.” (See below for evidence.)

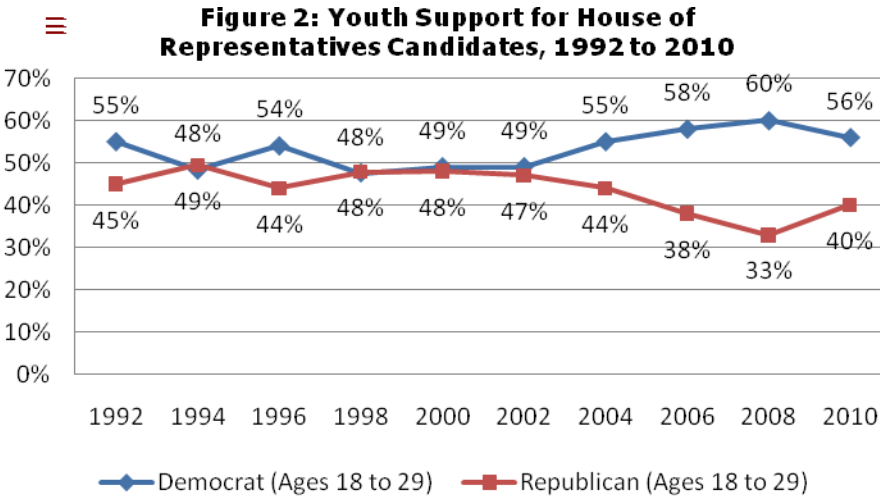
Note that “turnout” (the percentage of young people who vote) is different from the share of voters who are young. Youth share is widely reported in the media but is not a good measure of participation.

**Table 1: Youth Voter Turnout Estimates Using Exit Polls, 1994-2010**

<i>Year</i>	<b>Youth Share of Electorate</b> <i>Source: National Election Pool, National Exit Poll</i>	<b>Estimated Youth Turnout Rate</b> <i>Source: 1<sup>st</sup> day vote tally and Youth Share Based on Exit Polls</i>
<b>2010</b>	11%	20.4%
<b>2006<sup>ii</sup></b>	12%	23.5%
<b>2002</b>	11%	20%
<b>1998</b>	13%	20%
<b>1994</b>	13%	22%

Source: The percentages of voters age 18-29 are obtained from national exit polls conducted by Edison/Mitofsky. The numbers of votes cast are obtained from the media the first day following the election. 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 from the Census Current Population Survey March Demographic File.

Nationwide, in House races, 56% of young people voted for Democratic candidates and 40% voted for Republican candidates. Voters age 18-29 are the only age group in which the majority favored the Democratic candidate over the Republican candidate.



Young people voted at a higher rate in states where the Vote Again 2010 coalition is highly active.<sup>iii</sup> (Vote Again 2010 is a coalition of more than 30 501(c)3 nonpartisan youth-serving organizations and media partners that work to increase youth turnout.) In these states, youth turnout was 21%, compared to 20% in the seven states where the Vote Again 2010 Coalition organizations were least active. One explanation for the higher rates of participation in the Vote Again 2010 states is that there was more voter outreach to young voters and political advertising in these states. Current research shows that youth participate when they are asked to do so. As shown in Table 2, turnout increased between 1998 and 2010 in states that had high levels of youth outreach, but not in states where the Coalition was least active. Many of the groups that make up the Vote Again 2010 Coalition formed after the 1998 midterm elections, when the youth turnout hit its lowest rate.

**Table 2: Youth Voter Turnout in States with a High Concentration of Groups doing Youth Voter Outreach, 1998 and 2010**

<i>Year</i>	<b>Turnout in States Where the Vote Again 2010 Coalition is Highly Active</b>	<b>Turnout in States with Low Concentration of Vote Again 2010 Coalition Organizations</b>
<b>2010</b>	21%	20%
<b>1998</b>	15%	21%
<b>Percentage Point Change in Youth Voter Turnout between</b>	+6% points	-1% points

Young people voted at a somewhat higher rate in contested, “purple” states. In the seven most contested states, youth turnout was 23%. In the traditionally blue states, turnout was 18% and in the traditionally red states turnout was 22%.<sup>iv</sup> One explanation for the higher rates of participation in the purple states is that there was greater voter outreach and political advertising in these states.

**Table 3: Youth Voter Turnout in Red, Blue and Purple States, 1998 and 2010**

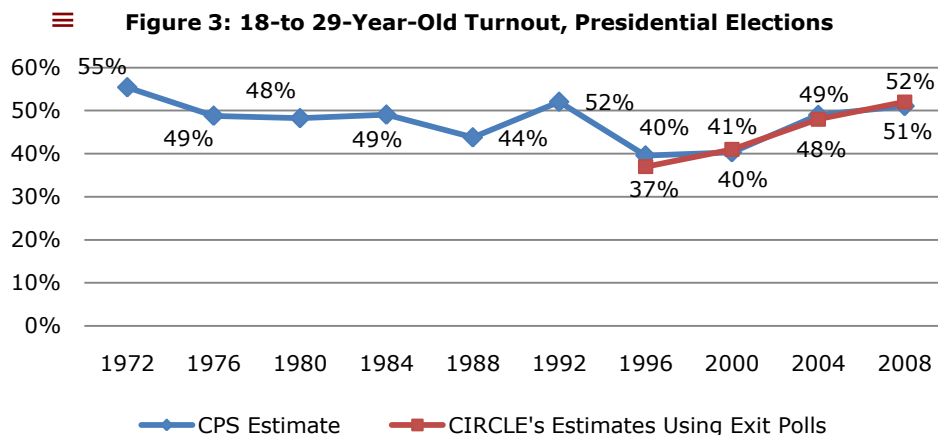
Year	Youth Turnout in Blue States	Youth Turnout in Red States	Youth Turnout in Purple States
2010	18%	22%	23%

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<sup>i</sup> There is no official count of voters by age. Therefore, any statistic on youth voter turnout is an estimate based on survey data. Like any survey, the National Exit Polls use methods that may introduce sampling bias. However, our estimates of youth turnout from the National Exit Polls (shown in Figure 1) have produced a trend that closely tracks the trend in the Census Current Population Survey (CPS). Below is a figure showing how the CPS and National Exit Polls track during Presidential elections.



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<sup>ii</sup> In 2006, CIRCLE’s first estimate of youth turnout was 24%. This estimate was based vote tallies from the day after the election and the preliminary youth share of voters as reported by the media. Later Edison/Mitofsky updated their exit poll results, changing the share of voters who were between the ages of 18 and 29. This percentage changed from 13% to 12%. Meanwhile the number of votes tallied increased. These changes in the youth share, combined with the increase in votes tallied, produced an estimate of 22%. To generate comparable estimates for 1994, 2002, 2006, and 2010, we chose to average the two estimates for 2006 and report an estimated turnout of 23%.

<sup>iii</sup> For the purposes of this analysis, we define states “where the Vote Again 2010 Coalition is highly active” as states that both have a state exit poll and where we know four or more Vote Again 2010 Coalition organizations had active campaigns to recruit young voters. Those states are: AZ, CA, CO, FL, OH, OR, and PA. For the analysis, we compare these states to states which had state exit polls and where the Vote Again 2010 Coalition was least active. Those states include: AR, IA, KY, LA, NH, NY and VT.

<sup>iv</sup> For the purposes of this analysis, we only include states with individual exit polls in 2010. Purple states are AR, CO, DE, IN, IA, SC and WV. Blue states are: CA, CT, HI, IL, NH, NY, OR, PA, VT, WA and WI. Red states are: AZ, FL, KY, LA, MO, NV, and OH.