

## CIRCLE AND ROCK THE VOTE RELEASE SPECIAL REPORT ON YOUNG VOTERS

A recent report released by CIRCLE and Rock The Vote indicates that young people are voting in larger numbers across all demographic groups. The report shows that despite a persistent decline in youth voter turnout since 1972, the 2004 election cycle saw a dramatic increase in participation by adults between the ages of 18 and 29, a trend which continued into the 2006 midterm and 2008 presidential primary elections.

*By tracking youth voter registration and turnout from 2000 to 2006, the authors found that not only is electoral participation by young people on the rise, but the demographic composition of the youth vote is changing significantly.*

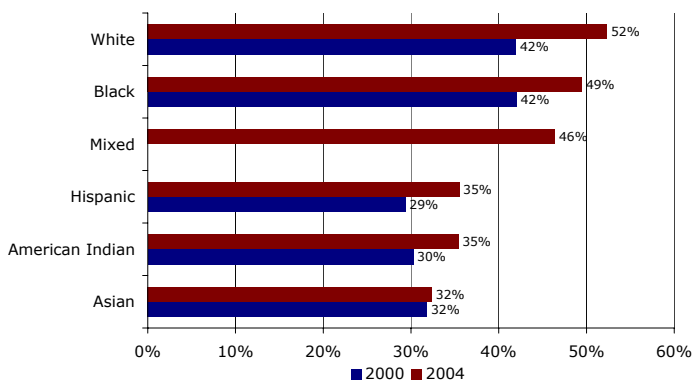
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### YOUNG VOTERS MORE DIVERSE

The research shows that as a group, young voters are more diverse than young voters of the 1990's and older voters of today. Overall, young whites, African Americans, and those of mixed race have the highest voter turnout rates but all racial and ethnic subgroups increased their voter turnout rate from 2000 to 2004.

The increase in voter turnout is not driven by a few demographic

Graph 1: Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections Among 18-to-29 Year-Old Citizens, by Race and Ethnicity



CIRCLE's Tabulations of the Census Current Population Survey, November Supplements (Voting), 2000 and 2004

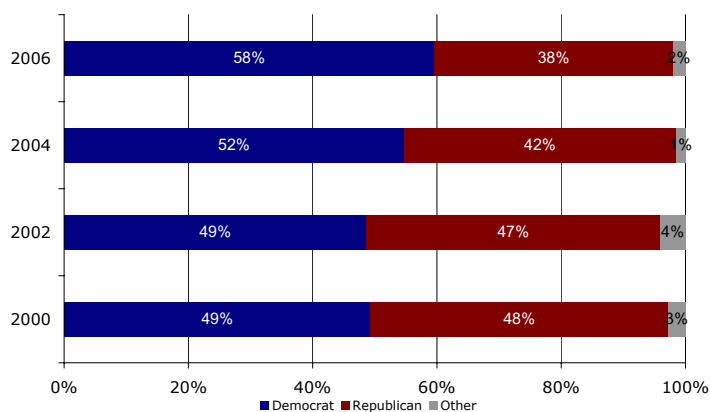
groups, but instead represents a broad-based increase in participation among all groups studied. The greatest increases come from young voters who are working students, a group which increased their voter turnout by 14 percentage points between 2000 and 2004.

Young voters in the Northeast and Midwest increased their turnout by more than 10 percentage points, and young voters in all areas of the country saw an increase in youth voter turnout.

### YOUNG VOTERS INCREASINGLY IDENTIFY AS DEMOCRATS

Participation and demographics are not, however, the only things changing within the youth voter bloc. The study also suggests that young voters are now increasingly likely to vote for Democratic candidates, and to a lesser extent, identify as Democrats. The trend is most striking in congressional elections, where in 2002 youth voters nearly evenly split their vote between the Democratic and Republican candidates. By 2006, though, young voters supported Democratic candidates by a margin of 21 percentage points.

