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49,000 Citizens Under the Age of Thirty Participate in Arkansas Primary
Young Arkansas Voters Support Clinton and Huckabee

Youth Voter Experts Available for Interviews
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Washington, DC – 11 percent of eligible Arkansas citizens under the age of 30 participated in the Arkansas primaries, according to preliminary analysis by CIRCLE (The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement). The primaries attracted an estimated 46,000 young voters to the polls.

Table 1 –Presidential Primary Participation in 2008
18-to-29-Year-Old Citizens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Youth Turnout Rate</th>
<th>Turnout Rate of Age 30 and Over</th>
<th>Overall Turnout Rate</th>
<th>Number of Youth Who Voted</th>
<th>Youth as Share of All Voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>11 %</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28 %</td>
<td>49,591</td>
<td>9 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The share of primary voters is obtained from the 2008 Arkansas Republican and Democratic National Election Pool exit polls conducted by Edison/Mitofsky. The numbers of votes cast are obtained from the CNN.com (3/18/2008; 100% of precincts reporting.) Estimated voter turnout is obtained by taking the estimated number of votes cast and dividing it by the estimated population of 18-to-29-year-old citizens and citizens over the age of 30 from the Current Population Survey (2007).

The results from both Democratic and Republican primaries in Arkansas punctuate the findings of national focus groups that CIRCLE conducted last fall. The research showed that college students are deeply concerned about issues, involved personally as volunteers, and ready to consider voting. But they want political leaders to be positive, to address real problems, and to call on all Americans to be constructively involved.

"Young Americans have been turning out to vote at remarkable rates in these primaries. This reflects their deep concern about the critical issues at stake and the impact of this election on our country’s future," said CIRCLE Director, Peter Levine. "Since 2000, young people have been volunteering at high rates and are becoming more interested in news and public affairs. Now they are ready to consider voting as a way of addressing major problems. The Millennials are beginning to make their distinctive and lasting mark on American politics."

Comparisons to other caucuses and primaries must be made with caution, because turnout is affected by the date of the primaries and by the nature of the Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns, which are different in every state. “Closed” primaries and caucuses tend to depress turnout since Independents cannot participate.

Because there is no actual count of the number of votes cast by young people in the Arkansas primaries, we can only estimate their level of participation. Our turnout estimates are based on vote tallies reported by the media, the share of voters who are young calculated by the National Election Pool exit/entrance polls, and an estimate of the eligible voting population obtained from the Census Current Population Survey (CPS).

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Table 3 – Youth Vote Choice by Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democratic Candidates</th>
<th>Republican Candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>Edwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas Ages 18-29</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina Ages 18-29</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada Ages 18-29</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire Ages 18-29</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Ages 17-24</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Ages 25-29</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.cnn.com

This increase in youth turnout in the early primary season continues a trend observed in other elections since 2000. In the 2006 congressional elections, the voter turnout rate among 18- to 29-year-olds increased by three percentage points compared to the previous congressional election of 2002. And in the 2004 presidential election, the national youth voter turnout rate rose 9 percentage points compared to 2000, reaching 49 percent. In 2004, under-30-year-olds were registered to vote at the highest rate in 30 years.

Definitions

Youth: For the purpose of the Arkansas primary, we define “youth” as citizens between the ages of 18 and 29 on February 5, 2008.

Number of youth who voted: An estimate of how many youth participated.

Youth share primary participants: An estimate of the number of young people who participated in the primaries as a percentage of the number of all people who participated in the primaries.

Youth turnout rate: An estimate of the number of young people who participated in the primaries as a percentage of the total number of young people who were eligible to participate in either primary.

The youth turnout rate is the best indicator of how young Americans are engaging in the political process. The other statistics—the sheer number of youth participants and the youth share of the electorate—can change because of factors unrelated to youth engagement.

CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) promotes research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. Since 2001, CIRCLE has conducted, collected, and funded research on the civic and political participation of young Americans. CIRCLE is based in the University of Maryland’s
School of Public Policy and is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, Carnegie Corporation of New York and several other foundations.