



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sunday, February 21, 2016
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Exclusive Analysis: Role of Young Voters in South Carolina Republican Primary and Nevada Democratic Caucus

South Carolina Marks 3rd Contest in a Row with Record-Setting Republican Youth Participation; Young South Carolinians Prefer Cruz to Trump

Medford/Somerville, MA – Youth participation in yesterday’s South Carolina Republican primary continues to demonstrate the strong potential influence of young people in this year’s Republican presidential nomination process, [according to youth vote experts](#) from the [Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement \(CIRCLE\)](#) – the preeminent, non-partisan research center on youth engagement at Tufts University’s Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service.

South Carolina represents the third Republican contest in a row where youth have broken recent participation records. Nearly 74,000 youth participated in the Republican primary, far exceeding the figures from [2008 and 2012](#).

Youth who participated in the South Carolina Republican primary were most likely among all age groups to support Senator Ted Cruz (28%), making **youth the only age group who did not select South Carolina’s overall winner, Donald Trump, as their top pick.**

In Nevada’s Democratic caucus, youth made up 18% of caucus-goers, a substantial increase from the 13% in the 2008 caucus, suggesting that young people were a much bigger presence in this year’s caucus than in the past. Young Democratic caucus-goers (ages 17-29) showed overwhelming support for Senator Bernie Sanders over Secretary Hillary Clinton: 82% to 14%.

“With their enthusiastic participation yesterday, young people once again made a strong statement about their intent to have their voices heard in the 2016 presidential election,” said Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, Director of CIRCLE. **“In South Carolina, Republican youth shattered the previous participation record, and in Nevada, young people were a strong presence, representing nearly 1 in 5 caucus-goers. The fact that young people are consistently participating in large numbers in four different primaries and caucuses, including states with a diverse demographic makeup, bodes well for youth participation and influence in 2016.”**

For CIRCLE’s full analysis of these state contests [see here](#). After the Nevada Republican caucus on February 23 and the South Carolina Democratic primary on February 27, CIRCLE will

calculate its exclusive youth turnout estimate for each state.

Throughout this election season, [CIRCLE's 2016 Election Center](#) will offer new data products and analyses providing a comprehensive picture of the youth vote, both nationally and in targeted states and congressional districts across the country, including an exclusive [Youth Electoral Significance Index](#).

CIRCLE youth vote experts also are available for interviews and/or analysis. Media outlets should contact: Brad Luna at brad@lunaeisenlamedia.com or 202-812-8140 (mobile)

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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 is part of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University.

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 (<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.