



CIRCLE

**The Center for Information & Research
on Civic Learning & Engagement**

For Immediate Release
November 8, 2006

Contact:
David Roscow
703-276-2772 x21
Mark Lopez, Research Director, CIRCLE
301-405-0183

Youth Voter Turnout Sharply Up in 2006 Midterm Elections

Estimated Youth Voter Turnout Rate Rises to at Least 24% At Least Two Million More Young People Vote Than in 2002 Midterm

**Youth Voter Experts Available for Interviews
Contact David Roscow at 703-276-2772 x21**

Washington, DC – An estimated ten million young Americans under the age of 30 voted in Tuesday’s midterm elections, an increase of at least two million compared to 2002, according to exit polls and early published tallies of votes that are likely to increase as additional precincts and ballots are included. The preliminary data were analyzed by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), which is the nation’s premier research organization on the civic and political engagement of young Americans.

The estimated youth turnout rate or percentage of young eligible voters who cast votes also jumped from 20% in 2002 to at least 24% in 2006, an increase of at least four percentage points.¹ Voters under the age of 30 accounted for 13% of all voters, which is an increase of about 2 points compared to the 2002 midterm elections.

“This is an extraordinary turnout for young voters,” said CIRCLE Director Peter Levine. “In a year of rising turnout, young people led the way—repeating the pattern that we saw in 2004. Youth were an especially high proportion of voters in Montana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Missouri. Nationwide, in House races, 61% of young people voted for Democratic candidates—the highest proportion for any age group.”

MIDTERM ELECTION YOUTH VOTER TURNOUT²

Midterm election year	Estimated national youth voter turnout rate, using exit polls	Estimated number of voters (ages 18-29)	Youth share of the votes cast (according to exit polls)
2006—Preliminary	24%	10 million ³	13%
2002	20%	8 million	11%
1994	22%	8.6 million	13%

Additional information on youth and voting (nationally and by state) is available on the CIRCLE website at www.civicyouth.org. CIRCLE will also revise the 2006 turnout figures based on updated vote tallies.

CIRCLE, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, promotes research on the civic and political engagement of young Americans. 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 other foundations.

¹ For consistency, all figures in this release are derived from national exit polls and vote tallies as reported by the Associated Press. Other CIRCLE documents use Census Current Population Survey data instead of exit polls to estimate youth participation in past elections. However, the Census Bureau's election data for 2006 will not be released until 2007, so this release uses exit polls as a provisional source that allows comparisons to past years.

² The percentages of voters age 18-29 are obtained from national exit polls. The numbers of votes cast are obtained from the Associated Press as of 9am the day following the election. Estimated voter turnout is obtained by taking the estimated number of votes cast and dividing it by the estimated population of 18-29 year old citizens from the March Current Population Survey.

³ This number will likely increase over the next days and weeks due to absentee and provisional ballots. For example, in 2002, the vote tally for the House of Representatives on the day after the election rose by 10 million over the subsequent weeks. As the vote tally rises, youth turnout may rise somewhat.