

ROCK THE VOTE

To: Political Reporters and Editors
 Fr: Kat Barr, Director of Research, Rock the Vote
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 Date: December 4, 2007

Re: Young Voters: Facts vs. Myths

Given recent media interest in young voters, particularly as the primaries approach, Rock the Vote created this factsheet as a quick and easy resource outlining many of the key facts about the youth vote. For more information, please visit our library of research, polling, facts and figures on young people at www.rockthevote.com/research.

Myth - Every election year, reporters and organizations hype the youth vote as the next big thing, but come Election Day, young voters fail to materialize at the polls.

Fact - It's true that there was a lot of talk about young voters in both 2004 and 2006 – but for very good reason. After a nearly continuous downward turnout trend since 1972, **turnout among 18-29 year olds was up significantly in 2004 and 2006.**

- In 2004, **20.1 million 18-29 year olds voted, a 4.3 million jump over 2000.** The turnout increase (9% points) among the youngest voters was **more than double** that of the overall electorate (4% points). (U.S. Census Bureau)
- In 2006, the **youth increased by 1.9 million over 2002 levels.** Turnout among the youngest voters grew by 3% points over 2002, twice the turnout increase (1.7% points) of older voters. (U.S. Census Bureau)

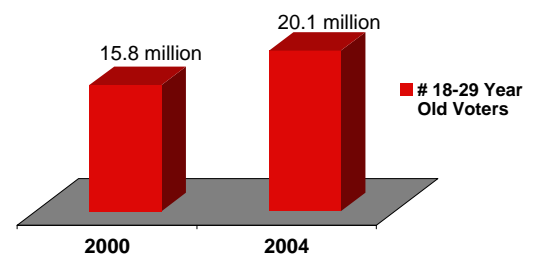
In fact, in 2004 the turnout rate of 18-29 year olds was higher than all but one year (1992) since 18-20 year olds got voting rights in 1972.

Myth – Even if turnout went up in 2004, it's probably just a blip in the radar screen like 1992.

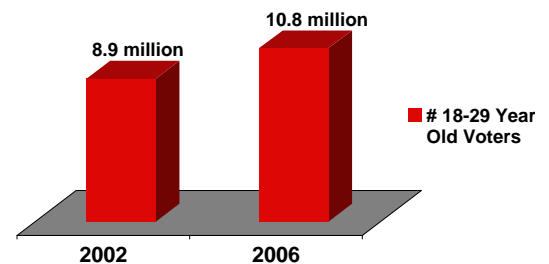
Fact - While we can't predict the future, there are a number of indicators that 2004 was the beginning of a trend.

- **2006:** Turnout rose again in the 2006 elections - **the first increase in 18-29 year old turnout in a midterm election in 24 years** – and also the first in 24 years to sustain over two elections. (U.S. Census Bureau)
- **Engagement:** Reams of research on today's youth vote shows that they are paying more attention to politics and elections than they were before the 2004 elections. (See chart for one example)
- **Mobilization:** Higher youth turnout in 2004 and 2006 was in part the result of increased outreach efforts from nonpartisan groups and campaigns, which will continue in 2008.
 - In 2004, nonpartisan groups invested \$40 million in registering and turning out young voters. In 2006, these groups again invested millions in mobilization efforts.
 - Research proves that outreach increases turnout – **if campaigns work the youth vote, it works.** Phone calls and door-knocks increase turnout by 5-10 points, and more than 80% of youth who get registered end up going to the polls.

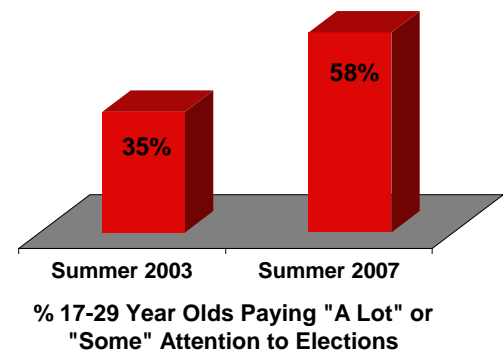
2004 vs. 2000 turnout of young voters
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau



2006 vs. 2002 turnout of young voters
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Young voters' election attention up
 CBS News-N.Y. Times-MTV Polls

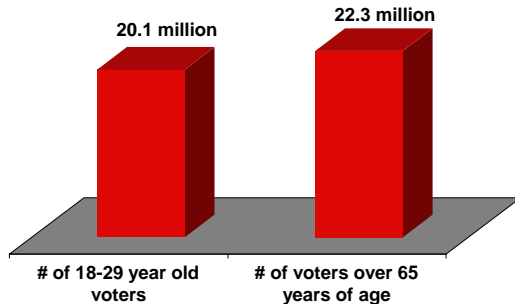


Myth - The youth vote can't make much of a difference in elections.

