EXCLUSIVE RESEARCH: Index Ranks Potential Youth Impact in 2016 Presidential and Congressional Contests

Identifies states and districts where young voters have the highest potential influence in 2016; Iowa, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Colorado top the list in presidential contest

Medford/Somerville, MA – Where will the youth vote matter most in 2016? A new index ranks the states and districts where young people could have a major influence on the outcome of the 2016 presidential election, as well as on key Senate and House races. The Youth Electoral Significance Index was developed by 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.

Analyzing a range of data – including, population characteristics, turnout in previous elections, predicted electoral competitiveness, and relevant state election laws – the index highlights the states and districts where young people are poised to have a disproportionately high impact in 2016. The index generates top-ten rankings for 2016 congressional races and states in the presidential contest and offers detailed analysis.

“Young people have the potential to shape elections,” said Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, Director of CIRCLE. “These rankings help us understand where their impact could be most meaningful in 2016. We hope this tool encourages campaigns, media outlets, and advocates to reach out to young people in these states and districts – and across the country – and actively engage them in conversations about issues that matter to them.”

Top-line findings:
- Iowa, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Colorado top the list of states with the highest potential youth impact in the presidential race.
- Most of the states in our top-10 rankings are currently considered toss-ups,
meaning young people could very well help to decide the next President of
the United States and shape the results in key Congressional races.

- New Hampshire will figure prominently with young people in 2016. It is ranked
  first in the Senate index and a very close second (a virtual tie) in the
  Presidential ranking. Four factors contribute to the potential influence of
  young voters there: same-day registration (which is known to raise turnout),
  regularly high youth turnout, a high percentage of youth with college
  experience, and a low poverty rate.

- Iowa is home to three of the top five House districts that could see significant
  youth impact in 2016. This is due to a number of factors, including the number
  of colleges and universities, a higher than average youth population, and
  historically high turnout.

- Changes in state election laws may make a difference in 2016 and may
  require renewed outreach to young people. For example, in 2008, North
  Carolina’s high youth turnout helped President Obama win that state.
  However, several laws have been introduced since, possibly making it difficult
  for young people to register and vote in 2016. Increased efforts for outreach
  and education will be necessary for youth votes to have a large impact there.

Throughout this election season, CIRCLE’s 2016 Election Center will offer new
data products and, including detailed youth voting analyses the morning after
each caucus and primary. You can view trend data on youth turnout via CIRCLE’s
interactive maps.

CIRCLE youth vote experts also are available for
interviews and/or analysis. Media outlets should
contact: Kristofer Eisenla at
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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
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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.