



## Young Voters By the Numbers

### *A Large, Growing, Diverse, and Increasingly Active Electorate*

In 2006, there are 41.9 million 18-29 year old citizens in the U.S., or 21 percent of the overall electorate.<sup>1</sup>

Waiting in the wings, however, are more than 35 million more “Millennial Generation” youth between the ages of 9-17 years who will become potential voters over the next several years.<sup>2</sup>

In 2008, Millennial citizens 18-31 years of age will be nearly 50 million strong.<sup>3</sup>

By the time this entire cohort reaches voting age, Millennials will number approximately 82 million citizens<sup>4</sup> out of an adult citizen population of just over 225 million,<sup>5</sup> or more than 36 percent.

**Therefore, the Millennial Generation is on track to be one-third of the U.S. electorate by 2015.**

Within this huge cohort, however, are distinct, politically crucial demographic subgroups.

#### **The Millennial Generation is the most diverse in U.S. history:**

- 61 percent of Millennials identify as white; 18 percent as Hispanic; 14 percent as African-American; 5 percent as Asian;
- In comparison, 81 percent of Americans over 65 years of age identify as white.<sup>6</sup>

**In 2006, Millennial voters were a diverse group.** According to CIRCLE’s analysis of 2006 exit polls<sup>7</sup>, the 2006 youth electorate was more racially and ethnically diverse than older voters.

- 11 percent classified themselves as Hispanic/Latino, larger than the proportion in the electorate as a whole (6%).
- Thirteen percent of young voters self-identified as Black, compared to 10% of all voters.

**The Millennial Generation is on its way to being a force in elections** – turnout among 18-29 year olds increased substantially in each of the last two major elections (2004 and 2006). All indications point to a continuing trend of growing young voter turnout.

**2004:** On Election Day 2004, 4.3 million more 18-29 year olds voted than in 2000, a nine percentage point increase (from 40% to 49% turnout).

**2006:** Young voter turnout increased for the second major election in a row on November 7, 2006. Approximately ten million 18-29 year olds voted, an increase of two million (or 24%) over 2002.

**2008:** Looking ahead to the next major election - in 2008, potential Millennial voters will be pushing 50 million (18-31 years of age), nearly a quarter of the electorate. Given the current momentum around young voter turnout, this is a group that both parties can and must target if they hope to win in '08.

**See charts on page two for young voter turnout statistics**

<sup>1</sup> CIRCLE tabulation of U.S. Census Bureau’s March 2006 Current Population Survey (CPS).

<sup>2</sup> Definitions of the Millennial Generation vary; here it refers to those born between 1977 and 1997.

<sup>3</sup> According to the U.S. Census Bureau population projections for 2000 to 2050, by sex and single year of age, “Detail File” <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/> and applying the 2006 citizenship rate for that cohort (90.43% according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s March 2006 CPS), there will be about 7.8 million 18-19 year old citizens in 2008. Added to the approximately 41.9 million voting-age Millennial adults today, that nears 50 million.

<sup>4</sup> According to the U.S. Census Bureau population projections for 2000 to 2050, in 2015 the total 18-38 population will be 90,672,110; applying the 2006 citizenship rate (March 2006 CPS), there are projected to be 81,994,789 citizens between 18-38 years of age in 2015.

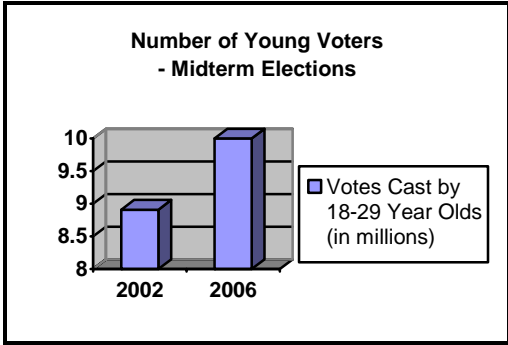
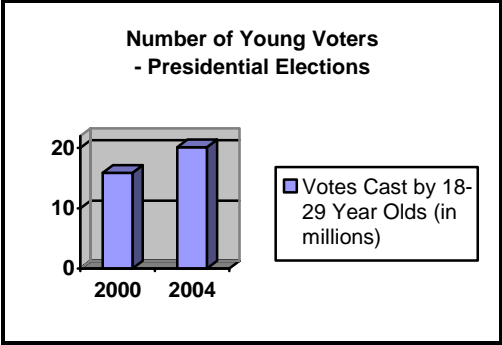
<sup>5</sup> In 2015, the total U.S. adult population (18+) is projected to be 245,347,376 (according to the U.S. Census Bureau population projections for 2000 to 2050). Applying today’s citizenship rates for that cohort (91.6% according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s March 2006 CPS), in 2015 the total adult citizen population (18+) is projected to be 224,837,397.

