



CIRCLE

The Center for Information & Research
on Civic Learning & Engagement

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Young Voters Turn Out in Nevada Caucuses Nearly 20,000 Nevada Citizens Under the Age of Thirty Participate in Caucus

Youth Voter Experts Available for Interviews
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Washington, DC - 5 percent of eligible Nevada citizens under the age of 30 participated in Saturday's Nevada Caucus, according to preliminary analysis by CIRCLE (The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement). Nevada was not a major player in previous presidential contests, but its elevated status in 2008 drew close to 20,000 young caucus attendees.



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

Caucus	Youth Turnout Rate	Turnout Rate of Age 30 and Over	Overall Turnout Rate	Number of Youth Who Caucused	Youth as Share of All Caucus-goers
Nevada	5%	11%	10%	19,848	12%

Political Party	Number of Caucus Participants	Share of Caucus Participants
Democratic	15,054	13%
Republican	4,794	11%

Source: The share of Caucus attendees is obtained from the 2008 NV Democratic and Republican exit polls conducted by Edison/Mitofsky. The numbers of votes cast are obtained from the www.nvdems.com and www.nvgopcaucus.com (as of 10:12 pm eastern time, 1/20/2008.) 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).

See p.3 for definitions.

The results from Saturday in Nevada 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.

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.

Because there is no actual count of the number of young people who attended the Nevada caucuses, we can only estimate their turnout rate (the percentage of eligible young people who attended caucuses). In Nevada, our turnout estimate is based on the number of people who attended the caucuses by the NV Democratic and Republican parties as of 10 pm January 20, 2008. The 2008 voter turnout rate may rise as more votes are tallied.

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As a result, our 2008 turnout rate likely underestimates the level of participation in the 2008 Nevada caucuses.

We cannot calculate turnout for previous Nevada caucuses as we could for Iowa. In Iowa, youth turnout tripled compared to 2004, rising from four percent of eligible citizens in 2004 to 13 percent in 2008. In New Hampshire, the youth vote soared to 43 percent, up from 28 percent in 2000.



**Table 2 – Youth Vote Choice
by Party**

		Democratic Candidates			Republican Candidates			
		Clinton	Edwards	Obama	Huckabee	McCain	Paul	Romney
Nevada	Ages 18-29	33%	7%	59%	7%	13%	19%	50%
New Hampshire	Ages 18-24	22%	9%	60%	15%	27%	19%	17%
	Ages 25-29	37%	18%	35%	11%	37%	15%	33%
Iowa	Ages 17-24	10%	14%	57%	37%	8%	20%	21%
	Ages 25-29	15%	12%	57%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: www.cnn.com

This increase in youth turnout in the early primary and caucus 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.

“Younger Americans are doing their part, registering to vote, paying more attention to issues and politics, and now turning out in Nevada and South Carolina,” 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 Nevada Caucuses, we define “youth” as citizens between the ages of 18 and 29 on January 19, 2008.

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

Youth share Caucus 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 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.