



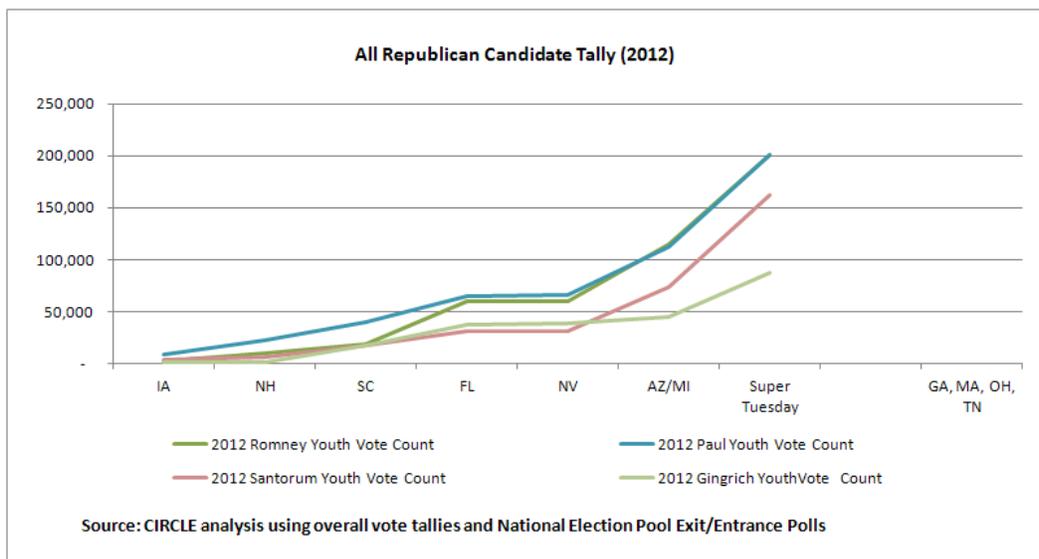
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Wednesday, March 21, 2012  
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## Illinois Primary Youth Turnout 4%

*73,000 IL Citizens Under Age 30 Participated in Yesterday's Primary*

**MEDFORD/SOMERVILLE, Mass.** – Four percent of eligible voters under the age of 30 participated in yesterday’s Illinois primary, according to preliminary analysis by the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (**CIRCLE**). Youth turnout in the Illinois primary rose from 1996 to 2012, both years in which the Republican Party held a competitive race, but youth turnout dropped significantly from 2008 (18%), when both the Republicans and the Democrats held competitive races in Illinois.

Young voters supported former Gov. Mitt Romney by a margin of 5% over former Sen. Rick Santorum (see Table 2). Although Romney won the Illinois youth vote, he performed considerably better with older voters. Including all the primary and caucus states for which exit poll estimates of youth vote-choice are available,<sup>1</sup> the cumulative total of young votes stands at approximately 246,000 for Romney, 224,000 for Santorum, 220,000 for Rep. Ron Paul, and 114,000 for former Speaker Newt Gingrich. Although the states that had voted by this point in the 2008 race were somewhat different, Barack Obama had won about 750,000 votes by this time. See the graph below for cumulative 2012 youth vote statistics.



“Although Mitt Romney is the front-runner in the race for Republican youth votes, he and all the other Republican presidential candidates have work to do if they hope to draw substantial numbers of young voters in November,” said CIRCLE Director Peter Levine.

Because of a lack of available data, the CIRCLE turnout estimates do not include young people who participated in yesterday’s uncontested Democratic primary.

**Table 1 – Illinois Presidential Primary Participation of 18- to 29-Year-Old Citizens**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Youth Turnout Rate</i>	<i>Number of Youth Who Participated</i>	<i>Youth as a Share of Primary-Goers</i>
2012**	4%	73,369	8%
2008*	18%	377,996	13%
2004	N/A	N/A	N/A
2000	N/A	N/A	N/A
1996**	3%	62,249	10%

Youth turnout rate and number of youth votes are based on CIRCLE analysis of publicly available information (see Sources below).