<sup>6</sup> CIRCLE’s tabulations from the U.S. Census Bureau’s March 2006 CPS.

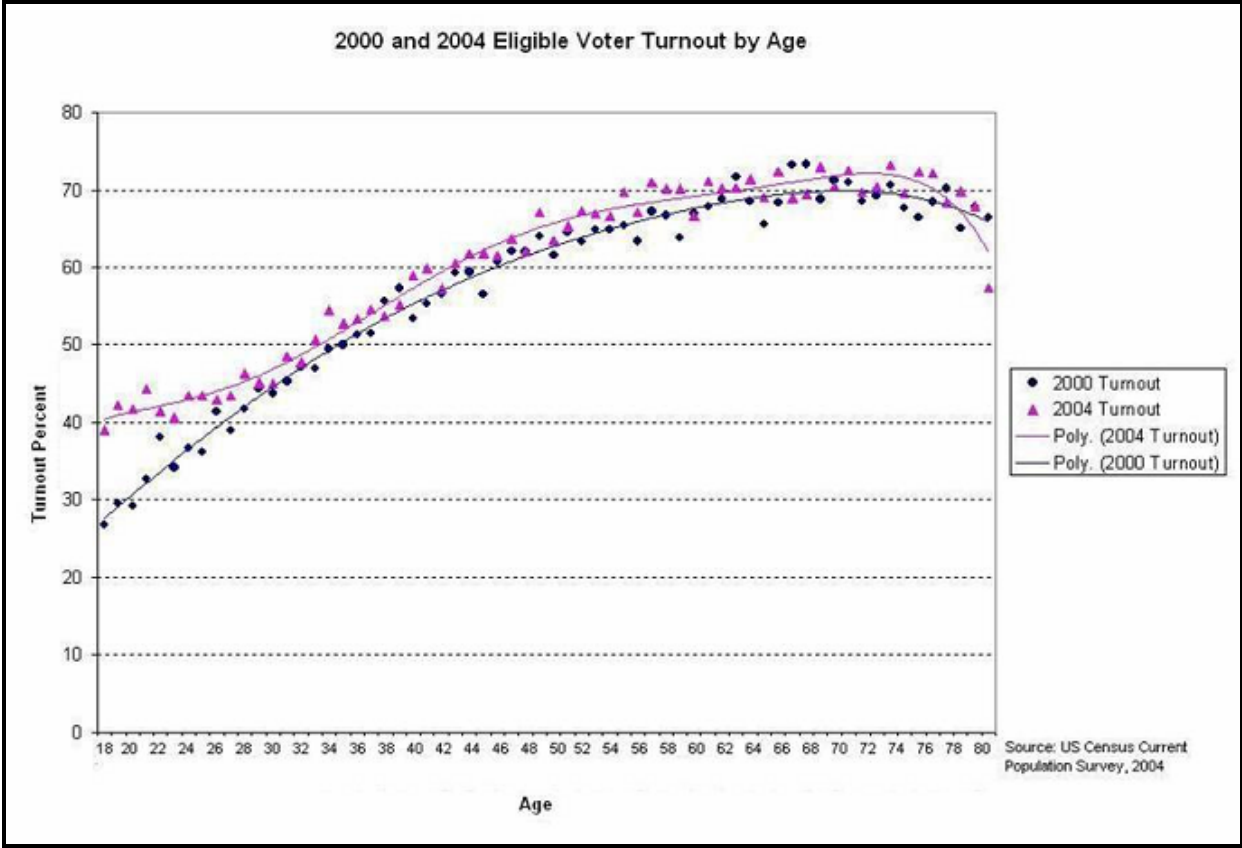
<sup>7</sup> CIRCLE, *Young Voters in the 2006 Elections*

# Young Voters By the Numbers<sup>8</sup>

Year	Votes Cast by 18-29	Percent of 18-29 Year Old Citizens Voting	Year	Votes Cast by 18-29	Percent of 18-29 Year Old Citizens Voting
2000	15.9 million	40%	2002	8 million	22%
2004	20.1 million	49%	2006	10 million	24%



The chart below represents voter turnout in 2000 and 2004 by age, and shows that the youngest voters increased their turnout far more than any other age group. The large turnout in 2004 was driven by the youth vote.  
 (Created by Harvard University Institute of Politics, Professor David King)



**Young Voter Strategies**, a nonpartisan project in partnership with the Graduate School of Political Management at The George Washington University, provides the public, parties, candidates, consultants and nonprofits with data and research on the youth vote as well as best practices to effectively mobilize young people. For more information, including the latest opinion polling, demographic research, and campaign toolkits, visit [www.youngvoterstrategies.org](http://www.youngvoterstrategies.org)

<sup>8</sup> Numbers for 2000, 2002, & 2004 are from the U.S. Census Bureau. Figures for 2006 are from CIRCLE's analysis of the 2006 exit poll.