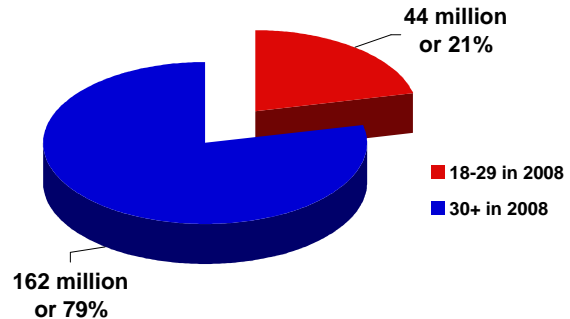
Fact - The youth vote can make – and has made –the difference in close elections. Their sheer size, combined with growing rates of voter turnout makes them a politically powerful voting bloc.

- In 2004, the size of the 18-29 year old electorate (20.1 million voters) rivaled that of the much-coveted senior vote (22.3 million voters over 65). (U.S. Census Bureau)
- By 2008, there will be 44 million 18-29 year olds eligible to vote – one-fifth of the voting eligible population.

Size of under-30 vs. over-65 vote in 2004
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



44 million eligible 18-29 year olds in '08
Source: RTV tabulations of U.S. Census Bureau population projections



Fact - In 2006, young voters made the difference in races where campaigns ran youth outreach efforts. **When campaigns and candidates work the youth vote, it works.**

- **Montana:** Tester defeated Burns by 3,562 votes; 18-29 turnout was up by 39,106 votes over 2002.
- **Virginia:** Webb defeated Allen by 9,329 votes; 18-29 turnout was up by 110,453 votes over 2002.
- **Missouri:** McCaskill defeated Talent by 48,314 votes, 18-29 turnout was up by 108,269 votes.
- **CT-02:** Joe Courtney won by 83 votes; turnout at the UConn polling place was up nearly 10x that.

See *Rock the Vote's Young Voter Mobilization Tactics Volume II* for more details.

Myth – In 2004, young voters didn't turn out to the Iowa caucuses and are the reason Howard Dean didn't win.

Fact – In 2004, 17-29 year olds quadrupled their Iowa caucus turnout compared to 2000, and made up 17% of all caucus-goers (more than the 15% 30-44 year olds made up). As for vote choice, the plurality (35%) of 17-29 year olds voted for John Kerry, the winner, while 25% voted for Dean and 20% for John Edwards. (Sources: Iowa caucus entrance poll, <http://www.cnn.com>, and CIRCLE at the University of Maryland, www.civicyouth.org)

