



CIRCLE

The Center for Information & Research
on Civic Learning & Engagement

For Immediate Release
January 3, 2008

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Iowa Youth Turnout Rate Almost Triples 56,000 Iowans Under the Age of Thirty Participate in the Caucuses

Youth Voter Experts Available for Interviews
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Washington, DC - Eleven percent of eligible Iowans under the age of 30 participated in last night's Iowa caucuses, according to preliminary analysis by CIRCLE (The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement). The youth turnout rate rose to 11 percent in 2008 compared to 4 percent in 2004 and 3 percent in 2000.



**Table 1 - Iowa Presidential Caucus Participation
17-to-29-Year-Old Citizens**

Caucus Year	Youth Turnout Rate	Turnout Rate of Age 30 and Over	Overall Turnout Rate	Number of Youth Who Caucused	Youth as Share of Caucus-goers
2008	11%	15%	14%	56,875	19%
2004	4%	8%	5%	20,740	17%
2000	3%	9%	8%	14,940	9%

Combines the Democratic and Republican caucuses. For separate results by party, see Table II.

Source: The share of caucus goers is obtained from the IA entrance polls conducted by Edison/Mitofsky (2008 & 2004) and Voter News Services (2000). The numbers of votes cast are obtained from the CNN.Com and the Washington Post (as of 11 pm Jan 3, 2008) and the New York Times (Jan 20, 2004 & Jan. 25, 2000). Estimated voter turnout is obtained by taking the estimated number of votes cast and dividing it by the estimated population of 17-to-29-year-old citizens and citizens over the age of 30 from the Current Population Survey.

See p. 2 for definitions.

Comparisons to past years must be made with caution, because turnout is affected by the date of the caucuses and by the nature of the Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns, which are different in every cycle. For example, there was no Republican caucus in Iowa 2004, when President Bush sought reelection. The following table provides estimates of youth participation in Iowa caucuses by party and year.

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**Table 2 - Iowa Presidential Caucus Participation
By Party
17-to-29-Year-Old Citizens**

Political Party	Caucus Year	Number of Caucus-goers	Share of Caucus-goers
Democratic	2008	46,640	22%
	2004	20,740	17%
Republican	2008	10,235	11%
	2004	N/A	N/A

The turnout rate has historically been low in Iowa caucuses, but the youth turnout rate was much higher tonight than in recent years. This result 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.

“Younger Americans are doing their part, registering to vote, paying more attention to issues and politics, and now turning out for the Iowa caucuses,” said CIRCLE Director Peter Levine. “Now it is up to political leaders to reach out to younger Americans and run campaigns that address their issues and concerns.”

Definitions

Youth: For the purpose of the Iowa caucuses, we define “youth” as citizens who will be between the ages of 18 and 29 on Election Day, 2008.

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

Youth share caucus-goers: An estimate of the number of young people who participated in the caucuses as a percentage of the number of *all people* who participated in the caucuses.

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

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.