\* Combines the Democratic and Republican figures. For separate results by party, see Table 4

\*\*2012 and 1996 statistics only include the Republican Primary. In these years, there was/is no Democratic Primary, because there was an incumbent president from the Democratic Party that took the nomination.

**Sources:** The share of primary participants is obtained from the 2012 and 2008 Illinois exit poll conducted by Edison Research, and the 1996 Illinois exit poll conducted by Voter News Services. The numbers of votes cast are obtained from the NYTimes.com (99% reporting as of 5:30 a.m. ET, 3/21/2012.) The numbers of votes cast in the past election years were obtained from various sources including the Washington Post archives (1996) and CNN.com (2008). Estimated voter turnout is obtained by taking the estimated number of votes cast by young people and dividing it by the estimated population of the 18- to 29-year-old citizens from the Current Population Survey (1995-2011). Because we are reporting the morning-after tallies and turnout estimates, we also report vote tallies and youth share based on the figures reported the morning after the equivalent election in previous years. See p. 3 for definitions.

**Table 2 - Illinois Youth Vote Choice by Candidate**

	<i>Gingrich</i>	<i>Paul</i>	<i>Romney</i>	<i>Santorum</i>
<b>Illinois</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>36%</b>

Source: National Election Pool Illinois Exit Poll 2012

**Table 3 – Comparison of Youth Vote in the 2008 and 2012 Illinois Republican Primaries**

	<i>Santorum</i>	<i>Paul</i>	<i>Romney</i>	<i>McCain</i>	<i>Obama (D)</i>
2008 Youth Vote Count	N/A	11,354	19,214	26,201	200,555
2012 Youth Vote Count	<b>26,411</b>	<b>11,738</b>	<b>30,079</b>	N/A	N/A

Source: CIRCLE analysis of National Election Pool Illinois Exit Poll 2008 and 2012

Comparisons to past years 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 cycle. For example, in 2008 both the Republicans and Democrats held primaries, but in 2012 only the Republicans held a competitive primary. Table 4 provides estimates of youth participation in the Illinois primary by party and year.

**Table 4 – Illinois Presidential Primary Participation By Party  
18- to 29-Year-Old Citizens**

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Primary-Goers</i>	<i>Share of Primary-Goers by Party</i>
Democratic	2012	N/A	N/A
	2008	290,660	14%
	2004	N/A	N/A
	2000	N/A	N/A
	1996	N/A	N/A
Republican	<b>2012</b>	<b>73,369</b>	<b>8%</b>
	2008	87,337	10%
	2004	N/A	N/A
	2000	N/A	N/A
	1996	62,249	10%

#### Definitions

**Youth:** For the purpose of this press release and estimation of youth participation in the Illinois primary, we define “youth” as citizens who were eligible to vote on March 20, 2012, as permitted by state election law (18- to 29-year-old citizens).

**Number of youth who participated:** An estimate of how many youth participated in caucuses or primaries.

**Youth share:** An estimate of the number of young people who participated in the primary as a percentage of the number of all people who participated.

**Youth turnout rate:** An estimate of the number of young people who participated in the primary or cast a ballot as a percentage of the total number of young people who were eligible to participate on March 20, 2012.

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.

To sign-up to receive copies of CIRCLE's cutting-edge research on young Americans and next-day voter turnout estimates for the 2012 elections, please email [amy@lunamediaingroup.com](mailto:amy@lunamediaingroup.com).

**To obtain more extensive information about Illinois's young voters and historical voting trends, click [here](#)**

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*CIRCLE ([www.civicyouth.org](http://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 ([activecitizen.tufts.edu](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](http://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.*

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<sup>1</sup> Those states are IA, NH, FL, SC, NV, MI, AZ, GA, MA, OH, TN, AL, MS, VA, and IL. In other states, there was not exit poll or the youth sample was insufficient.