



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, March 16, 2016
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Exclusive Analysis: Role of Young Voters in March 15th Primaries

Young Voters Break More Participation Records; Youth Support for Frontrunners Still Lagging

Medford/Somerville, MA – **The record levels of participation among young people continued in state primaries on March 15, 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 Citizenship and Public Service.

Youth turnout broke the previous participation records (set in 2008) in four of the five states that held primaries on March 15, and did so with large increases. The youth turnout rate ranged from 18 percent in Florida (up from 13 percent in 2008) to 27 percent in Missouri (up from 21 percent in 2008). In Ohio, the only state that did not break a youth participation record, young people turned out at a rate of 23 percent (down from 25 percent in 2008).

Youth support for the frontrunners continues to lag that of older voters, especially on the Democratic side. Senator Bernie Sanders won the youth vote overwhelmingly in all five states: from 65 percent in Florida to 86 percent in Illinois. Secretary Hillary Clinton won four of the five states with support from other age groups. For example, in Florida, while two-thirds of young people supported Senator Sanders, all other age groups supported Secretary Clinton by at least a 2-to-1 margin. It appears that the too-close-to-call race in Missouri can be attributed, at least in part, to young people, who supported Senator Sanders over Secretary Clinton at a rate of 78 percent to 21 percent.

On the Republican side, the youth vote choice was more mixed, and was much less decisive than that of older voters. Young people selected Governor John Kasich in his home state of Ohio by a wide margin (50 percent to Donald Trump’s 26 percent). Senator Ted Cruz won the youth vote in Missouri and in North Carolina, in each case by about 10 points over Mr. Trump. And Mr. Trump won young voters in Florida and Illinois, though by slim margins in both cases. In all states on March 15, young Republicans set new participation records.

“Although Mr. Trump and Secretary Clinton have emerged as decisive frontrunners in the 2016 nominating contests, young voters show no signs of moderating their strong support for Senator Sanders or for unifying in support of Mr. Trump,” says Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, director of CIRCLE. **“Last night, young people made it clear – through their participation and vote choices – that the frontrunners still have a lot of work to do to win them over for the general election.”**

For CIRCLE’s full analysis of yesterday’s five state primaries, please see [here](#).

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

CIRCLE youth vote experts also are available for interviews and/or analysis. Media outlets should contact Kristofer Eisenla at kristofer@lunaeisenlamedia.com or 202-670-5747

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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 Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University.

The Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service (<http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/>) is a national leader whose model and research are setting the standard for higher education’s role in civic engagement education. Serving every school of Tufts University, Tisch College creates an enduring culture that prepares students to be lifelong 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.