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2012 Youth Vote -- Exclusive Analysis: **Romney Catches Paul in Youth Votes after MI & AZ** **Primaries**

New Graphs Show -- Youth Support for GOP Significantly Down from Obama's in '08 Primaries

Medford, MA – The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement ([CIRCLE](#)) at Tufts University, a non-partisan, academic research center that studies the political and civic engagement of young Americans under 30, has released exclusive analysis showing changes in the support and engagement of youth voters in the 2012 Republican presidential primary campaign.

According to CIRCLE's analysis, Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX) held a clear lead with youth voters supporting his candidacy until recent data from the Michigan and Arizona contests now show former Gov. Mitt Romney has pulled even or slightly ahead. Former Sen. Rick Santorum and former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich have lagged consistently behind. The exclusive analysis from CIRCLE's researchers are of the estimated total number of young voters in the 2012 presidential campaign who supported the Republican candidates in all states where exit or entrance polls have been conducted so far.

2012 Republican presidential candidates' estimated total number of youth voters (under 30) before Super Tuesday:

- Romney 115,000
- Paul 112,000
- Santorum 74,000
- Gingrich 44,500

(These estimates are based on a combination of entrance/exit poll data and overall vote tallies. The estimates omit states in which no exit or entrance polls were conducted – Colorado, Maine, Minnesota and Missouri. Thus Romney's 3,000 vote lead over Paul is by no means certain.)

Although Paul's youth support continues to draw media attention and Romney's popularity among the demographic is advancing, Barack Obama drew far more votes in primaries and caucuses from Americans under 30 in his 2008 campaign than all the Republican candidates combined. In fact, both Paul and Romney have drawn only a bit more than half as many votes as Obama did at this point in his 2008 campaign. By this time in the 2008 election, Obama had 200,000 votes from young people. Overall, the Democratic primary campaign of 2008 produced a much higher turnout than the Republican primary campaign of 2012: 477,000 votes versus 360,000 votes so far.

For a graph created by CIRCLE's team of researchers that shows the GOP candidates' race for the youth vote over time, please visit: <http://www.civicyouth.org/?p=3476>. And for a graph created by CIRCLE's team of researchers that illustrates the turnout trend in each year's primary season, please visit: <http://www.civicyouth.org/?p=3476>

The turnout difference between 2008 and 2012 could be a sign that youth engagement has declined, but it could also be an indication that young people remain largely in the Democratic column today, after supporting Obama by a 68-32% margin in 2008 and then choosing Democratic House candidates over Republicans by a 57-40% margin in 2010.

CIRCLE will provide a youth voter turnout estimate for Super Tuesday states for which there is an exit poll on Wednesday, March 7.

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.

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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.

BACKGROUND: Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement

Young Voter Research Available for Super Tuesday States

CIRCLE is the premiere site for reliable data and research on young voters and has a wide range of information and analyses on Super Tuesday states, for both primaries/caucuses and general elections. Some of this data and research dispels stereotypes of young people's participation. Examples of this work include:

- Youth voter turnout in primaries and caucuses [so far in 2012](#) and [from 2008](#) (when exit polls were done), including a summary of the [2008 Super Tuesday Primaries](#)
- Interactive [map of youth voting](#) that includes:
 - Midterm and presidential election youth turnout trend lines for the past 40 years for every Super Tuesday state
 - Young people's political ideology, partisanship and how young people voted by state for the past several election cycles.
- [Youth voter registration](#) rates nationally and by state
- Information about the history of youth participation in state politics and civil society.

CIRCLE also has a great deal of analysis on youth participation on the national level:

- [Quick facts](#) on youth voting and other civic/political participation
- Youth voting data for Presidential races since 1972, examined by gender, race/ethnicity, and educational attainment, including:
 - Voting trends between [young men and women](#) in the 2008 Presidential election
 - [Minority youth voting](#) data from the 2008 Presidential election
 - The [different voting trends](#) of youth with college experience and youth with no college experience.
- Analysis of the impact of various [state voting laws](#) on youth voter turnout
- How young people participate in a wide variety of civic and political activities, including a [major report](#) that dispels myths about young people's participation
- Reasons young people give for why they were not registered ([2008](#)) to vote or why they did not vote ([2010](#)).