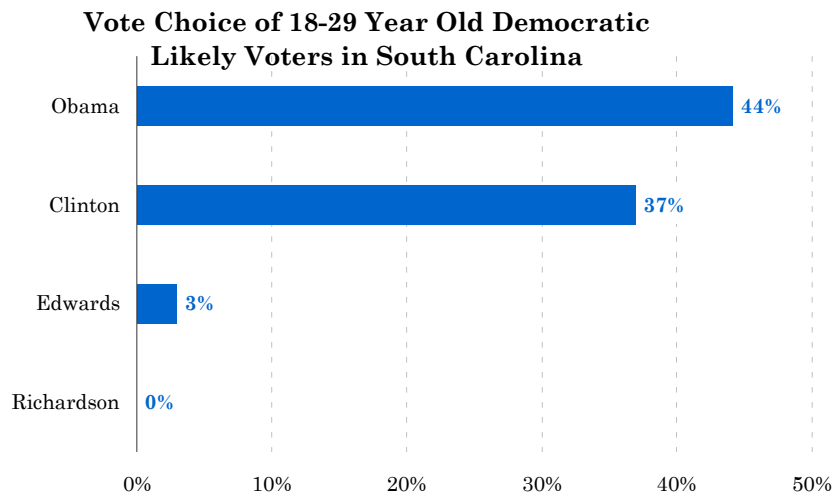
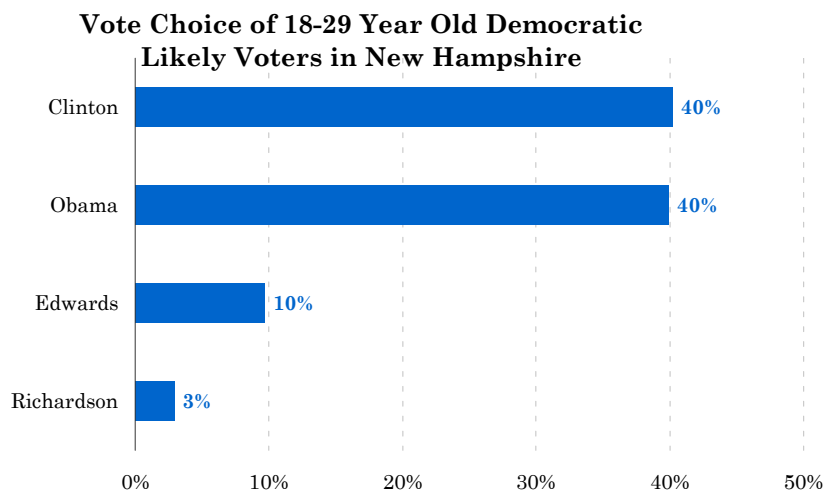
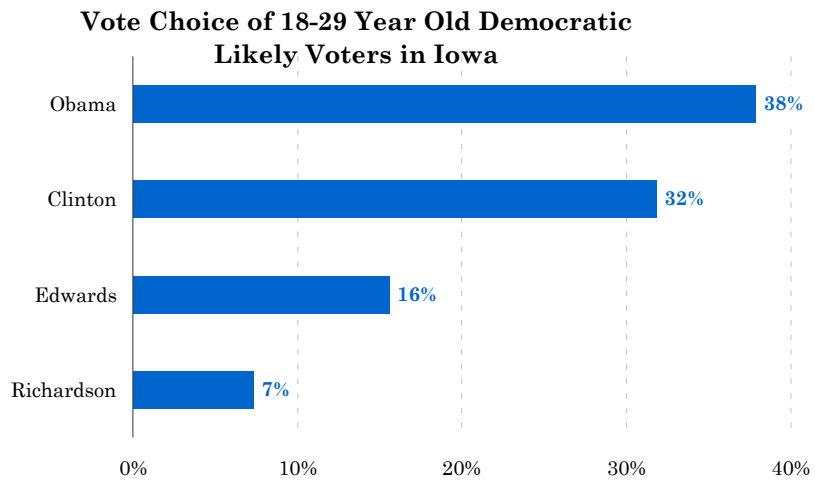
Myth - Young voters are flocking to [fill in the blank] candidate. If he/she loses in Iowa, or New Hampshire or South Carolina, it'll be because young adults didn't vote.

Fact – No one has the youth vote sewn up, particularly in the wide-open primary races. Young voters aren't a monolithic bloc – like all voters, they split their votes between candidates, make up their minds based on a variety of factors, are different state-by-state, **and will vote if or when that candidate asks for their vote.**

See the next two pages for the latest 18-29 year old Democratic and Republican primary and caucus polling from Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina, and the following two pages for national primary polling.

