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## **Can Romney Draw Youth Support?**

*Florida Youth Turnout 4%; Romney Wins Young Voters but Paul in Second without Campaigning*

**MEDFORD/SOMERVILLE, Mass.** – Four percent of eligible Florida voters under the age of 30 participated in last night’s primary, according to preliminary analysis by the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement ([CIRCLE](#)), and they voted for former Gov. Mitt Romney ahead of Rep. Ron Paul by a margin of 16 percentage points – even though youth were Romney’s weakest age group and Paul drew almost four times as many young voters as he did in the 2008 primary.

The youth turnout, at 4%, was higher than in 2004, the last time only one party held a contested Florida primary. Recent years in which both the Republicans and the Democrats held competitive races in Florida, 2000 and 2008, youth turned out at a rate of 4% and 13%, respectively.

About 100,000 young Floridians participated in yesterday’s Republican primary. Romney received 41% of young votes (approx. 41,000 votes), followed by Paul with 25% (approx. 25,000 votes), former House Speaker Newt Gingrich with 21% and former Sen. Rick Santorum with 13%. Roughly 134,000 young people participated in the 2008 Florida Republican primary.

CIRCLE Director Peter Levine noted, “Ron Paul won the youth vote in Iowa and New Hampshire, but he came in second in Florida and third in South Carolina – states with much larger populations. Next up is Nevada, another small state, where fewer than 5,000 young people participated in the Republican caucuses in 2008. It would be possible for a candidate like Paul to win the youth vote in Nevada with a concentrated effort. Mitt Romney drew more young voters in Florida this year than in 2008, but the turnout still raises questions about his appeal to youth.”

Additional data on young voters and the Florida primary can be found on CIRCLE’s website at: <http://www.civicyouth.org/can-romney-draw-youth-support/>

Because of a lack of available data, the CIRCLE turnout estimates do not include young people who participated in Florida’s uncontested Democratic primary.

Comparisons to past years must be made with caution, because turnout is affected by the date of the primary and by the nature of the Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns, which are different in every cycle. For example, in 2008 both the Republicans and Democrats held primaries, but in 2012 only the Republicans held a competitive primary.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Youth:** For the purpose of this press release and estimation of youth participation in the Florida Primary, we define “youth” as citizens who were eligible to vote on January 31, 2012, as permitted by state election law.

**Number of youth who participated:** An estimate of how many youth participated in caucuses or primaries.

**Youth share:** An estimate of the number of young people who participated in the primary as a percentage of the number of all people who participated.

**Youth turnout rate:** An estimate of the number of young people who participated in caucuses or cast ballots as a percentage of the total number of young people who were eligible to participate on January 31, 2012. 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.

To sign-up to receive copies of CIRCLE's cutting-edge research on young Americans and next-day voter turnout estimates for the 2012 elections, please email [amy@lunamedia.com](mailto:amy@lunamedia.com).

**To obtain more extensive information about Florida's young voters and historical voting trends, click [here](#).**

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*CIRCLE (<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 a national 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.*