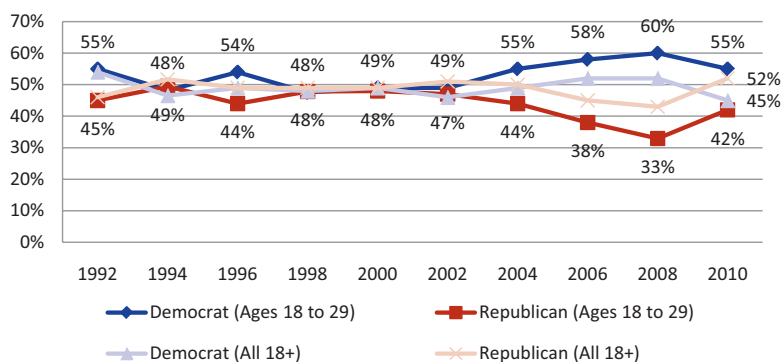


YOUNGER VOTERS WERE RACIALLY DIVERSE, VOTED DEMOCRATIC, AND APPROVED OF PRESIDENT OBAMA

Young voters in the 2010 midterm elections were racially and ethnically diverse, voted for Democrats, and approved of President Obama, according to new analysis of exit poll data released by CIRCLE and Generational Alliance (GA). (For more information about the GA please visit www.generationalliance.org.) The complete research findings, compiled from data of the National Exit Poll by Edison Research, can be found in a new CIRCLE fact sheet, "Young Voters in the 2010 Election," at www.civicyouth.org.

An estimated 22.8 percent of all eligible young people ages 18–29 voted in the 2010 midterms.¹ Younger voters chose Democratic House candidates over Republican House candidates by a margin of 55%–42%. By a 62%–38% margin, younger voters approved of Barack Obama's handling of his job as president. By a 53%–43% margin, they said that his policies will help the country in the long run. In contrast, a 55%–44% majority of all voters disapproved of the president and a 51%–43% majority of all voters said his policies will hurt the country.

Figure 1: House Vote Preference, 1992–2010



Source: 1992 - 2010 Edison Research National Election Poll

"Since 2004, young voters have been one of the strongest Democratic constituencies," said CIRCLE director Peter Levine. "Democrats need to engage them better than they did in 2010, and Republicans need to make inroads in a generation that continues to prefer Democrats."

Most (85%) of young adults who voted in 2010 had also voted in 2008. The 2010 young electorate was mostly a subset of the 2008 electorate.

IN THIS ISSUE

1. Younger Voters were Racially Diverse, Voted Democratic, and Approved of President Obama

RESEARCH ROUNDUP

4. CIRCLE's Work on the Civic Engagement of Non-College Youth: A Summary
6. New Research on the Effectiveness of Political Discussion in K-12 Civic Education
8. 2010 Reports Present Strengths and Weaknesses of States' Civic Health
9. CIRCLE in the News

RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

10. Building the Youth Vote is About Building Infrastructure

CIRCLE is pleased to provide an enclosed copy of the Special Report "Civic Skills and Federal Policy." This report is the result of a meeting convened by CIRCLE of scholars, civic leaders, and federal officials. The purpose of the meeting was to develop a federal policy agenda for civic skills. The conference was co-sponsored by the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools and Strengthening our Nation's Democracy (SOND) and took place in Washington DC in April 2010.

Tufts
UNIVERSITY

Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Citizenship
and Public Service

THE RESEARCH ROUNDUP COLUMN HIGHLIGHTS RECENT RESEARCH FINDINGS COMMISSIONED OR GENERATED BY CIRCLE. ALSO INCLUDED IS AN UPDATE ON NEW CIRCLE PRODUCTS SUCH AS FACT SHEETS, RESEARCH ARTICLES, RESEARCH ABSTRACTS, BIBLIOGRAPHIES, AND DATASETS.

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH COLLEGE EXPERIENCE MORE REPRESENTED AT THE POLLS

In U.S. elections, young adults who have never attended college (about half of the young population) are consistently much less likely to vote than their counterparts who have some college experience. In the 2010 midterms, it appears that the turnout rate of younger voters with college experience was at least twice as high.

ALL GROUPS OF YOUNGER VOTERS SAW THE ECONOMY AS THE TOP ISSUE FACING AMERICA.

All groups of younger voters saw the economy as the top issue facing America. But the young voters without college experience were substantially more likely to choose health care as the most important issue facing the country. Young voters without college experience believed that spending more to create jobs was an important priority, while they were more likely than their college counterparts to believe that Congress should let the Bush-era tax-cuts expire.

YOUNG VOTERS RACIALLY DIVERSE

In 2008, the strong turnout was driven by youth of color. Again in 2010, younger voters were more racially and ethnically diverse than the electorate as a whole. Among younger voters, 65% were white, 16% Black, 14% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 2% "all others" (this last category includes Native Americans and those who choose to classify themselves in any of the other categories). In contrast, among voters 30 and older, 80% were white, 10% Black, 7% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 2% "all other." Seven percent of younger voters said they were gay, lesbian, or bisexual, compared to 4% of all voters.

Younger Blacks represented 16% of all younger voters, slightly more than their proportion of the whole 18–29 population (14.4%). In 2008, they had represented 18% of younger voters and had the highest turnout rate of any racial/ethnic group of young Americans. This year, it appears that their turnout was about on par with, or slightly above younger voters as a whole.

