

THE STATE OF THE YOUTH NATION: 2007
June 15-23rd, 2007

Interviews for this poll were conducted among 659 17 to 29 year- olds interviewed by telephone June 15 - June 23rd, 2007. The poll was conducted jointly by CBS News, The New York Times and MTV. Respondents were part of nationwide representative samples identified in households previously interviewed by CBS News Polls and from random-digit dial samples. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 4% points for results based on the entire sample.

SUMMARY

- Younger Americans aged 17 to 29 believe they will be a force in the upcoming 2008 election: nearly eight in ten think their generation will have a lot or some impact on who the next president will be.
 - And even at this early stage, young people are tuning in: six in ten are paying a lot or some attention.
 - Most say the upcoming presidential election is one of the most important - or the most important - election in their lifetime.
- Many younger Americans are getting wired into the campaign: the internet is a widely-used way for younger Americans to connect to the candidates. One-third say they have been to the website of a political candidate, and 15% have connected to a candidate through a social networking site like MySpace or Facebook.
- Younger Americans choose the economy and the war as the issues that will matter most in their voting decisions next year.
 - But on many specific topics of concern, younger Americans say Presidential candidates aren't giving them enough priority: student loans, job training, health care for the uninsured and reducing oil use are all very important to younger people - but most say the candidates are not addressing these specific topics enough.
- About half of Americans 17 to 29 call themselves enthusiastic about a candidate - and Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton have captured the enthusiasm of younger Americans far more than their Democratic rivals and any of the Republican candidates now running.
- When younger Americans look at the current crop of presidential candidates, they see a diverse array of backgrounds and personal experiences represented.
- Younger people don't think being black or female is a hindrance to getting elected among the people they know, but being a Mormon might be.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND INFLUENCE ON CAMPAIGN 2008

- Young Americans believe they will have an impact on this election. 77% of 17 to 29 year olds think their generation will have a lot or some impact on who the next president will be.

HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DO YOU THINK PEOPLE OF YOUR GENERATION WILL HAVE ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION?

A lot	34%
Some	43
Not much/none	22

- o Still, about half of young Americans think they will have less influence on the presidential election than older people.
- 17 to 29 year olds say the 2008 presidential election is one of the most important - if not the most important - election in their lifetime.

IN YOUR LIFETIME, THIS ELECTION IS...

The most important	22%
One of the most important	43
As important as others	29
Less/not important	5

- 80% disagree with the statement: "It makes no real difference who is elected President -- things go on just as they did before."
- Even at this early stage, young people say they are tuning in to the presidential campaign. Nearly six in ten are paying a lot or some attention. Back in the summer of 2003, only 35% of adults under 30 were paying attention to the campaign. Today, adults nationwide are paying a bit more attention than younger people.

ATTENTION TO 2008 CAMPAIGN

	Now	7/2003	All Americans
	17-29	18-29	5/07
A lot	14%	7%	20%
Some	44	28	46
Not much/none	41	65	44

- College grads are more likely to say they're paying attention to the 2008 campaign. 65% say they are, compared to 58% of those without college degrees.
- There are gender differences. 40% of young women say their generation will have a lot of influence on selection of the next president, compared to 28% of young men.

- Some have gotten personally involved in the political arena in some way. 28% say they have done something like joining a political club, working on or volunteering for a campaign in some way, or attending a rally.

EVER DONE SOMETHING TO GET INVOLVED IN POLITICS?

Yes	28%
No	72

- 74% of the 17 to 29 year olds interviewed say they are registered to vote. And among those currently not registered, most plan to do so before the 2008 election.
- Among those already registered or those who plan to, 43% say it will be their first time voting in a presidential election, while 57% have voted before.
- If the 2008 election were being held today, 54% of 17-29 year olds say they would vote for the Democratic candidate; 32% would choose the Republican.
- In 2004 more Americans 18-29 turned out to vote in the Presidential election than had in 2000, but the total electorate in 2004 was higher, too.
 - Their turnout boost helped young people keep their influence amid an electorate that increased from 2000 to 2004; according to CBS News Exit Polls, they comprised 17% of voters in each year.