Democratic – Early Primary and Caucus Polling

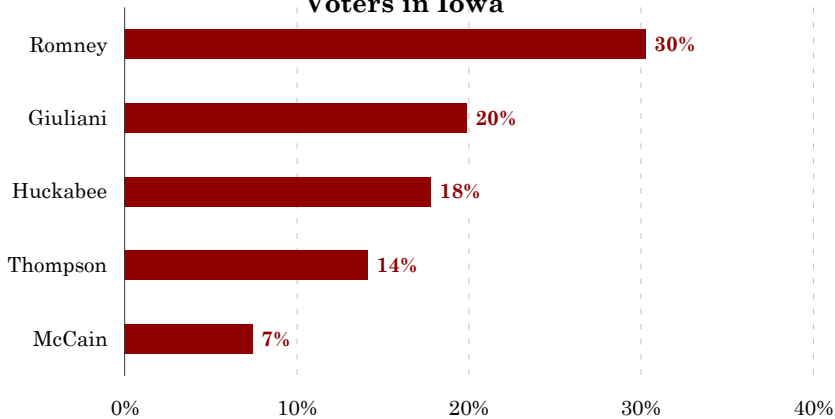
Source: Rock the Vote aggregated October and November 2007 polls to produce the charts below. Because the 18-29 year old samples in primary polling are often quite small, polls were aggregated to generate a reportable sample size. Iowa sample is 363, from Rasmussen Reports, University of Iowa, and CBS/New York Times polls. New Hampshire sample is 317, from University of New Hampshire, Rasmussen Reports, St. Anselm College, and Marist College polls. South Carolina sample is 137, from Survey USA, Rasmussen Reports, and Clemson University polls.



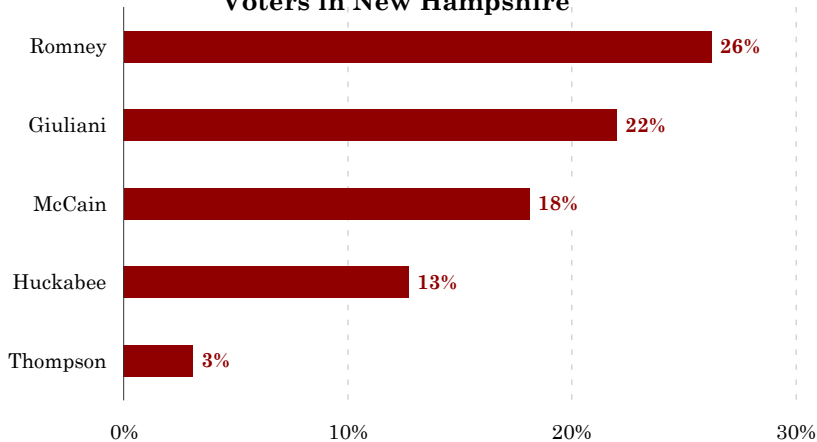
Republican – Early Primary and Caucus Polling

Source: Rock the Vote aggregated October and November 2007 polls to produce the charts below. Because the 18-29 year old samples in primary polling are often quite small, polls were aggregated to generate a reportable sample size. Iowa sample is 252, from Rasmussen Reports, University of Iowa, and CBS/New York Times polls. New Hampshire sample is 293, from Marist College, University of New Hampshire, Rasmussen Reports, and St. Anselm College polls. South Carolina sample is 202, from Rasmussen Reports, Survey USA, Clemson University, and Insider Advantage polls.

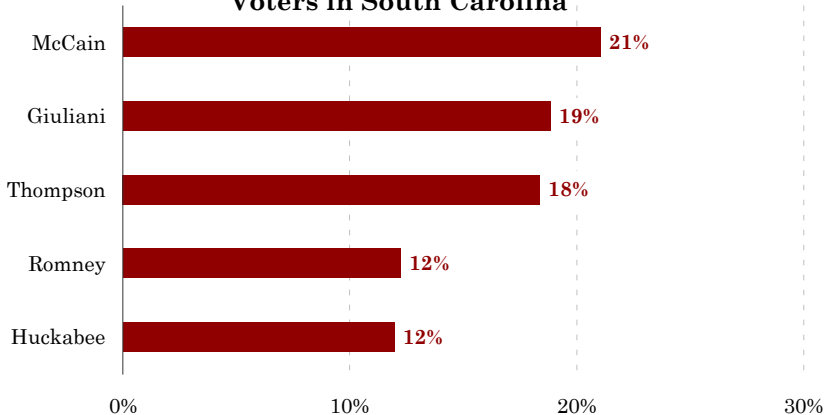
Vote Choice of 18-29 Year Old Republican Likely Voters in Iowa