Graph 2: Voters' Choice in Congressional Elections, Ages 18 to 29, 2000-2006

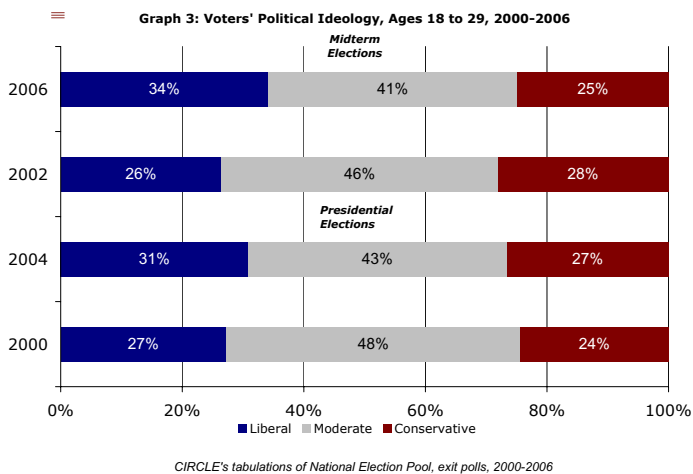


CIRCLE's tabulations of National Election Pool, exit polls, 2000-2006

According to the report, "In every presidential election since 1972, young voters preferred the candidate who ultimately won the presidential election and the popular vote. In the last two presidential cycles, however, young peoples' candidate choice was different from that of their adult counterparts: they chose the Democratic candidates, Al Gore in 2000 and John Kerry in 2004."

Unlike past elections, in 2000 and 2004, young voters expressed candidate preferences that were different from the general voting population.

Young voters are also slightly more likely to profess a liberal ideology. According to the report, fewer young people identified as moderate in the last election cycle. Compared to 2000, young



voters in 2004 were more likely to identify as liberal (31 percent) and conservative (27 percent). In the 2006 midterm elections, the drop in moderates was offset by a nearly eight percentage point surge in young people who identified as liberal.

The complete report, "Young Voter Registration and Turnout Trends," can be downloaded from CIRCLE's Web site at <http://www.civicyouth.org/?p=280>. The full report offers research and data on young voters broken down by state, gender, ethnic group, religious affiliation and other key demographics for the 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2006 elections. 📄

Article written by Connor Glennon, CIRCLE Undergraduate Assistant

## CIRCLE IN THE NEWS

### RECENT NEWS ARTICLES CITING CIRCLE RESEARCH...

- ≡ "The Year the Youth Vote Arrives"  
by E.J. Dionne, Jr.,  
**The Washington Post**, 7/25/2008
- ≡ "McCain Vows to Court Young Voters"  
by Jeff Brady, **NPR**  
7/21/2008
- ≡ "Will Exams Cost Obama Student Votes"  
by Sara Murray,  
**The Wall Street Journal**, 5/6/2008
- ≡ "It's the Medium, Not the Messenger"  
by Jose Antonio Vargas,  
**The Washington Post**, 5/23/2008
- ≡ "'Other Youth Vote' Is Harder to Mobilize"  
by Zoe Tillman,  
**The Christian Science Monitor**, 4/18/2008
- ≡ "Young Voters Could Put Obama or Clinton in the White House"  
by Nikki Schwab,  
**U.S. News & World Report**, 3/13/2008
- ≡ "Internet Spurs Upswing in Volunteerism"  
by Wendy Koch, **USA Today**  
3/13/2008
- ≡ "Sound Bite That Has Some Teeth"  
by David Carr,  
**The New York Times**, 3/17/2008
- ≡ "Campaigns Target Young Latinos in Texas"  
by Ben Adler,  
**Politico**, 2/29/2008
- ≡ "Super Tuesday A Mixed Bag for Dems; Youth Vote Favors Obama"  
by Michael Lipkin,  
**CBSNews.com**, 2/6/2008