THE INTERNET AND THE CAMPAIGN

- Visits to political internet sites go together with enthusiasm and attention to politics.
 - Most young people who have visited either a political website of some kind, or candidates' MySpace pages, have a candidate whom they feel enthusiastic about. Those who haven't visited any such sites are much less likely to say they feel enthusiastic about any candidate.
 - Young people who have visited a political page or website are much more likely than those who haven't to say they're paying a lot of attention to the campaign (28% of them are.)
 - Young people who have visited the sites are a bit more likely to say their generation will have a lot of impact in 2008 than are those who have not visited.
- 71% of younger Americans have visited networking sites such as MySpace, Friendster, and Facebook at least once at some point, including 56% who have their own page. This is especially true of those under age 25.
 - 25% of those who have been to such networking sites have visited a page belonging to, or associated with, a political candidate, including some who have signed up or registered with them.

EVER VISITED A POLITICAL CANDIDATES' PAGE ON SITES LIKE MYSPACE OR FACEBOOK? (Among those using social networking sites)

Yes, visited pages	15%
Yes, visited & signed up, volunteered, etc.	10
No	74

- 31% of 17 to 29 year olds have at some point directly visited a political or campaign site of some kind, including one in 10 who have signed up for mailing lists, volunteered, or donated money once there.

EVER VISITED ANY POLITICAL OR CAMPAIGN WEB SITES?

Yes, visited sites	22%
Yes, visited & signed up, volunteered, donated etc.	9
No	69

THE ISSUES AND THE ELECTION

- Younger Americans choose the economy and jobs, and the war, as the issues that will matter most in their voting decisions next year.

- o 23% pick the economy and 20% name Iraq. Education (15%), the environment (12%), terrorism (10%) and health care (10%) also register in double-digits.

TOP ISSUE IN VOTING NEXT YEAR?

Economy/jobs	23%
Iraq	20
Education	15
Environment	12
Terrorism	10
Health care	10
Immigration	8

- But two-thirds of younger Americans (65%) say the candidates are NOT giving their issue enough attention.
 - o This is especially true for those who name issues besides Iraq.
 - Of those who say education, the environment or health care is their top priority, 84% think the candidates are NOT making that issue enough of a priority.
 - Of those who pick the economy, 67% say the candidates are not giving the economy enough priority.
 - But of those who pick Iraq, only 26% think candidates aren't giving that enough priority; 64% of them say candidates are.
- On some specific aspects of these issues, young people see a disconnect between their priorities and the candidates'.
 - o On student loans, job training, health care for the uninsured and lowering oil and gas use, large majorities say these particular policies ARE important - but majorities also say the candidates ARE NOT giving those items enough priority.

YOUR PRIORITIES VS. CANDIDATES PRIORITIES

	Policies are <u>Important</u> to you	Candidates are <u>NOT</u> prioritizing it
Reducing oil/gas use	90%	59%
Student loans	88%	67%
Job training	88%	68%
Health care coverage	88%	54%

- 90% say government policies that promote lower oil and gas use are important to them (including 63% who call it very important)
 - o But 59% candidates are not making that enough of a priority.
- 88% say job training and opportunities for younger workers are important to them (including 62% who call it very important.)
 - o But 68% say candidates are not making that enough of a priority.

- 88% say providing health care to the uninsured is important to them (including 60% who call it very important)
 - But 54% say candidates are not making that enough of a priority.
- 88% say student aid such as loans and grants are important to them (including 59% who call it very important)
 - But 67% say candidates are not making that enough of a priority.

OTHER ISSUES: GUNS

- More than one in four younger Americans calls guns a serious problem in their community.

ARE GUNS A PROBLEM IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Yes	27%
No	70

- When younger Americans look back on the violence at Virginia Tech that took place last spring, their views are similar to the reactions expressed by Americans nationwide shortly after the tragedy.
- Most say stricter guns laws would have helped prevent at least a little of the violence.

AT VIRGINIA TECH, STRICTER GUNS LAWS WOULD HAVE HELPED..