Vote Choice of 18-29 Year Old Republican Likely Voters in New Hampshire

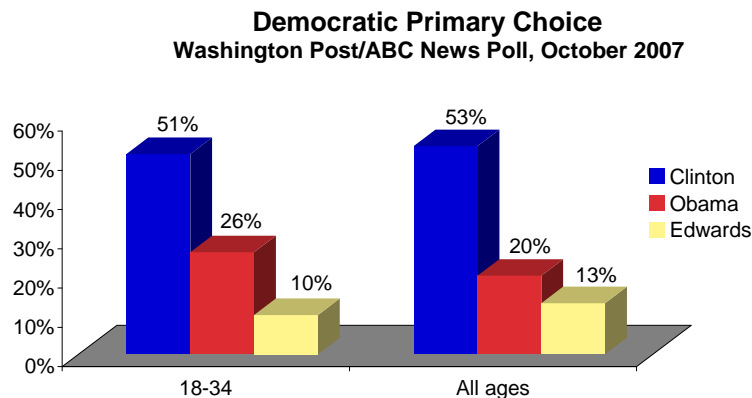
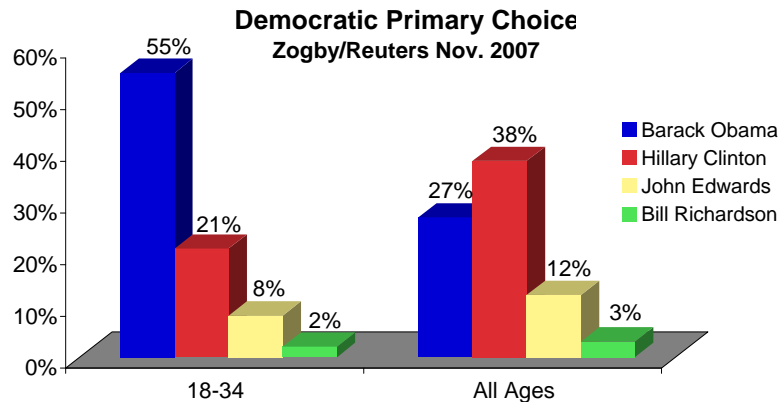
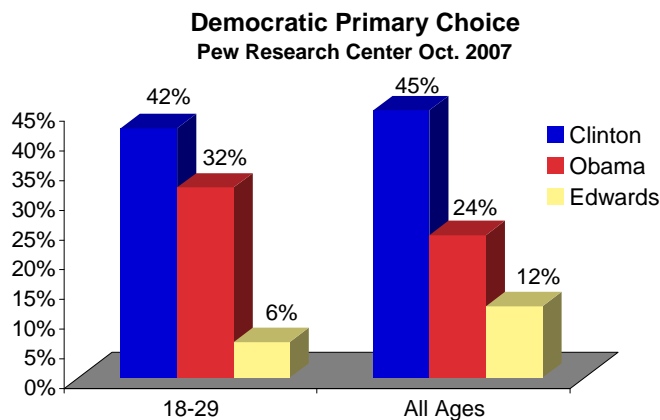
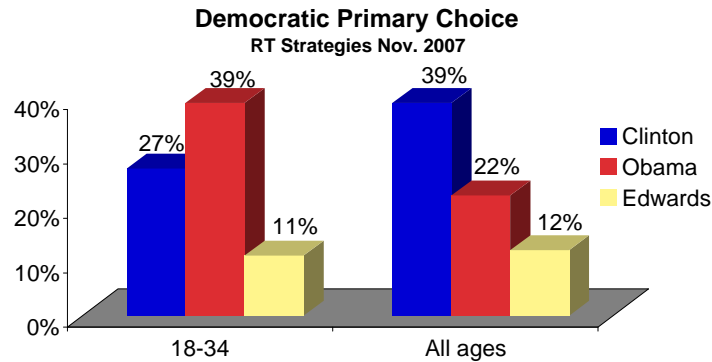


