

## Quick Facts about Young Voters in Colorado: The Presidential Election Year 2008

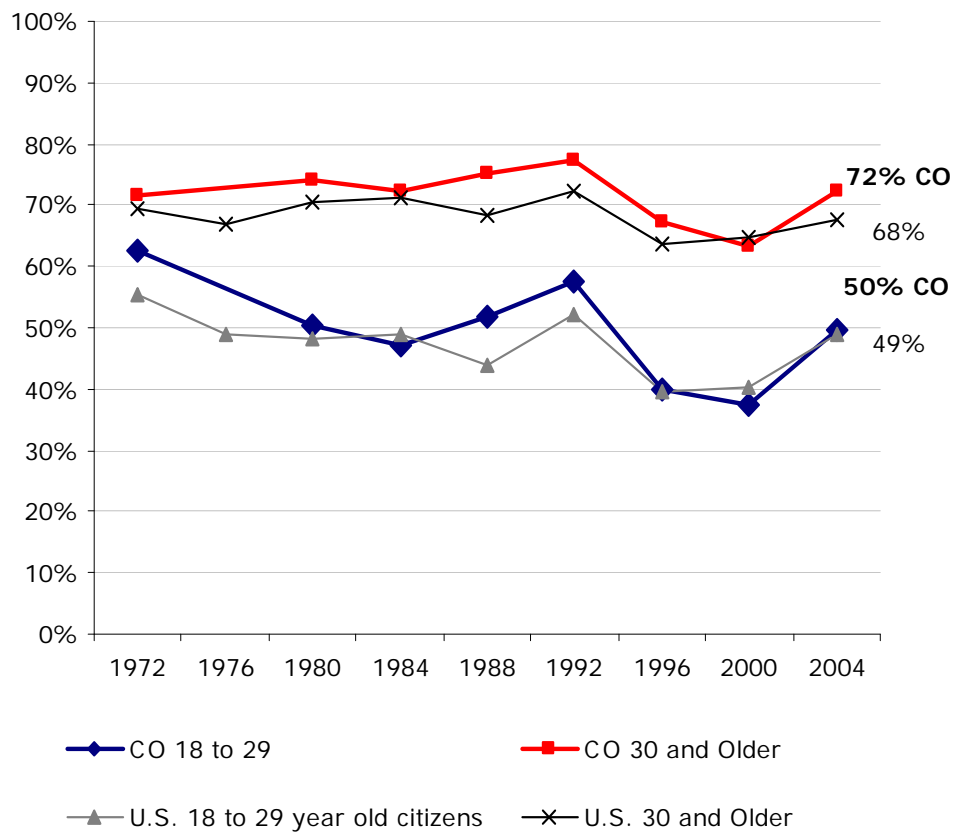
By Karlo Barrios Marcelo and Emily Hoban Kirby<sup>1</sup>  
October 2008

This year's general election follows a primary season in which more than 6.5 million young people under the age of 30 participated.

In 2004, turnout among 18-to-29 year-olds in Colorado ranked 25<sup>th</sup> among all states and the District of Columbia in 2004, and was up 13 percentage points over 2000. The national youth voter turnout for the primaries increased by eight points, from nine percent in 2004 to 17 percent in 2008. However, whether the voter mobilization momentum of 2008 continues into the general election remains unpredictable.

This fact sheet reports the characteristics of young voters for the state of Colorado, including estimates of the number of young voters and voter turnout rates in 2004 and 2000 for various sub-groups of young people.

**Figure 1: Colorado Voter Turnout in Presidential Years Among Citizens, by Age**



Source: Author's tabulations from the Current Population Survey, November (Voting) Supplements, 1972-2004. No 1976 data for CO.

