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Analysis by Tufts Univ. Research Center Shows FL's Young Republican Primary Voters Far More Diverse than Those in SC *More than 20% of Young Latino Voters in 2010 Republican*

Tufts University, Medford/Somerville, MA – The recent South Carolina primary reshuffled the cards in the Republican presidential primary campaign. For the first time in history, the state opted for a different candidate from the winner of Iowa or New Hampshire, selecting former House Speaker Newt Gingrich as their top pick for the Republican nomination for president.

In order to better understand if Florida will follow suit, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) evaluated its past original analyses and historical election data to illustrate the differences in young Republican primary voters in South Carolina and their counterparts in Florida.

“CIRCLE’s team of researchers and statisticians culled through historical voting data, as well as exit poll data and other independent research in order to present a vivid comparison of young voters in Florida with those in South Carolina,” said Peter Levine, director of CIRCLE. “Although our analysis won’t tell us which candidate is set to come out on top among young Republican voters in Florida, it certainly uncovers some important clues into how the make-up of the under-30s is an entirely different ballgame in Florida than it was in South Carolina.”

CIRCLE ANALYSIS:

Florida Young Republican Primary Voters: How Do They Differ from Their South Carolina Counterparts Who Were Partly Responsible for a Game-Changing Primary Election?

FLORIDA HAS THREE TIMES MORE ELIGIBLE YOUNG VOTERS THAN SOUTH CAROLINA

Florida is much bigger, hence more expensive. With 1,611,000 more young citizens in Florida than in South Carolina, the sheer size of the state and its multiple media markets will put a strain on smaller campaign budgets. In a large state like Florida, candidates need either a large, expensive ground strategy (CIRCLE’s research shows that personal contacts work best to mobilize youth), or significant amounts of helpful, free media.

YOUNG REPUBLICAN VOTERS IN FLORIDA ARE MORE DIVERSE

In the 2012 South Carolina Republican primary, 98% of all voters were white, and in the 2008 Republican South Carolina primary, 93% of young voters were white. Young voters in the 2008 Florida Republican primary were more diverse: Over one-fifth (22%) of the young voters in the Florida Republican primary were youth of color, 13% of which were Latino. In the 2010 midterm election, Republican-identified youth in Florida were significantly more diverse than in South Carolina: Over one-fifth (27%) of young Hispanics identified themselves as Republican.

YOUNG REPUBLICANS IN FLORIDA VOTE LESS SOCIALLY CONSERVATIVE

In 2008, 61% of young South Carolina Republican primary voters described themselves as “born-again or evangelical Christian,” compared to 48% of young Republican primary voters in Florida. According to the 2010 general election exit polls, 68.2% of self-identified young Republican voters in South Carolina were conservative; somewhat fewer (64.6%) consider themselves conservative in Florida, where 30.5% of Republican young voters called themselves “moderate.” In the 2008 South Carolina primary, former Gov. Mike Huckabee earned 35% of the youth vote, Sen. John McCain came in second with 28%, and former Gov. Mitt Romney in third with 12%. Alternatively, in Florida, youth picked McCain (30%), but 23% of them opted for Romney, 19% for former Mayor Giuliani, 18% for Huckabee, and just 5% for Congressman Ron Paul.

FLORIDA WILL HOLD A CLOSED PRIMARY

Florida is holding a closed primary, meaning that only those registered as Republican may vote next week. In Florida in 2008, Giuliani did relatively well among young people, earning 19% of their vote but only 15% of the total vote, and Paul earned a mere 5%. If former House Speaker Newt Gingrich picks up the kinds of young voters who supported Giuliani in 2008, Paul will have to raise his game a lot to be competitive in Florida.

Stepping back to look at the entire youth population, rather than only those who voted in Republican primaries, there are some similarities. Although South Carolina is a red state and Florida is considered purple, young people have been more Democratic than older people in both states since 2004. Nevertheless, the GOP Senatorial candidates won the youth vote in both states in 2010. In South Carolina, Sen. Jim DeMint (R) beat Alvin Greene (D) by 38% among youth. Similarly, in Florida, Sen. Marco Rubio (R) beat Kendrick Meek (D) by 31% among youth. In both cases, the difference between the candidates was narrower among youth than older voters.

CIRCLE will provide a youth voter turnout estimate for the Florida primary on Wednesday, Feb. 1. CIRCLE will also release detailed information about the history of youth participation in the Florida primary and in Florida’s politics and civil society.

Note: “Turnout” means the proportion of eligible citizens who participate. “Turnout” should not be confused with the proportion of Florida’s primary voters who are young: That statistic will be reported by the Edison Research “exit polls” on Tuesday, Jan. 31, but it is not a meaningful measure of youth involvement.

BACKGROUND: More Historical Data on the Participation of Young FL Voters

For more detail on the history of youth voting in Florida, please see CIRCLE's Florida research at http://www.civicyouth.org/state-detail/?state=FL&map=2&map_id=5.

In the 2008 Florida primary, voters age 18-29 turned out at a rate of 13%. Overall, 29% of all Floridians participated in the 2008 primary (Democratic and Republican combined). The last time there was only a competitive Republican primary in Florida was 1996, when 4% of young Floridians voted and made up 8% of primary voters. The last year in which there was only one competitive primary, 2004, youth turnout was 4%.

Several factors could reduce youth turnout in the Florida primary this year:

- CIRCLE's recently released research has found substantial declines in the youth voter registration rate since 2008 in key states, which could be cyclical, but either way is a "warning sign" for the President. See www.civicyouth.org/?p=3177 for more information.
- There will be no competitive Democratic caucus this year. In 2008, just over 50% of young Florida primary voters participated on the Democratic side.

A sample of additional facts about young voters in Florida:

- In the 2008 general election, an estimated 53.3% of young people in Florida cast a ballot.
- There were roughly 151,000 youth who participated in the Democratic primary in 2008 and 134,000 youth who participated in the Republican primary. Youth who participated in the Republican primary represented just 6% of the state's young people.
- In 2008, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton split the youth vote in the Democratic primary, with roughly 65,000 young people voting for each. Romney received 23% of young votes in the Republican primary (31,000 votes). Huckabee received 18% of young votes in the 2008 Florida primary, while Paul received 5% (6,700 votes).
- In 2008, only 14% of young Republican primary voters identified as Independent.

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CIRCLE (www.civicyouth.org) is a nonpartisan, independent, academic research center that studies young people in politics and presents detailed data on young voters in all 50 states. CIRCLE was founded in 2001 with a generous gift from the Pew Charitable Trusts and is part of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University. CIRCLE's reputation for reliable, independent, timely research has been hailed by experts in the field of civic partnership, such as Harvard University professor Robert Putnam who said CIRCLE had brought "the best and most serious research to one place."

The Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service (<http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/>) is a national leader whose model and research are setting the standard for higher education's role in civic engagement education. Serving every school of Tufts University, Tisch College creates an enduring culture that prepares students to be lifelong active citizens.

Tufts University (www.tufts.edu), located on three Massachusetts campuses in Boston, Medford/Somerville and Grafton, and in Talloires, France, is recognized as one of the premier research universities in the United States. Tufts enjoys a global reputation for academic excellence and for the preparation of students as leaders in a wide range of professions. A growing number of innovative teaching and research initiatives span all Tufts campuses, and collaboration among the faculty and students in the undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs across the university's schools is widely encouraged.