

Exclusive Analysis: Youth turnout rate way up in 2018

Young people turned out at historic rate; youth vote choice overwhelmingly Democratic

November 7, 2018

MEDFORD/SOMERVILLE, Mass. (Nov. 7, 2018)—Young people turned out at an estimated rate of 31 percent, a substantial increase over 2014 and a high-water mark for the last quarter century, according to [an exclusive youth turnout analysis](#) released by researchers 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](#).

Read CIRCLE's exclusive turnout analysis [here](#).

“Young people approached the 2018 midterms with a resolve to change the American political landscape through peer-to-peer action, and yesterday they demonstrated their power,” said Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, CIRCLE director. “These data estimates represent a huge increase in youth participation and are a testament to the efforts that a diverse group of youth organizers built and sustained in communities and on campuses across the country. This year we also saw new stakeholders, including more universities, the private sector and even celebrities, strengthen and deepen their approach to youth outreach and non-partisan voter engagement efforts.”

Key findings include:

- We estimate that 31 percent of youth (ages 18-29) turned out to vote in the 2018 midterms, a substantial increase over 2014, when our day-after analysis suggested that 21 percent of eligible young voters went to the polls. This 2018 turnout rate [mirrors our pre-election polling estimate](#).
- Based on CIRCLE's comparable analyses, which reach back to 1994, we estimate that this is by far the highest level of participation among youth in the last seven midterm elections.
- Young people's vote choice heavily favored Democrats, according to the exit polls, with [67 percent of youth voting for a House Democratic candidate and just 32 percent for a House Republican candidate](#), a historic 35-point vote choice gap that certainly helped the Democratic Party take control of the U.S. House of Representatives and likely shaped some key statewide races.
- In Wisconsin, young people favored Democratic Governor-elect Tony Evers over incumbent Republican Scott Walker by a 60 percent to 37 percent margin, helping to propel Evers to a narrow victory.

- In a close Georgia gubernatorial race, young voters preferred Stacey Abrams by a 63 percent to 36 percent margin over Republican Brian Kemp. The race has been called for Kemp, but Abrams has not conceded.
- In Nevada, where young people made up a particularly high share of the electorate (19 percent) and their vote choice favored Democrats, both the Democratic Senate candidate Jacky Rosen, and the Democratic gubernatorial candidate Steve Sisolak, are projected to have won close races by less than 5 percentage points.

These estimates will be updated and supplemented in the coming days and weeks. Please visit civicyouth.org for the latest data and analyses.

[CIRCLE](#) 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. CIRCLE is a co-lead on the [22x20 campaign](#), which is a network of education, media literacy and media partners working to mesh media literacy with voter engagement before the 2020 election.

Researchers are available for interviews. Media outlets should contact: Jen McAndrew at jennifer.mcandrew@tufts.edu or 617 627-2029.

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About Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University

The only university-wide college of its kind, the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life (<http://tischcollege.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.