Vote Choice of 18-29 Year Old Republican Likely Voters in South Carolina



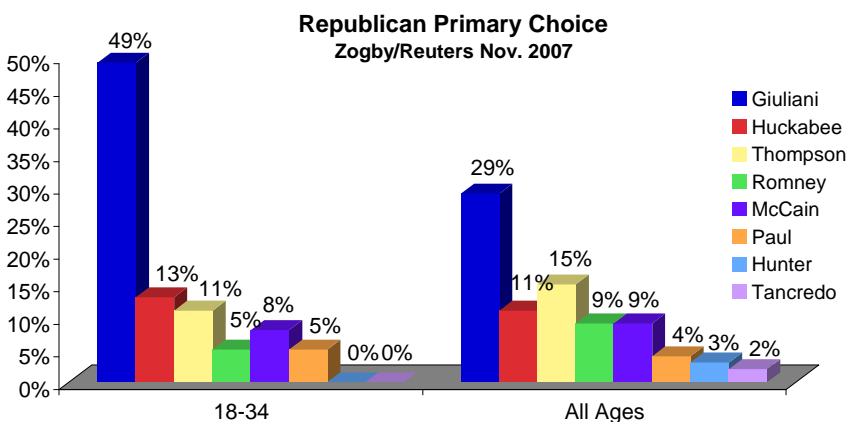
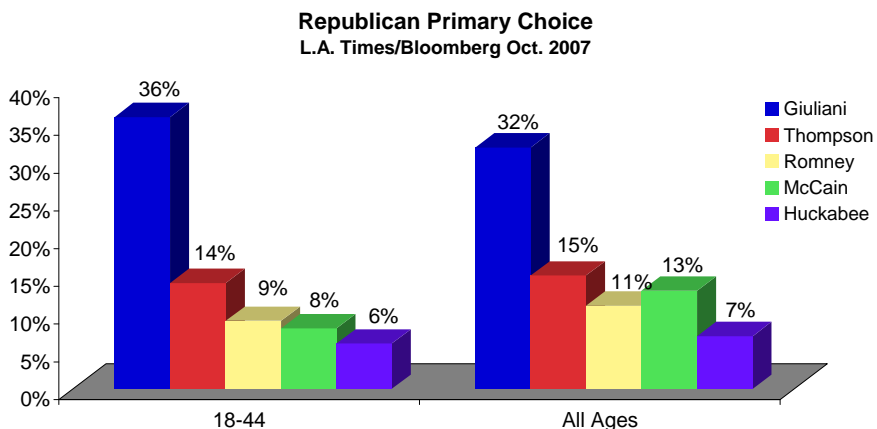
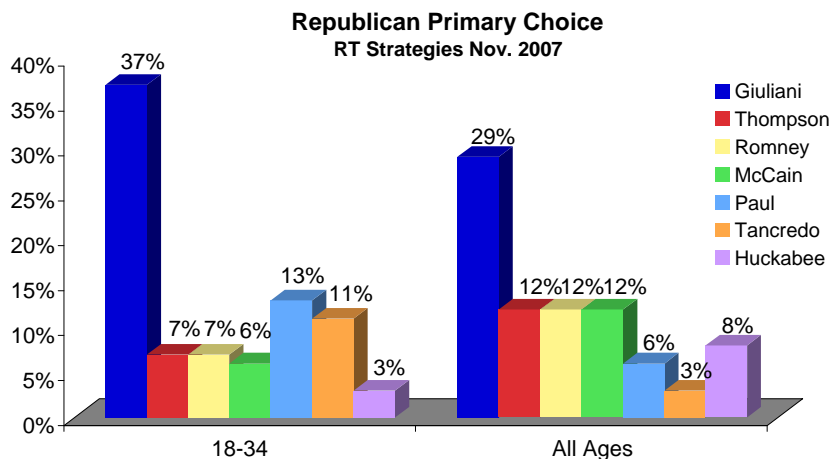
Democratic - National Primary Polling

Polls below include results publicly available from the polling outfits and for the age groups with sample sizes large enough to report. Because results vary by pollster, several polls are listed to give readers a broad picture.



Republican - National Primary Polling

Polls below include results publicly available from the polling outfits and for the age groups with sample sizes large enough to report. Because results vary by pollster, several polls are listed to give readers a broad picture.



About Rock the Vote

Rock the Vote's mission is to build the political clout and engagement of young people in order to achieve progressive change in our country. Rock the Vote uses music, popular culture and new technologies to engage and incite young people to register and vote in every election. And we give young people the tools to identify, learn about, and take action on the issues that affect their lives, and leverage their power in the political process.

Rock the Vote is creative, effective, and controlled by nobody's agenda but our own – we tell it like it is and pride ourselves on being a trusted source for information on politics. We empower the 45 million young people in America who want to step up, claim their voice in the political process, and change the way politics is done. www.RockTheVote.com

**For more research on young voters, see www.RockTheVote.com/Research.
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