



**CIRCLE**

The Center for Information & Research  
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**YOUTH VOTER TURNOUT IN VIRGINIA CONTINUES UPWARD TREND  
2005 Youth Voter Turnout Increases by an Average of 15 percent over 2001 in Targeted Precincts**

Youth voter turnout in the 2005 Virginia gubernatorial election increased by an average of 15.1 percent over the 2001 election in targeted youth precincts, according to an Election Night analysis by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at the University of Maryland. This rise continues the national trend begun during the high-profile 2004 election when the number of votes cast by 18 to 24 year olds increased by 35 percent over the 2000 election.

"The youth vote is up, again," said Karl Bach, a student senator at George Mason University. "We care, we're engaged and we're voting."

Youth voter turnout surged in the 2004 election with the 18 to 24 year old turnout rate increasing by 11 percentage points over the 2000 election, as compared to an increase of only four percentage points among the general population.

The 2005 analysis focused on 13 precincts with a relatively high concentration of college students that were the focus of non-partisan Get-Out-the-Vote efforts of the Student PIRGs' New Voters Project. The analysis compared voter turnout numbers from the 2001 gubernatorial election with Tuesday's turnout numbers and found that voter turnout increased by an average of 15.1% among the precincts studied and, in one precinct, by as much as 61.9% over the 2001 election. A table detailing the analysis is below.

The Student PIRGs' New Voters Project, a non-partisan effort, made more than 30,000 personalized Get-Out-The-Vote contacts in the week before the November 8th election and registered 7,000 young people before the registration deadline in October.

"The reason I chose to work on this project was to get more of my fellow students to vote so that politicians start paying attention to us," said Lacey McLear, President of the Student PIRGs' New Voters Project at Virginia Commonwealth University. "I'm incredibly gratified to see that our work paid off."

"Tabling events, phone banks, 'dorm-storming' and door-to-door canvassing, were non-stop on campuses across Virginia," said Ben Unger, the PIRG New Voters Project field director. "We had personal conversations with tens of thousands of registered young people, reminding them to vote and encouraging them to have a say in our democracy. Our aim was simple: for more young people to vote. Their choice in the ballot box was their own business."

The PIRG New Voters Project prioritized making personalized peer-to-peer contacts, the strategy thought to be the most effective way to mobilize young voters.

Yale University Professors Don Green and Alan Gerber, who have done extensive field research on the effectiveness of various GOTV contacts on young people, found that a reminder phone call increases turnout by three to five percent among those contacted, while door-to-door canvassing increases turnout by an average of eight to ten percent among those contacted. For more information on the Green/Gerber studies visit: [www.yale.edu/vote](http://www.yale.edu/vote)

**Table 1: Analysis of Targeted Virginia Precincts**

<b>College or University</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>City or Town</b>	<b>Precinct Code</b>	<b>Percentage Increase over 2001 Gubernatorial Election</b>
Virginia Tech	Montgomery	Blacksburg	0601	14.6%
			0102	5.3%
			0501	7.6%
Virginia Commonwealth	Richmond City	Richmond	0211	36.4%
			0206	19.7%
			0204	21.5%
			0207	11.3%
			0505	61.9%
			0208	15.8%
University of Virginia	Charlottesville City	Charlottesville	0302	-3.8%
			0401	14.7%
			0402	7.7%
College of William & Mary	Williamsburg City	Williamsburg	0001	13.7%
				<b>Average: 15.1%</b>

Source: CIRCLE tabulations and analysis of raw precinct data, November 2005.

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The Student PIRGs' *New Voters Project* is a nonpartisan, grassroots mobilization effort that works to register and mobilize young voters. In 2004, the Student PIRGs' *New Voters Project* registered 524,000 18-29 year olds in 22 states, and made more than half a million get-out-the-vote contacts in the days leading up to Election Day. In 2005, the Student PIRGs' *New Voters Project* is working in VA, NJ, CO, IA, NM, NV, OR and WI. Learn more at: [www.newvotersproject.org](http://www.newvotersproject.org)