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Exclusive Analysis: Role of Young Voters in April 26 Primaries

Record Youth Participation Continues in 2016; Young People Favor the Party Frontrunners to a Lesser Degree than Older Voters

Medford/Somerville, MA – Driven by participation in yesterday’s Democratic primaries, record youth participation continues in 2016, according to youth vote experts from the [Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement \(CIRCLE\)](#) – the preeminent, non-partisan research center on youth engagement at Tufts University’s [Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life](#).

Youth participation increased over previous years in yesterday’s Connecticut and Maryland Democratic primaries, as well as in the Maryland Republican primary. Young people, however, continue to favor the party frontrunners to a lesser degree than older voters.

Young people in **Connecticut** increased their estimated proportion of all voters from 10% in 2008 to 12% of all voters in 2016. This increase was driven by youth Democratic primary participation, and young people preferred Senator Bernie Sanders over Secretary Hillary Clinton 83% to 17% in Connecticut.

In **Maryland**, youth participation increased in both party primaries, fueling an overall estimated increase in youth turnout in the state to 18% of young citizens, up from 15% in 2008. The estimated number of young people who participated in the Republican primary more than doubled the estimate for 2012 and bested the previous record from 2000. Young Republicans in Maryland split their votes across the three candidates almost equally: Donald Trump received 33%, while Senator Ted Cruz garnered 32%, and Governor John Kasich received 31%. On the Democratic side, Senator Sanders received 68% of youth support, which was the only age group he won in the state. Young African-Americans have shown more support for Secretary Clinton than youth from other groups so far this year, which could partially explain why she drew more youth support in Maryland than in Connecticut. African Americans made up almost half of all voters (46%) in Maryland’s Democratic primary.

We estimate that over 350,000 youth in **Pennsylvania** participated in yesterday’s primaries, accounting for 11% of all voters. Though the number of votes cast by young people in the

Democratic primary dropped from 2008, the overall participation was strong with 18% of all eligible youth participating. Young people in Pennsylvania strongly preferred Senator Sanders in the Democratic primary, though Secretary Clinton won the state overall. With 52% of the vote, the Pennsylvania Republican primary saw the highest youth support for Donald Trump of any state so far in 2016, though that rate of support was still lower than for older voters in Pennsylvania.

“Young people remain engaged in the state primary contests, and we have seen record youth participation numbers repeatedly during this election cycle,” says Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, director of CIRCLE. **“This interest is driven by the relative competitiveness of the presidential nominating contests, as well as media and campaign attention. It remains to be seen how this enthusiasm will translate to the general election, but youth participation in voting and civic life at an early age is promising for the strength of democratic participation in the future.”**

For CIRCLE’s full primary analysis for April 27, please see [here](#).

Throughout this election season, [CIRCLE’s 2016 Election Center](#) will continue to offer new data products and analyses providing a comprehensive picture of the youth vote, both nationally and in targeted states and congressional districts across the country. CIRCLE researchers also will provide insight into key states where young people have the potential to shape the 2016 general election, as rated in CIRCLE’s [Youth Electoral Significance Index](#).

CIRCLE youth vote experts are available for interviews and/or analysis.

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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 is part of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life.

The only university-wide college of its kind, the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life (<http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/>) offers transformational student learning and service opportunities, conducts groundbreaking research on young people’s civic and political participation, and forges innovative community partnerships. Its work is guided by two core beliefs: that communities, nations and the world are stronger, more prosperous, and more just when citizens actively participate in civic and democratic life; and that higher education has a responsibility to develop the next generation of active citizens.

Tufts University (<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.