## Estimates of Eligible Young Voters, 2008

In 2008, a Presidential election year, there are an estimated 699 thousand young people in Colorado who are eligible to vote in U.S. elections. Table 1 shows voting statistics for the years 2004 and 2000.<sup>2</sup>

Colorado's youth voter turnout rate was in the middle of all states in 2004, but it had the 42<sup>nd</sup> highest turnout rate among youth in 2000 among all 50 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>3</sup>

## Voter Turnout Rates in 2004 and 2000 Among Eligible Young Citizens

Table 2 displays voter turnout rates for various groups of young people in 2004 and 2000 in Colorado. 2004 was a year of high voter turnout for all youth groups in Colorado relative to 2000. Relative to the nation as a whole in 2004, youth in Colorado were slightly more electorally engaged.

**Table 1 – Colorado Voter Turnout Statistics, 2008, 2004, and 2000**

|   | Young People<br>18 to 29 | Adults<br>30 and Older |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>2008</b>                                 |                          |                        |
| Number of Citizens Eligible to Vote in 2008 | 699 thousand             | 2.7 million            |
| <b>2004</b>                                 |                          |                        |
| Number of Votes Cast                        | 325 thousand             | 1.7 million            |
| Voter Turnout Rate                          | 50 percent               | 72 percent             |
| Share of all Voters                         | 17 percent               | 83 percent             |
| <b>2000</b>                                 |                          |                        |
| Number of Votes Cast                        | 252 thousand             | 1.4 million            |
| Voter Turnout Rate                          | 37 percent               | 63 percent             |
| Share of all Voters                         | 15 percent               | 85 percent             |

Source: Authors' Tabulations, Current Population Survey, March Supplement 2008 and November Supplement 2004 and 2000.

**Table 2 – Colorado Voter Turnout Rates Among Young Citizens ages 18 to 29, 2004 and 2000**

| Voter Turnout Rate Among:         | 2004       | 2000       |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| National Youth Rate               | 49 percent | 40 percent |
| CO Youth Rate                     | 50 percent | 37 percent |
| CO Registered Voter               | 81 percent | 67 percent |
| <b>Race/Ethnicity<sup>4</sup></b> |            |            |
| White non-Hispanic                | 56 percent | 39 percent |
| Black non-Hispanic                | ***        | ***        |
| Hispanics                         | 30 percent | ***        |
| Asian non-Hispanic                | ***        | ***        |
| Native American non-Hispanic      | ***        | ***        |
| <b>Gender</b>                     |            |            |
| Women                             | 56 percent | 39 percent |
| Men                               | 44 percent | 36 percent |
| <b>Educational Attainment</b>     |            |            |
| Less than High School             | 24 percent | ***        |
| High School                       | 31 percent | 31 percent |
| Some College                      | 60 percent | 42 percent |
| BA or more                        | 74 percent | ***        |
| <b>College Experience</b>         |            |            |
| No experience                     | 29 percent | 25 percent |
| At least some experience          | 65 percent | 48 percent |
| <b>Marital Status</b>             |            |            |
| Single Men                        | 44 percent | 31 percent |
| Single Women                      | 57 percent | 41 percent |
| Married Men                       | ***        | ***        |
| Married Women                     | 55 percent | 34 percent |

Source: Authors' Tabulations from the 2004 and 2000 November Supplements of the Current Population Survey. '\*\*\*' indicates a sample size is too small to produce a reliable estimate.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> We thank Mark Hugo Lopez for his 2006 fact sheet series on which this fact sheet is based. We also thank Peter Levine, Abby Kiesa, and Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg for comments on previous drafts of this fact sheet.

<sup>2</sup> For a full discussion of the different ways voter turnout can be calculated please see "CIRCLE Working Paper 35: The Youth Voter 2004: With a Historical Look at Youth Voting Patterns 1972-2004." All voter turnout estimates presented in this fact sheet are calculated for U.S. citizens only, and according to the "Census Citizen Method" described in CIRCLE Working Paper 35.

<sup>3</sup> For state-by-state comparisons of voter turnout rates, see the CIRCLE fact sheet "Youth Voter Turnout in the States during the 2004 Presidential and the 2002 Midterm Elections."

<sup>4</sup> We have defined racial/ethnic groups in the CPS November Supplements by defining anyone with Hispanic background as Latino; individuals who cite a single non-Hispanic race or ethnicity are identified as non-Hispanic white, African American, Asian American or Native American.