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### Youth Voting in the 2004 Democratic Primaries

By CIRCLE staff, March 3, 2004

This fact sheet provides information about youth voting in the 2000 and 2004 Democratic primaries. It is important to recognize that these two years are not comparable in all respects. For example, there was a contested Republican primary in 2000, but not in 2004; there were different candidates; and the dates and order of state primaries shifted. Nevertheless, this fact sheet provides comprehensive information about youth voting in the two most recent presidential primaries.

In the states where there were exit polls in 2000 and 2004, approximately 749,000 young people (age 18-29) voted in the 2004 Democratic primaries. Turnout for all age groups in those Democratic contests increased by about 33,000 votes, or 0.4%. Youth turnout decreased by 9,000 votes or 1.2% in the same Democratic primaries.<sup>1</sup>

Counting only those states that voted on Super Tuesday in 2004,<sup>2</sup> the number of votes cast in Democratic primaries by people under the age of 30 is down from 686,000 to 614,000, a decline of 72,000 votes or 10.5%. Turnout by all age groups in the Super Tuesday Democratic primary states is down by 573,000 or 8.4%.

Including all states for which there were exit polls in either year, the youth share of the vote in Democratic primaries was 9.84 in 2000 and 9.85 in 2004—essentially unchanged.

Republican presidential primaries were held in 2004, but they were not contested, so turnout was dramatically lower than in 2000, when more than 20 million people participated in GOP primaries.

## Results by State

The number of young voters in Democratic primaries increased in DE, IA, GA, MA, MD, OH, OK, and VT. The number of young voters decreased in CA, CT, NY, and RI. Republicans and Independents could vote in the "open" Democratic primaries in MO, NH, and TN, so comparisons between 2000 and 2004 are inadvisable in those states.

Youth share of the vote did not change by a statistically significant amount, except in Iowa and Delaware, where there were increases.

**Table 1 – Democratic Primary Turnout, 2000 and 2004**

State	2004 Percent of all Voters who were 18-29 (exit poll)	2000 Percent of all Voters who were 18-29 (exit poll)	Percent of Citizens who are 18-29 (2000 Census)	Primary Type in 2004	Primary Type in 2000
Iowa	17	9	19	Caucus	Caucus
New Hampshire	14	13	18	Open	Open
South Carolina	9	***	19	Open	Open
Missouri	9	9	19	Open	Open
Delaware	9	6	18	Closed	Closed
Oklahoma	6	5	21	Closed	Closed
Arizona	7	***	24	Closed	Closed
Virginia	8	***	18	Open	Caucus
Tennessee	7	7	20	Open (early voting as well)	Open (early voting as well)
Wisconsin	11	***	19	Open	Open
California	11	12	22	Closed	Closed
Connecticut	5	5	16	Closed	Closed
Georgia	11	12	27	Open	Open
Maryland	8	6	20	Closed	Closed
Massachusetts	9	8	18	Closed	Closed
New York	8	9	20	Closed	Closed
Ohio	9	8	20	Open	Open
Rhode Island	8	9	17	Closed	Closed
Vermont	10	8	19	Open	Open

Sources: 2004 exit poll data from National Election Pool, conducted by Edison/Mitofsky; 2000 exit poll data from Voter News Service; primary election rules from the Federal Election Commission.

**Table 2 – Votes Cast in Democratic Primaries for Which There Were Exit Polls**

<b>State</b>	<b>2004 Total Votes Cast</b>	<b>2004 Estimate of Youth Votes Cast</b>	<b>2000 Total Votes Cast</b>	<b>2000 Estimate of Youth Votes Cast</b>
Iowa	122,000	21,000	61,000	5,500
New Hampshire	218,000	31,000	155,000	20,000
South Carolina	291,000	26,000	***	***
Missouri	416,000	37,000	265,000	24,000
Delaware	33,000	3,000	11,000	650
Oklahoma	300,000	18,000	135,000	7,000
Arizona	223,000	16,000	87,000	***
Virginia	390,000	31,000	***	***
Tennessee	359,000	25,000	215,000	15,000
Wisconsin	817,000	90,000	371,000	***
California	2,597,000	286,000	3,272,000	393,000
Connecticut	127,000	6,000	177,000	9,000
Georgia	602,000	66,000	284,000	34,000
Maryland	441,000	35,000	507,000	30,000
Massachusetts	602,000	54,000	572,000	46,000
New York	648,000	52,000	974,000	88,000
Ohio	1,164,000	105,000	979,000	78,000
Rhode Island	33,000	3,000	47,000	4,000
Vermont	74,000	7,000	49,000	4,000

\*\*\* No exit polls were conducted for the Democratic Primaries in AZ, VA, SC, or WI in 2000. Also note that any inferences made about open primary states need to take into account participation in the Republican Primary since voters can vote in any primary. In 2000, some of the Republican primaries were more contested. In 2004, the Democratic Primary was generally more contested. Therefore, comparing results between 2000 and 2004 is not advised in open primary states. Source: total number of votes cast is provided by Secretaries of State in each state.

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<sup>1</sup> CIRCLE calculates the number of youth voters by combining exit polls (which estimate the percentage of voters who are younger than 30) with data on the total number of votes cast. In 2004, exit poll data come from the National Election Pool, conducted by Edison/Mitofsky. In 2000, exit polls were conducted by Voter News Service. The total number of votes cast is provided by Secretaries of State in each state.

<sup>2</sup> CA, CT, GA, MA, MD, NY, OH, RI, and VT, but excluding MN, which held a caucus, and MO, which was not a Super Tuesday state in 2000.