**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**: Wednesday, March 7, 2012 **CONTACT:** Amy Steele, Luna Media Group amy@lunamediagroup.com or 208-301-0846 (cell)

# Youth Turnout on Super Tuesday 5%; Paul, Santorum and Romney Tied for Youth Support

At this Point in '08, Obama Had Drawn More Than Twice as Many Youth Votes as Top Three 2012 Republican Candidates Combined

**MEDFORD/SOMERVILLE, Mass.** – Approximately 5% of eligible citizens under the age of 30 participated in the Super Tuesday contests, according to preliminary, exclusive analysis by the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (<u>CIRCLE</u>). Youth turnout was lower yesterday than it was in 2008 in all the states that also held primaries and caucuses in 2008, partly because only the Republican primaries were contested this year.

Combining the five Super Tuesday states in which exit polls were conducted with adequate youth samples, CIRCLE estimates that 88,000 total youth voted for Rep. Ron Paul, with about 88,000 who voted for former Sen. Rick Santorum, about 86,000 for former Gov. Mitt Romney, and about 43,000 for former Speaker Newt Gingrich. These estimates essentially show a three-way split in total youth votes for Paul, Santorum and Romney on Super Tuesday. The candidates performed differently in each state, however: Paul came in first among youth voters in Virginia; Santorum, in Ohio and Tennessee; Romney, in Massachusetts; and Gingrich, in Georgia.

In all of the primaries and caucuses so far (excluding states where there were no exit or entrance polls about youth vote choice), youth vote tallies stand at approximately 201,000 for Romney, 200,000 for Paul, 162,000 for Santorum, and 87,000 for Gingrich. By this time in the 2008 primary campaign, Barack Obama had drawn more than six times as many youth votes as any of the Republican 2012 candidates, with about 1,365,000 youth votes (although more primaries were contested on or before Super Tuesday in 2008). For a graph created by CIRCLE's team of researchers that shows the GOP candidates' race for the youth vote over time, please visit: <a href="http://www.civicyouth.org/?p=3485">http://www.civicyouth.org/?p=3485</a>

"So far, the Republican primary shows a strikingly even race for the youth vote, with no candidate really winning the young Republicans' allegiance," said CIRCLE director Peter Levine. "The results so far suggest that Republicans have some work to do to build youth support."

At this point, Romney has won the youth vote in three states (Florida, Arizona, and Massachusetts); Paul, in six states (Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Nevada, Michigan and Virginia); Santorum, in two states (Ohio and Tennessee); and Gingrich, in one state (Georgia).

Because of a lack of available data, the CIRCLE turnout estimates do not include young people who participated in this year's uncontested Democratic primaries.

Comparisons to past years must be made with caution, because turnout is affected by the date of the caucuses 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.

## Georgia

Youth voter turnout in the Georgia Republican primary was 5%, with just over 70,000 young people voting on Super Tuesday. 31% of youth who voted yesterday in Georgia chose Newt Gingrich, while 24% chose Ron Paul and 22% voted for each Romney and Santorum. This is below the youth turnout in Georgia on Super Tuesday in 2008, when turnout in the Democratic and Republican primaries combined was 21%.

#### Massachusetts

Roughly 29,000 young people participated in yesterday's Massachusetts Republican primary, making up 3% of youth in the state. Half of young people who voted did so for Romney, which represented the least support among any age group in Massachusetts.

#### Ohio

While the Republican primary in Ohio was highly contested, youth turnout was far below the 2008 primary turnout. Yesterday, 7% of Ohio youth turned out to vote in the Republican primary, compared to 25% in 2008, when there was both a contested Democratic and Republican primary. Roughly 131,000 young people voted yesterday, with 37% choosing Santorum, 28% choosing Romney and 25% choosing Paul.

#### Oklahoma

About 26,000 young people voted in yesterday's Republican primary in Oklahoma, which is 5% of the state's youth. There were not enough youth in the exit poll sample to report young people's vote choice.

## Tennessee

Santorum received his strongest youth support yet in Tennessee, receiving 43% of the vote from those youth who participated yesterday. About 44,000 youth voted in the Republican primary, representing 5% of the state's youth, down from 2008 when both parties had contested primaries.

#### Vermont

About 4,000 young people voted in yesterday's Republican primary in Vermont, which is 4% of the state's youth. There were not enough youth in the exit poll sample to report young people's vote choice.

#### Virginia

While Mitt Romney took 60% of the overall vote in Virginia, he only received 39% of the youth vote in the Virginia primary. Ron Paul won 61% of young people's vote in the state yesterday. (Paul and Romney were the only candidates to meet requirements to be listed on the Virginia GOP primary ballot.) Only 2% of young people in Virginia voted in the Republican primary, about 32,000 young people. This represents a large decrease from the 2008 primary when 16% of Virginia youth voted in either the Democratic or Republican primary.

Similar data for the other states that voted on Super Tuesday is not available, as entrance or exit polls were not done in Alaska, Idaho, North Dakota and Wyoming.

#### **Definitions**

**Youth:** For the purpose of this press release and estimation of youth participation on Super Tuesday, we define "youth" as citizens who were eligible to vote on March 6, 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 March 6, 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@lunamediagroup.com.

# To obtain more extensive information about young voters in the states that participated in the Super Tuesday contests, click on the states below:

Alaska	North Dakota	<u>Vermont</u>
Georgia	<u>Ohio</u>	<u>Virginia</u>
<u>Idaho</u>	<u>Oklahoma</u>	Wyoming
Massachusetts	<u>Tennessee</u>	

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CIRCLE (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 (<a href="http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/">http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/</a>) 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 (<u>www.tufts.edu</u>), 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.