



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, May 11, 2016
CONTACT: Kristofer Eisenla, [LUNA+EISENLA media](mailto:kristofer@lunaeisnlamedia.com)
kristofer@lunaeisnlamedia.com | 202-670-5747 (mobile)

Exclusive Analysis: Role of Young Voters in West Virginia, Nebraska

High Youth Turnout in West Virginia; More than 1/3 of Young Voters Do Not Back Trump; Strong Youth Support for Sanders Continues

Medford/Somerville, MA – Although the two major party nominees for president are all but confirmed, youth turnout in yesterday’s primaries was robust, particularly in West Virginia, 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](#).

In West Virginia, an estimated 25% of the state’s young people cast ballots in the primary, many for Senator Bernie Sanders, who won the state but still trails Secretary Hillary Clinton by a substantial margin in the delegate count. This estimated youth turnout is one of the highest so far this year, surpassing states like Iowa (11%), Florida (17%), Virginia (18%), and Ohio (23%), matching turnout last week in Indiana, and trailing states like Wisconsin (33%) and New Hampshire (43%).

Young voters (ages 17-29) in West Virginia’s Democratic primary favored Senator Sanders 70% to 25% over Secretary Clinton, far exceeding his overall margin of victory of 51% to 36%. While fewer young people participated in the Democratic primary than in 2008 (35,000 vs. 46,000), youth comprised a slightly larger share of voters this year (15% vs. 14%).

In West Virginia’s Republican primary, 63% of young people voted for Mr. Trump. Though significant, this level of support still trailed his overall support in the state, which he won with 77% of the vote. Some youth cast ballots for candidates who have dropped out of the race (12% for Cruz, 6% for Kasich), and almost one-fifth (19%) reported they voted for someone else or had no answer. Young people were, by far, the largest age group to provide this response.

In the Nebraska Republican Primary, the estimated number of youth who cast ballots far exceeded 2008, but represented a sliver of the youth population overall. Young people made up an estimated 8% of voters in the Nebraska Republican primary. That small sample size did not allow for reliable estimates of individual candidate support.

“For the first time, Donald Trump entered a state primary as the presumptive GOP nominee, and Secretary Clinton is all but assured the Democratic nomination, but young people still want a voice in the matter, and are continuing to show up at the polls,” said Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, director of CIRCLE. **“In West Virginia, a decisive majority of youth voted for Senator Sanders in the Democratic primary, and a significant minority of young Republicans voted for candidates who are no longer in the race or left the ballot blank, so it remains unclear if young people will continue to be engaged in future state contests and how their candidate support during the primary season will translate to the general election.”**

For CIRCLE’s full analysis of the May 10th primaries, 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.

**Media outlets should contact: Kristofer Eisenla at
kristofer@lunaeisenlamedia.com or 202-670-5747**

###

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.