

AMERICA Goes to the Polls

A Report on Voter Turnout in the 2008 Presidential Primary

Prepared by the
Nonprofit Voter Engagement Network
a national, nonpartisan program of the
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits



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A preliminary report based on voter participation in 43 Democratic primaries and caucuses and 41 Republican primaries and caucuses as of April 1st 2008

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A REPORT ON VOTER TURNOUT IN THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

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www.nonprofitvote.org

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Sources

Voter Turnout

Primary turnout by state is affected by many factors: date, who's on the ballot, voter interest, mobilization and caucus vs. primary. The type of primary can make an important difference as well. Is the primary or caucus open only to registered voters of that party (*a closed primary/caucus*)? Is it open to party members and unaffiliated or independent voters (*a modified primary/caucus*)? Or is it open to voters of any party (*an open primary/caucus*).

Overall, the primary seasons of 2000, 2004 and 2008 are reasonably comparable. Most states used the same primary or caucus method. Population growth or demographic changes are also less of a factor than when making comparisons to primaries from the 1990's or before.

The majority of turnout data is from The U.S. Election Atlas. The U.S. Election Atlas data was compared against and supplemented by **The Green Papers**— a website/blog dedicated almost entirely to the presidential contest since the 1990's. Both sites get data from official sources, such as state election offices or the state political parties.

In addition, the report highlights new analysis of youth and Latino turnout by CIRCLE, Rock the Vote and the Pew Hispanic Center. CIRCLE specializes in the study of youth voter and civic participation. Rock The Vote also garnered youth voting trends through survey research and other analysis. The Pew Hispanic Center has produced reports on the 2008 primary and has published several authoritative studies of Latino voter turnout in prior elections.

U.S. Election Atlas, www.electionatlas.org by Dave Leip.

The Green Papers, www.greenpapers.org by Richard E. Berg-Andersson

CIRCLE – Center of Information and Research on Civic Learning and Education
www.civicyouth.org

Pew Hispanic Center www.pewhispanic.org

For additional analysis of primary turnout, it is worth visiting the detailed summary of exit poll data on the site of MSNBC - <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21660890>. Exit polls are conducted by Edison Mitofsky for the media pool, including MSNBC and other major media outlets.

Youth Vote 2008

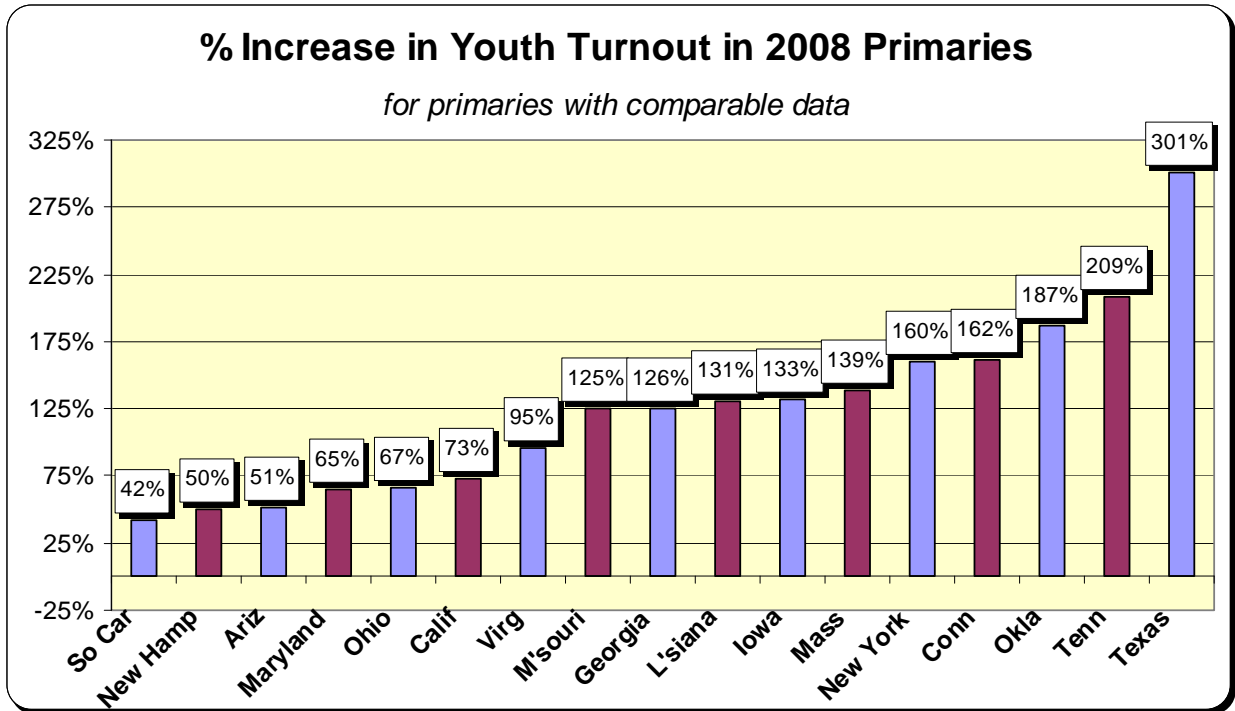
Analysis by the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE) and Rock the Vote