CIRCLE STAFF AND ADVISORY BOARD

STAFF

Peter Levine,
Director

Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg,
Lead Researcher

Abby Kiesa,
Youth Coordinator &
Researcher

Emily Hoban Kirby,
Senior Researcher

Surbhi Godsay,
Researcher

Deb Jospin,
sagawa/jospin consulting
firm (ex officio, as chair of
Tisch Board of
Advocates)

Joseph Kahne,
Mills College

Richard M. Lerner,
Tufts University

Meira Levinson,
Harvard Graduate School
of Education

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Biko Baker,
The League of Young
Voters

Michael X. Delli Carpini,
Annenberg School,
University of Pennsylvania
(chair)

Tom Ehrlich,
Carnegie Foundation
for the Advancement of
Teaching

Maya Enista,
Mobilize.org

Constance Flanagan,
Penn State University

William A. Galston,
Brookings Institution

Shawn Ginwright,
University of California
San Francisco

Diana Hess,
University of Wisconsin

Susan Ostrander,
Tufts University

Kent Portney,
Tufts University

Carmen Sirianni,
Brandeis University

Dorothy Stoneman,
YouthBuild

Lauren Young,
Spencer Foundation



Continued from Page 2

Meanwhile, younger Hispanics represented 14% of younger voters, again close to the same as their proportion of the 18–29 population as a whole (14.2%). In past elections, the turnout of young Latinos had lagged behind other racial/ethnic groups, but the exit polls suggest that they may have narrowed or even erased the gap in 2010.

Youth of color and low-income youth are voting while dealing with institutional barriers such as disenfranchisement because of felony convictions. Other obstacles were evident at the polls, according to reports from members of the Generational Alliance this past November 3rd. According to Christina Hollenback, Director of the Generational Alliance, “In places like Florida, South Carolina and California around campuses with high numbers of Hispanic and African-American youth, young people were given misinformation in reference to their polling location and election day, had their legitimate forms of ID questioned and rejected, and were subjected to protests from people outside the polling locations trying to deter them from voting.”

VOTERS OF ALL AGES AGREE: ECONOMY IS THE #1 ISSUE FACING THE COUNTRY

Young voters of all racial backgrounds felt that the economy was the most important issue facing the nation today. Despite their similar sense of the most important issue, younger white voters held views that were quite different from young voters as a whole. For example, 52% of young white voters said that the next Congress should focus on reducing the budget deficit, compared to 41% of the entire young voter population.

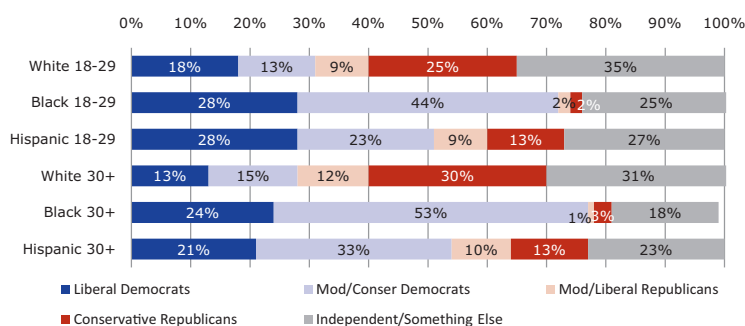
REPORTED PARTY SUPPORT AND IDEOLOGY VARY WIDELY AMONG VOTERS OF DIFFERENT RACES

Young voters in the 2010 election varied greatly in their party and ideological identification.

“WE ARE A FORCE THAT IS FIGHTING FOR CHANGE NOT JUST FOR OURSELVES BUT FOR OUR COMMUNITIES—BUT THIS FIGHT CANNOT CONTINUE TO HAPPEN ALONE,” SAID LEAGUE OF YOUNG VOTERS EDUCATION FUND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROB BIKO BAKER.

Among young Black and Hispanic voters, nearly three in ten self-identified as liberal Democrats, compared to 18% of their white counterparts. White youth, on the other hand, were most likely to self-identify as Independents/something else (35%) or as conservative Republicans (25%). White youth were more likely to support the Tea Party movement (34%) than Black and Hispanic youth (17% and 14%, respectively), although white youth were less supportive than their white adult counterparts (49% of whom supported the movement).

Figure 2: Ideology by Race/Ethnicity and Age



Source: 2010 Edison Research National Election Poll

“We are a force that is fighting for change not just for ourselves but for our communities-but this fight cannot continue to happen alone,” said League of Young Voters Education Fund Executive Director Rob Biko Baker. ★

ENDNOTES

1 CIRCLE computes youth turnout by multiplying the highest total vote tally reported by media outlets by youth share reported by the NEP National Exit Poll, and dividing the product by estimated 18-to-29 year old citizen count from March 2010, Current Population Survey. For more details on how CIRCLE estimates turnout, please refer to: <http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP35CIRCLE.pdf>. National vote tallies were obtained from www.CNN.com and www.NYT.com on the morning of November 3, 2010 for first-day tally estimate (which produced an estimated youth turnout of 20.4%), and mid-day on November 4, 2010 (which produced an estimated youth turnout of 20.9%) for a second-day estimate. On November 15, 2010 Edison Research applied a final weight to the national exit poll data. This re-weighting increased the estimated share of young voters from 11% to 12%. Using this new share estimate combined with a second-day vote tally, CIRCLE now estimates youth turnout in 2010 was about 22.8%. In releasing our turnout estimates immediately after the election, we emphasized that youth turnout “was fairly typical for a midterm election”: well within the normal range. That clearly remains the case. A reweighting of the exit poll data more than one week after the election is unusual, and we are not able to assess independently which results are most accurate. A more precise estimate of 2010 youth turnout will be available once the Census releases its November Current Population Survey voting data in the spring. Meanwhile, the most reliable conclusion is that youth turnout (as estimated by the CIRCLE exit poll method) has stayed between 20 percent and 23 percent in all midterm elections since 1994. Any changes are within the margin of error.

