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**Tufts University Research Center's NH Primary Analysis:**  
**Young NH Voters Historically Engaged, With Higher  
Turnout than National Avg. in Every Election since '98**

*Nearly 40% of Young Repub. Primary Voters Identified as "Independent" in '08*

**Tufts University, Medford/Somerville, MA** – Analysis of young New Hampshire primary voters released today by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) shows that young Republican primary voters (18-29) are a highly engaged part of the electorate and could possibly play a deciding role in next Tuesday's primary.

In every general election since 1998, the turnout percentage for young New Hampshire voters has been higher than the national average. In the 2008 New Hampshire primary, an historic 43% of young voters in the Granite State turned out to cast a vote for either the Republican or Democratic candidates, according to CIRCLE, a leading nonpartisan, academic research center at Tufts University that studies young people in politics.

"Historically, young voters in New Hampshire turn out to vote at a rate that is on par with older voters in the state, which puts their engagement in elections above the national average for youth in every general election since 1998," said Peter Levine, director of CIRCLE. "In the 2008 primary, New Hampshire young people turned out at a rate double that of 2004 and undoubtedly played a significant role in John McCain's eight-point win over Mitt Romney in the Republican primary that year."

Young Republican primary voters in New Hampshire are poised to play a deciding role in Tuesday's election, not simply because of their higher-than-average turnout rates, but also because of their ideological make-up. In the 2008 New Hampshire Republican primary, 55% of participants ages 18-29 identified as "Republicans," but in that same primary election 39% the young Republican primary voters identified themselves as "Independents."

"Every campaign should pay attention to young voters in New Hampshire," continued Levine. "Since nearly 40% of young Republican primary voters in '08 identified themselves as 'Independents,' candidates should be aware that many young voters could be Independents again this year. I suspect it was no coincidence that Rick Santorum's first post-Iowa town hall yesterday in New Hampshire was held on a college campus comprised primarily of young New Hampshire college students."

CIRCLE will provide a youth voter turnout estimate for the New Hampshire primary on Wednesday, Jan. 11 in addition to detailed information about the history of youth participation in the New Hampshire primaries and in the state's politics and civil society.

Note: "Turnout" means the proportion of eligible citizens who participate. "Turnout" should not be confused with the proportion of New Hampshire's primary voters who are young. That statistic will be reported by the Edison Research exit polls on Jan. 10, but it is not a meaningful measure of youth involvement.

**\*\* Additional background compiled and analyzed by CIRCLE on young voters in New Hampshire can be found in the background document below. \*\***

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*CIRCLE ([www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org)) is a nonpartisan, independent, academic research center that studies young people in politics and presents detailed data on young voters in all 50 states. CIRCLE was founded in 2001 with a generous gift from the Pew Charitable Trusts and is part of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University. CIRCLE's reputation for reliable, independent, timely research has been hailed by experts in the field of civic partnership, such as Harvard University professor Robert Putnam who said CIRCLE had brought "the best and most serious research to one place." Follow CIRCLE on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/CivicYouth](http://www.facebook.com/CivicYouth) or on Twitter [@civicyouth](https://twitter.com/civicyouth).*

*The Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service (<http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/>) is a national leader whose model and research are setting the standard for higher education's role in civic engagement education. Serving every school of Tufts University, Tisch College creates an enduring culture that prepares students to be lifelong active citizens.*

*Tufts University ([www.tufts.edu](http://www.tufts.edu)), located on three Massachusetts campuses in Boston, Medford/Somerville and Grafton, and in Talloires, France, is recognized as one of the premier research universities in the United States. Tufts enjoys a global reputation for academic excellence and for the preparation of students as leaders in a wide range of professions. A growing number of innovative teaching and research initiatives span all Tufts campuses, and collaboration among the faculty and students in the undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs across the university's schools is widely encouraged.*

## **BACKGROUND: Historical Data on the Participation of Young NH Voters**

*For additional details on the history of youth voting in New Hampshire, please see CIRCLE's research [here](#).*

**New Hampshire's young people are generally engaged in elections (62% of young, NH voters turned out for the November 2008 general election), but several factors could potentially reduce youth turnout in the 2012 New Hampshire primary:**

- CIRCLE's recently released research has found substantial declines in the youth voter registration rate since 2008 in key states. Click [here](#) for more information.
- There will be no competitive Democratic primary this year. In 2008, three-fifths of young New Hampshire primary voters participated on the Democratic side. The last time there was only one competitive primary was 2004, when 18% of youth in New Hampshire participated.
- In 2008, about 33,000 young New Hampshirites, 17% of the state's young people, participated in the Republican primary and helped elect the state's top candidate, Senator John McCain. More than 51,000 young people cast vote in the 2008 New Hampshire Democratic primary, and 51% (about 26,000) of those young voters supported Barack Obama.
- Of young Republican-identified youth who voted in 2010, 65% considered themselves conservative, versus 31% who said they were moderate. Republican-identified youth were six points more likely to identify as moderates than were Republicans over age 30.
- The Tea Party received support from 61% of young Republican New Hampshire voters in 2010, versus 74% of older Republican voters.

**A sample of additional facts available online, [here](#):**

- In 2012, there are an estimated 197,000 18-to 29-year-old citizens eligible to vote in New Hampshire.
- In the 2008 general election, an estimated 62% of young people in New Hampshire cast a ballot.
- In 2008, an estimated 43% of 18-to-29 year-olds in New Hampshire cast a ballot in the 2008 primary (Democratic and Republican combined), while an estimated 53% of all citizens cast a ballot.
- Youth turnout in the 2008 New Hampshire primary (Democratic and Republican combined) more than doubled when compared to 2004.

- There were roughly 51,000 youth who participated in the Democratic primary in 2008 and 33,000 youth who participated in the Republican primary.