



## GET THE #YOUTHTRUTH ON YOUNG VOTERS

CIRCLE recently launched #YouthTruth, an education campaign to address a set of myths about young people.

As part of the campaign CIRCLE will provide:

- Stakeholders with the research and resources they need to tell an accurate story about youth political participation in Election 2012.
- Accurate, timely, and contextualized research and data to improve public conversations about youth and politics.

- Visuals that explain research on youth participation in an accessible way
- Simple summaries of youth voting in various forms for use in classes, trainings, and online
- Quick responses to data questions.

Follow @CivicYouth and #YouthTruth on Twitter, and contribute your own thoughts to the conversation. ★

### THE #YOUTHTRUTH: CONFRONTING MYTHS ABOUT YOUNG VOTERS

#### MYTH: YOUNG PEOPLE ARE APATHETIC OR ALIENATED

Young people care about issues, but in many cases are not asked to participate. Our recent national study entitled "That's Not Democracy: How Out-of-School Youth Engage in Civic Life and What Stands in Their Way" (see this issue, p. 1) finds that even the population least likely to vote, young adults without college experience, talk frequently about social and political issues, but they perceive that organizations do not want them to participate.

Young people's engagement is often substantive rather than superficial. For instance, in 2008 young people 18-24 were significantly more likely to say that the candidate's position on the issues, rather than his leadership or personal qualities, was more important in determining their vote for president (69% versus 28%). Exit polls showed that young voters were aligned on the issues with the candidate they chose.

#### MYTH: YOUNG PEOPLE CANNOT BE MOBILIZED TO VOTE

Research shows that when young people are contacted, they respond. Mobilizing youth is a smart investment by campaigns. Youth are most likely to respond to contacts from people they trust, and by personal and interactive methods, such as telephone conversations, rather than automated messages.

#### MYTH: YOUNG PEOPLE = COLLEGE STUDENTS

Substantial portions (40.4%) of young eligible voters (age 18-29) do not have any college experience. Approximately a quarter of young eligible voters are in college (24.4%) and only 19.9% of young people have college degrees.

#### MYTH: VOTING IS THE ONLY WAY YOUNG PEOPLE CAN ENGAGE POLITICALLY

Youth are not only diverse demographically, but they engage in their community and politics in various ways. In 2008, nearly 18% of young people only voted, not being engaged in other ways. But 19% of young people were broadly engaged, participating both politically and civically through community groups.

#### MYTH: YOUNG PEOPLE ALL VOTE DEMOCRATIC

In 2008, not all youth voted for President Obama. That year, 32% of young voters chose Senator McCain, whereas 66% chose President Obama. Historically, the youth vote has been split more evenly.

## CIRCLE IN THE NEWS

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### A SAMPLE OF RECENT ARTICLES:

- **"SURVEY: MOST YOUNG ADULTS DO NOT KNOW THEIR STATE VOTING LAWS,"** BY KAUKAB JHUMRA SMITH, *YOUTH TODAY*, 8/1/2012
- **"GOP DIVIDE DEEPENS ON ABORTION, IMMIGRATION, GAY RIGHTS,"** BY PAUL WEST, *CHICAGO TRIBUNE*, 8/27/2012
- **"LIVE VIDEO DISCUSSION: WILL OBAMA STILL APPEAL TO YOUNG VOTERS?,"** BY MICHELLE MALTAIS, *LA TIMES*, 9/4/2012
- **"ROVE: THE PRESIDENT'S FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH IS DRYING UP,"** BY KARL ROVE, *WALL STREET JOURNAL ONLINE*, 9/6/2012
- **"THE YOUTH VOTE: CAN OBAMA RECREATE 2008'S MAGIC?,"** BY NICOLE GREENSTEIN, *TIME MAGAZINE ONLINE*, 9/6/2012
- **"YOUTH FERVOR HIGH AT DNC, BUT LAGGING BEHIND 2008,"** BY BIANCA BROOKS, *NPR*, 9/6/2012
- **"OPINION: YOUTH VOTE CRITICAL TO 2012 ELECTION,"** BY BETHANY BIRON, *USA TODAY*, 9/7/2012
- **"MY VIEW: HOW SCHOOLS SHOULD HANDLE 9/11 IN CLASS,"** BY PETER LEVINE, *CNN ONLINE*, 9/11/2012
- **"COLLEGE STUDENTS: NEW HAMPSHIRE IS TRYING TO STOP US FROM VOTING,"** BY STACY TEICHER KHADAROO, *CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR*, 9/17/2012
- **"STRUGGLING YOUNG ADULTS ARE QUESTION MARK FOR CAMPAIGNS,"** BY SUSAN SAULNY, *NEW YORK TIMES*, 9/20/2012
- **"YOU GOT ID?,"** BY ALLIE GRASSGREEN, *INSIDE HIGHER ED*, 9/24/2012
- **"THE YOUNGEST ONE-FOURTH OF US,"** BY JUDY WOODRUFF, *PBS NEWSHOUR (ONLINE)*, 9/26/2012
- **"FEW STATES TEST STUDENTS ON CIVICS,"** BY NORA FLEMING, *EDUCATION WEEK*, 10/11/2012
- **"THE MISSING MILLENNIALS,"** BY ZOË CARPENTER, *THE NATION*, 10/17/2012

## NEW CIRCLE FACT SHEET EXAMINES STATE CIVIC EDUCATION STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

With funding from the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, CIRCLE has analyzed the standards, course requirements, and mandatory assessments relevant to civic education in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. This is the first such scan in 5 years. The full analysis is summarized in our new fact sheet entitled State Civic Education Requirements, found here: <http://www.civicyouth.org/?p=4422>

### Some of the highlights include:

- ★ All states have standards for social studies, a broad category that includes civics/government along with other disciplines such as history and geography. The theme of power, authority, and government is included in all 51 states' social studies standards (including the District of Columbia's). The theme of civic ideals and practices is found in every state's standard except Missouri's.
- ★ Thirty-nine states require at least one course in American government or civics.
- ★ In the 2012-13 school year, 21 states require a state-designed social studies test. This is a similar number as in 2006 but a dramatic reduction compared to 2001, when 34 states conducted regular assessments on social studies subjects. Two states, Maryland and Florida, have recently instituted new social studies assessments, not yet required this year.
- ★ Just nine states require students to pass a social studies test in order to graduate from high school: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. Georgia's assessment will be phased out but Maryland and Florida will add high-stakes tests.
- ★ Social studies assessments have shifted from a combination of multiple-choice and performance tasks to almost exclusively multiple-choice exams since 2000.