

YOUTH TURNOUT INCREASES FOR SECOND ELECTION IN A ROW

Preliminary CIRCLE estimates show that turnout among 18-29 year-olds increased for the second major election in a row, growing to approximately 24 percent, up at least two points over 2002 levels. In addition, CIRCLE's analysis of the 2006 Edison/Mitofsky National Election Pool's exit poll shows that young adults voted for the Democratic candidate over the Republican candidate in races for the House of Representatives (58% vs. 38%), the Senate (60% vs. 33%) and governor (55% vs. 34%). Additional findings include:

- ★ Young voters were the most likely age group to make their voting decision on Election Day. Forty-four percent of young voters decided for whom to vote in the U.S. House election within a week of Election Day, compared to 28% of the electorate as a whole.
- ★ Young voters are more racially and ethnically diverse than older voters. Eleven percent classified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (larger than the proportion in the electorate as a whole 6%). Young latinos have increased their voter share by eight percentage points since 1992, more than any other minority racial/ethnic group.
- ★ Thirty-nine percent of young respondents said their vote for Congress was meant to express opposition to George W. Bush.

UPDATED STATISTICS ON VOTERS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 AND 29

In our November 8th press release, CIRCLE used the Edison/Mitofsky National Election Pool exit polls for the House of Representatives races and the first day vote tally as reported by the Associated Press to estimate youth turnout. Based on these early reports, CIRCLE estimated that youth turnout was 24%. As new data has become available, CIRCLE now estimates that the turnout of 18-to-29 year-olds was somewhere between 22% and 24%, clearly up from 2000 when youth turnout was 20%.

CIRCLE's estimates of youth turnout are based on three components: (1) the number of votes cast in the election (from local election officials via the Associated Press); (2) the percentage of voters who are in that age range (according to exit polls); (3) and, the size of the citizen population between the ages of 18 and 29 (according to Census Bureau).

The reported number of votes cast has risen since our November 8th release and will continue to be adjusted upwards as local election officials count absentee ballots and provisional ballots. Meanwhile, since our press release Edison/Mitofsky updated their exit poll results, changing the percentage of voters who were between the ages of 18 and 29. This percentage changed from 13% to 12%. These two changes affect our estimate of the number of votes cast by young people, and hence youth turnout rate estimates can be adjusted.

Table 1 below shows how the changing figures affect youth voting estimates. The turnout estimate labeled "2006 (A)" uses the first estimate of the youth share of the electorate (13%). The turnout estimate labeled "2006 (B)" uses the second estimate of the youth share of the electorate (12%). Each calculation generates slightly different results, but all calculations tell the same basic story. Youth turnout in mid-term elections was higher in 2006 than 2002 and certainly rivals turnout in 1994 (a midterm election with one of the highest youth turnout rates).

Currently, exit polls are the only source of data for estimating youth voter turnout, but they may not be the best data source for comparing the turnout of different age groups over time. More information about youth voter turnout will be available in 2007 when the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, November Supplement is released.

TABLE 1: ESTIMATES FOR YOUTH VOTING IN MID-TERM ELECTIONS

Year	Youth Share of Electorate <i>Source: National Election Pool, National Exit Poll</i>	Youth Turnout Rate Estimate #1 <i>Source: 1st day vote tally and Youth Share Based on Exit Polls</i>	Youth Turnout Rate Estimate #2 <i>Source: 2nd day vote tally and Youth Share Based on Exit Polls</i>
2006 (A)	13%	24%	24%
2006 (B)	12%	22%	23%
2002	11%	20%	21%
1994	13%	22%	24%