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## **Tufts University Research Center to Release Only Data on Youth Turnout in Iowa Caucuses on Wed, Jan. 4**

*The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement has Extensive Data on Youth Voters Available, Including IA Historical Data*

**Tufts University, Medford/Somerville, MA** – The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), announced today that on the morning of Wednesday, January 4<sup>th</sup> they will be releasing one-of-a-kind data containing the only estimate of youth turnout for the Iowa Caucuses. Throughout the 2012 presidential elections, in both primaries and caucuses, CIRCLE will be providing the only estimates of youth turnout immediately on the morning after each election.

“Turnout” means the proportion of eligible citizens who participate. In the 2008 Iowa caucuses, the turnout rate for ages 17-29 was 13%. The turnout rate for Iowans of all ages was 16%, so young people participated at very close to the state’s average. ***"Turnout" should not be confused with the proportion of Iowa’s caucus-goers who are young: that statistic will be reported by the Edison Research “entrance polls” on Jan. 3, but it is not a meaningful measure of youth involvement.***

Additionally, CIRCLE -- a leading nonpartisan, academic research center at Tufts University which studies young people in politics – is also a clearinghouse of data and analysis about the history of youth participation in the Iowa Caucuses, Iowa politics in general and throughout civil society. Since 2001, CIRCLE has published many polls and studies of young voters.

In 2008, young people played an important role in the Iowa caucuses, more than tripling their turnout compared to 2004 and opting strongly for the eventual winner, Barack Obama. For more detail on the history of youth voting in Iowa, please see CIRCLE's Iowa research at [tinyurl.com/78wtrnq](http://tinyurl.com/78wtrnq).

### **MEDIA AVAILABILITY – EXPERT ON YOUTH VOTER PARTICIPATION**

**AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS:** Peter Levine, director of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) is available this week for commentary and analysis regarding youth participation in the Tuesday’s Iowa Caucus and the role of young voters in the 2012 presidential election. ***\*\*To book Peter Levine for on-air analysis or for interviews, please contact Brad Luna at 202-812-8140 or [brad@lunamedia.com](mailto:brad@lunamedia.com)***

### **BACKGROUND ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN IOWA CAUCUSES**

Several factors could reduce youth turnout in the Iowa caucuses this year:

- CIRCLE’s recently released research has found substantial declines in the youth voter registration rate since 2008 in key states. See [www.civicyouth.org/?p=3177](http://www.civicyouth.org/?p=3177) for more information.
- Also, there will be no Democratic caucus this year. In 2008, four fifths of young Iowa caucus-goers participated on the Democratic side. Most of the young Independents who participated in the Iowa

caucuses also chose to participate on the Democratic side in 2008. The last time there was only a competitive Republican caucus was 1996, when 3% of youth in Iowa participated.

On the other hand, Iowa's young people are generally engaged:

- Youth in Iowa always vote at above-average rates in general elections: their turnout was 63.4% in November, 2008. And Iowa often posts among the nation's highest rates of youth volunteering.
- Another advantage: 17-year-olds can vote in the Iowa caucuses if they will turn 18 in time for the 2012 general election. In 2008, mobilizing 17-year-old high school students was an important strategy for the Obama campaign. Research suggests that allowing people to vote while they are still in high school raises youth engagement.

Considering that not very many people participate in the Iowa caucus, a small number of young people could make a substantial difference to the outcome. In 2008, only about 12,000 young Iowans participated in the Republican caucuses (representing just 2% of the state's young people), but they helped to pick the state's winner, choosing Governor Mike Huckabee by a substantial margin. This year, a similarly small but energized group of young people could give the victory to a candidate such as Rep. Ron Paul, who has reportedly been bringing young volunteers to the state.

More than 30,000 young people supported Barack Obama in the 2008 Iowa Democratic caucuses, and that level of turnout would be more indicative of a candidate's having youth support in other states' primaries and the general election.

**A sample of additional Iowa Caucus facts available from CIRCLE:**

- In 2012, there are an estimated 471,000 18-to 29-year-old citizens eligible to vote in Iowa.
- In the 2008 general election, an estimated [63.40% of young people in Iowa](#) cast a ballot.
- In 2008, an estimated 13% of 17-to-29 year olds in Iowa cast a ballot in the 2008 caucuses (Democratic and Republican combined), while an estimated 16% of voters of all ages cast a ballot.
- Youth turnout in the 2008 Iowa caucuses (Democratic & Republican combined) more than tripled when compared to 2004 and 2000.
- There were roughly 52,000 youth who participated in the Democratic caucuses in 2008 and 12,000 youth who participated in the Republican caucuses.
- 87% of 17-to-24 year-old caucus-goers in 2008 were doing so for the first time.
- The youngest Republican caucus participants (17-24) were less likely to describe themselves as very conservative than other Republican caucus-goers (30 percent v. 45 percent), and more were self-described "moderates."

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*CIRCLE ([www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org)) is a nonpartisan, independent, academic research center that studies young people in politics and presents detailed data on young voters in all 50 states. CIRCLE was founded in 2001 with a generous gift from the Pew Charitable Trusts and is part of the Jonathan M. Tisch College*

*of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University. CIRCLE's reputation for reliable, independent, timely research has been hailed by experts in the field of civic partnership, such as Harvard University professor Robert Putnam who said CIRCLE had brought "the best and most serious research to one place."*

*The Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service (<http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/>) is anational leader whose model and research are setting the standard for higher education's role in civic engagement education. Serving every school of Tufts University, Tisch College creates an enduring culture that prepares students to be lifelong active citizens.*

*Tufts University ([www.tufts.edu](http://www.tufts.edu)), located on three Massachusetts campuses in Boston, Medford/Somerville and Grafton, and in Talloires, France, is recognized as one of the premier research universities in the United States. Tufts enjoys a global reputation for academic excellence and for the preparation of students as leaders in a wide range of professions. A growing number of innovative teaching and research initiatives span all Tufts campuses, and collaboration among the faculty and students in the undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs across the university's schools is widely encouraged.*