



CIRCLE

The Center for Information & Research
on Civic Learning & Engagement

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Turnout of Under-25 Voters Up Sharply *Youth More Liberal, Backed Kerry 56% - 43%*

The turnout rate of 18-24 year old voters rose by 5.8 percentage points, as 1.8 million more people in this age group voted than in 2000. Last week, 10.5 million under-25 voters went to the polls, compared to 8.7 million four years ago, raising the turnout rate to 42.3% from 36.5%, according to the first solid analysis of the youngest voters, which was released today by the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE).

They were part of the 21 million under-30 Americans who voted in 2004, an increase of 4.6 million over 2000. The turnout rate among 18-29 year olds rose from about 42.3% to 51.6%, a sharp rise of 9.3 percentage points.

New Voters – About 8 million of the under-30 voters, or 42%, voted for the first time. They represent 64% of the 13 million first-time voters.

Presidential Choice – Young voters favored the Democratic ticket by a significant margin, with 18-24 year olds favoring Senator Kerry over President Bush by 56-43%, and voters under 30 favoring Kerry 54-45%.

Issues – Young voters generally had the same concerns as older voters. Of the under-30 voters, for example, 22% said “moral values” were the most important issue, the same percentage as all voters. But on some prominent issues, they differed dramatically. Notably, 41% favor gay marriage, compared to 25% of all voters. They were 12 percentage points more likely than older voters to identify as liberal, and seven percentage points less likely to call themselves conservative. Voters under 30 were also 10 percentage points more likely to believe that “government should do more to solve problems.”

CIRCLE analysis is based on national and state exit polls conducted by Edison/Mitofsky and vote tallies from the Associated Press which are the only available data on voters in the 2004 election. More information, including data on issues, is available at www.civicyouth.org.

NOTE TO MEDIA: *There has been significant misreporting or misinterpreting of the youth vote. The youth “turnout rate” (or the percentage of young eligible voters who turned out) has been confused with the youth share of the electorate (or the percentage of all voters who were young). Because more people of all ages voted this year, turnout increased for everyone, including young people. However, the youth share of voters remained about the same as in 2000.*