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The Center for Information & Research
on Civic Learning & Engagement

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Gender Gap Widened in 2004 for Young Voters ***Gaps Also Big Between Married and Single, College and Non-College Youth***

Last fall, the gap between the turnout rates of young women and men was the widest ever (for ages 18-24), and the percentages of single young people who went to the polls grew at twice the rate of their married counterparts according to new analysis released today by the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE).

With 50 percent of 18-24 year old women and 44 percent of young men voting last year, the so-called gender gap widened to nearly six percentage points among this age group. That's the largest margin since 18-year-olds began voting in 1972, when there was virtually no difference between the turnout rates of young women and men, and nearly two percentage points wider than in 2000. For the 18-29 age group, the gender gap has widened to almost 7 percentage points. The turnout rates for both 18-24 year old men and women rose sharply between 2000 and 2004, by 12 points for women and 10 points for men.

Single young people, particularly women, are more likely to vote than married young people. The turnout among single women age 18-24 led the way and increased 12 percentage points, or about a third, since 2000. Single young men jumped by over 10 points. But the turnout rates for young married women only grew by six points and for young married men by four points.

And, for the first time since 1992, single men turned out more than married women. Among 18-24 year olds:

- 51% of single young women voted in 2004, up from 39% in 2000
- 45% of single young men voted in 2004, up from 34% in 2000
- 44% of married young women voted in 2004, up from 38% in 2000
- 38% of married young men voted in 2004, up from 34% in 2000

"The huge growth in the number of young voters going to the polls was a hallmark of the 2004 elections," said CIRCLE Director William A. Galston. "But taking a closer look, there are very telling and wide gaps within the overall positive trend. While the conventional wisdom used to be that married young people were more likely to vote than singles, we see that the opposite is now true, and the divide is significant."

The Education Gap

Those with at least some higher education have consistently been about twice as likely to vote as those who have not attended college. In 2004, 59 percent of 18-24 year olds with some college education voted compared to only 34 percent of non-college young adults, a 25-point gap. The turnout rate among college-attending young adults grew by 11 percentage points over 2000 and by nine points for non-college attending young voters. In 2000, the education gap was 23 points for this age group.

The increase in turnout by voters age 18-24 was higher than that of any other age group. The 47 percent turnout rate for 18-24 year olds was up more than 11 points over 2000, and the 49

percent turnout rate for 18-29 year olds was up by nearly nine points. The turnout rate for all voters grew by four points, to 64 percent.

More youth voting information is available at CIRCLE's Web site: www.civicyouth.org.

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CIRCLE (www.civicyouth.org) is a premier source of impartial, nonpartisan, and comprehensive data, research, and analysis on the civic engagement of young people. It is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts and Carnegie Corporation of New York, and housed at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy,