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### Youth Voting in the 2004 Democratic Primaries

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This fact sheet provides information about youth voting in the 2000 and 2004 Democratic primaries. It is important to recognize that these two years are not comparable in all respects. For example, there was a contested Republican primary in 2000, but not in 2004; there were different candidates; and the dates and order of state primaries shifted. Nevertheless, this fact sheet provides comprehensive information about youth voting in the two most recent presidential primaries.

In the states where there were exit polls in 2000 and 2004, approximately 749,000 young people (age 18-29) voted in the 2004 Democratic primaries. Turnout for all age groups in those Democratic contests increased by about 33,000 votes, or 0.4%. Youth turnout decreased by 9,000 votes or 1.2% in the same Democratic primaries.<sup>1</sup>

Counting only those states that voted on Super Tuesday in 2004,<sup>2</sup> the number of votes cast in Democratic primaries by people under the age of 30 is down from 686,000 to 614,000, a decline of 72,000 votes or 10.5%. Turnout by all age groups in the Super Tuesday Democratic primary states is down by 573,000 or 8.4%.

Including all states for which there were exit polls in either year, the youth share of the vote in Democratic primaries was 9.84 in 2000 and 9.85 in 2004—essentially unchanged.

Republican presidential primaries were held in 2004, but they were not contested, so turnout was dramatically lower than in 2000, when more than 20 million people participated in GOP primaries.

## Results by State

The number of young voters in Democratic primaries increased in IA, DE, OK and MD. The number of young voters decreased in CA, CT, NY, and RI. Republicans and Independents could vote in the "open" Democratic primaries in SC, MO, VA, TN, WI, GA, OH, and VT, so comparisons between 2000 and 2004 are inadvisable in those states. Unaffiliated voters could vote in either primary in NH, AZ (2000), MA, and RI so caution should also be used when comparing turnout between 2000 and 2004 (in these states).

Youth share of the vote did not change by a statistically significant amount, except in Iowa and Delaware, where there were increases.

**Table 1 – Democratic Primary Turnout, 2000 and 2004**

| State            | 2004<br>Percent of<br>all Voters<br>who were<br>18-29<br>(exit poll) | 2000<br>Percent of<br>all Voters<br>who were<br>18-29<br>(exit poll) | Percent of<br>Citizens who<br>are<br>18-29<br>(2000<br>Census) | Primary<br>Type in 2004 | Primary<br>Type in 2000 |
|------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Iowa             | 17   | 9  | 19   | Caucus                  | Caucus                  |
| New<br>Hampshire | 14   | 13   | 18   | Closed (I)              | Closed (I)              |
| South Carolina   | 9  | ***  | 19   | Open                    | Open                    |
| Missouri         | 9  | 9  | 19   | Open                    | Open                    |
| Delaware         | 9  | 6  | 18   | Closed                  | Closed                  |
| Oklahoma         | 6  | 5  | 21   | Closed                  | Closed                  |
| Arizona          | 7  | ***  | 24   | Closed                  | Closed (I)              |
| Virginia         | 8  | ***  | 18   | Open                    | Caucus                  |
| Tennessee        | 7  | 7  | 20   | Open                    | Open                    |
| Wisconsin        | 11   | ***  | 19   | Open                    | Open                    |
| California       | 11   | 12   | 22   | Closed                  | Closed                  |
| Connecticut      | 5  | 5  | 16   | Closed                  | Closed                  |
| Georgia          | 11   | 12   | 27   | Open                    | Open                    |
| Maryland         | 8  | 6  | 20   | Closed                  | Closed                  |
| Massachusetts    | 9  | 8  | 18   | Closed (I)              | Closed (I)              |
| New York         | 8  | 9  | 20   | Closed                  | Closed                  |
| Ohio             | 9  | 8  | 20   | Open                    | Open                    |
| Rhode Island     | 8  | 9  | 17   | Closed (I)              | Closed (I)              |
| Vermont          | 10   | 8  | 19   | Open                    | Open                    |

### Definitions of Primary Types:

**Closed** = Voters receive a ballot listing only those candidates running for office in the party with which they are registered. Unaffiliated voters may not vote.

**Closed (I)** = Same as above except that unaffiliated voters are permitted to vote.

**Open** = Voters receive ballots for each political party and make their choice of which primary to participate in.

Sources: 2004 exit poll data from National Election Pool, conducted by Edison/Mitofsky; 2000 exit poll data from Voter News Service; 2000 primary election rules from the Federal Election Commission; 2004 primary election rules from phone conversations with each Secretary of State's Office and [www.cnn.com/elections/2004/](http://www.cnn.com/elections/2004/).

**Table 2 – Votes Cast in Democratic Primaries for Which There Were Exit Polls**

| <i>State</i>     | <b>2004<br/>Total Votes<br/>Cast</b> | <b>2004<br/>Estimate of<br/>Youth Votes<br/>Cast</b> | <b>2000<br/>Total Votes<br/>Cast</b> | <b>2000<br/>Estimate of<br/>Youth Votes<br/>Cast</b> |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Iowa             | 122,000                              | 21,000   | 61,000                               | 5,500  |
| New<br>Hampshire | 218,000                              | 31,000   | 155,000                              | 20,000   |
| South Carolina   | 291,000                              | 26,000   | ***                                  | ***  |
| Missouri         | 416,000                              | 37,000   | 265,000                              | 24,000   |
| Delaware         | 33,000                               | 3,000  | 11,000                               | 650  |
| Oklahoma         | 300,000                              | 18,000   | 135,000                              | 7,000  |
| Arizona          | 223,000                              | 16,000   | 87,000                               | ***  |
| Virginia         | 390,000                              | 31,000   | ***                                  | ***  |
| Tennessee        | 359,000                              | 25,000   | 215,000                              | 15,000   |
| Wisconsin        | 817,000                              | 90,000   | 371,000                              | ***  |
| California       | 2,597,000                            | 286,000  | 3,272,000                            | 393,000  |
| Connecticut      | 127,000                              | 6,000  | 177,000                              | 9,000  |
| Georgia          | 602,000                              | 66,000   | 284,000                              | 34,000   |
| Maryland         | 441,000                              | 35,000   | 507,000                              | 30,000   |
| Massachusetts    | 602,000                              | 54,000   | 572,000                              | 46,000   |
| New York         | 648,000                              | 52,000   | 974,000                              | 88,000   |
| Ohio             | 1,164,000                            | 105,000  | 979,000                              | 78,000   |
| Rhode Island     | 33,000                               | 3,000  | 47,000                               | 4,000  |
| Vermont          | 74,000                               | 7,000  | 49,000                               | 4,000  |

\*\*\* No exit polls were conducted for the Democratic Primaries in AZ, VA, SC, or WI in 2000. Also note that any inferences made about open primary states need to take into account participation in the Republican Primary since voters can vote in any primary. In 2000, some of the Republican primaries were more contested. In 2004, the Democratic Primary was generally more contested. Therefore, comparing results between 2000 and 2004 is not advised in open primary states. Source: total number of votes cast is provided by Secretaries of State in each state.

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<sup>1</sup> CIRCLE calculates the number of youth voters by combining exit polls (which estimate the percentage of voters who are younger than 30) with data on the total number of votes cast. In 2004, exit poll data come from the National Election Pool, conducted by Edison/Mitofsky. In 2000, exit polls were conducted by Voter News Service. The total number of votes cast is provided by Secretaries of State in each state.

<sup>2</sup> CA, CT, GA, MA, MD, NY, OH, RI, and VT, but excluding MN, which held a caucus, and MO, which was not a Super Tuesday state in 2000.