

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

College Park, MD, August 25: Summer inside the Washington Beltway is traditionally a time for rest and reflection and for trying to escape the muggy heat. But not this summer at CIRCLE. As you'll read in the following pages of the newsletter and on our Web site (www.civicyouth.org), we are busy analyzing the data from the 2006 Civic and Political Health Survey, helping the National Conference on Citizenship to build an index of national civic health, awarding over half a million dollars in research grants on K-12 civic education, writing a separate fact sheet on youth voting for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, crunching numbers on community college students, immigrant youth, and other topics, and developing research projects for the near future. In addition, we launched a series of focus groups on about ten college campuses.

It is worth pausing to recall what all this activity is *for*. At CIRCLE, we are neutral about some things. For example, we don't care whether young people engage as radicals, moderates, conservatives, liberals, or libertarians—that's up to them. And we don't assume that any particular form of civic education or mobilization is effective until we have seen it tested.

However, we are not neutral about youth civic engagement. America needs its young people to do important work in politics and civic life, for their own sake and for the vitality of our democracy. CIRCLE's research, like all the good work of our colleagues across the country, is valuable only insofar as it advances that goal.

Sincerely,



Peter Levine

CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) promotes research on the civic and political engagement of young Americans. Although CIRCLE conducts and funds research, not practice, the projects that we support have practical implications for those who work to increase young people's engagement in politics and civic life. CIRCLE is also a clearinghouse for relevant information and scholarship. CIRCLE was founded in 2001 and is funded predominantly by Carnegie Corporation of New York and The Pew Charitable Trusts. It is based in the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy.

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