Young voters continued their turnout surge for the 3rd straight national election. The participation of young voters 18 – 29 years old doubled or tripled in most every state with comparable election data.

- ⇒ Youth turnout rose in every primary state with comparable data since the last presidential primary when both parties had contested primaries (in 2000).
- ⇒ Voter turnout among young voters ages 18 – 29 rose at a faster rate than any other age cohort.
- ⇒ The turnout follows the upward trend of 2004 and 2006, reversing a downward or non-growth trend since the election of 1972, the first election where the voting age was lowered to 18.

15 States with Comparable Data on Youth Voter Turnout in 2008 Primaries

Including all comparable caucuses versus participation in the last similar competitive caucus for each party – Democrat-2004; Republican-2000



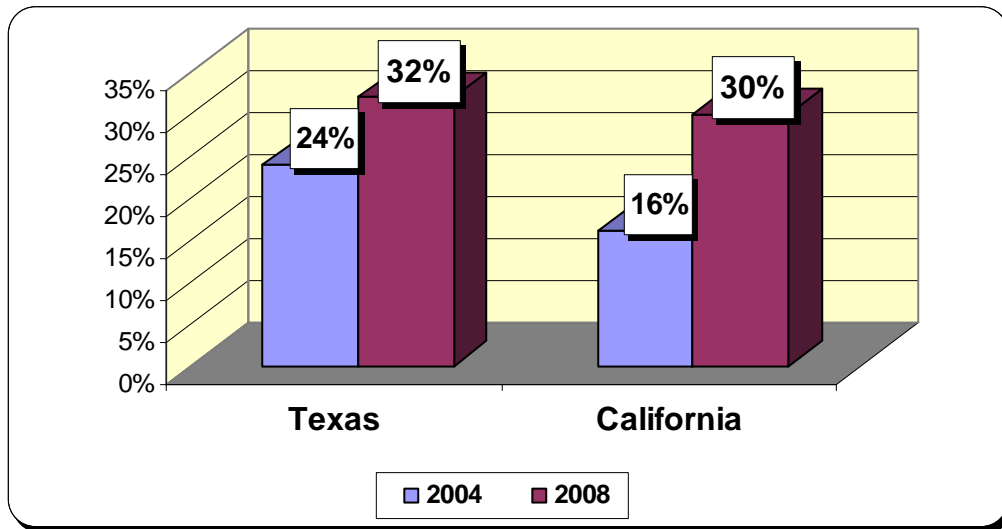
Latino Vote 2008

Analysis by the Pew Hispanic Center

The Latino vote increased in most states, with some states showing very large increases. The greatest increase has been in the big states of Texas and California.

- ⇒ Latino voters have risen to about 9% of eligible voters in 2008, continuing their steady growth as a share of the U.S. electorate.
- ⇒ The voter turnout of Latino voters doubled in Texas and California. The level of voter mobilization appears to have been one differential factor. Latino turnout was uneven elsewhere, staying the same in the large states of New York and Arizona.

Latino Vote Up in Texas and California



No Change in Latino Vote in Arizona and New York