	17-29	All Americans
	Now	April 2007
A lot	25%	32%
A little	30	21
No effect	42	43

- 28% think allowing adults to carry concealed handguns would have made the situation at Virginia Tech worse. 23% disagree - and think that would have helped the situation. More than four in ten think concealed weapons would have had no impact.

One in five younger Americans reports owning a firearm themselves.

- Those who own guns are more likely to say that stricter gun control laws would have had no impact at Virginia Tech.

HEALTH CARE

- Like most Americans, most younger Americans think the US health care system needs either fundamental changes (55%) or must be entirely rebuilt (35%).
- Younger Americans are even more supportive (62%) of one national, government-administered health care system than Americans as a whole (47%) in a February 2007 CBS News/NY Times Poll.

- o About three in four young people who do not have health insurance favor a government-run plan.
- One in five Americans 17-29 reports that they do not currently have health insurance.

OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES

- Abortion is often a heated topic in Presidential campaigns. Younger Americans see this issue about the same way as all Americans.
 - o 37% of younger Americans would make abortion generally available; in a May 2007 CBS News/New York Times Poll about the same number of all Americans agreed.
- Most younger Americans think possession of a small amount of marijuana should not be treated as a criminal offense.
- Younger Americans are more accepting of the idea of same-sex marriage.
 - o 44% say same-sex couples should be able to legally marry; only 28% all of Americans agree. While 30% of younger Americans would have no legal recognition for a gay couple's relationship; more, 35%, of Americans feel this way.
- Half of younger Americans (50%) say being homosexual is something a person cannot change. But most Americans (53%) in October 2006 said being homosexual was a choice.

THE WAR IN IRAQ

- Just like Americans overall, those age 17 to 29 say the war in Iraq is the most important problem facing the country. 32% say it is the most important problem, followed by the economy and jobs (9%), and immigration (8%).
- Most young people say the war in Iraq is going badly and 58% think the U.S. should have stayed out of that country in the first place. Assessments of the Iraq war among Americans nationwide are similar.

HOW IS THE IRAQ WAR GOING?

	17-29	All Americans
	Now	5/07
Very well	2%	2%
Somewhat well	25	21
Somewhat badly	34	29
Very badly	38	47

- Those aged 17 to 29 are more optimistic than Americans overall on the question of whether the U.S. will ultimately succeed in Iraq. However, as with all Americans, few think success is "very" likely.

WILL THE U.S. SUCCEED IN IRAQ?

	17-29	All Americans
	Now	5/07
Very likely	10%	12%
Somewhat likely	41	33
Not very likely	28	29
Not at all likely	19	24

- 47% think the war has had no impact on this country's safety from terrorism. Fewer, 31%, say the war has made the U.S. safer.

87% of young people are opposed to reinstating the military draft.

REINSTATING THE MILITARY DRAFT?

Favor	9%
Oppose	87

In addition, 56% do not think a reinstatement of the draft is likely, but 42% say it could happen.

THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

- Americans 17-29 volunteer Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton as candidates they are enthusiastic about - though many (45%) do not name any candidate as eliciting such enthusiasm.

ARE YOU ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT ANY 2008 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE?

Barack Obama	18%
Hillary Clinton	17
Rudy Giuliani	4
Mitt Romney	2
Fred Thompson	2
Other	4
No, none of them	45

- o Clinton generates more enthusiasm among women. 22% of women 17 to 29 are enthusiastic about Clinton while 17% are enthusiastic about Obama.
- Among young people who plan to vote in a Democratic primary, 29% are enthusiastic about Hillary Clinton, and 26% name Barack Obama. 36% of this group is not excited about any of the presidential candidates.
- Rudy Giuliani tops the enthusiasm list among Republican candidates.
 - Among Republican primary voters, specifically, 13% are enthusiastic about Rudy Giuliani, followed by Mitt Romney (9%), potential candidate Fred Thompson (7%) and declared candidate John McCain (2%). 48% of these voters could not name a candidate they are enthusiastic about.
 - Some young Republican primary voters are actually excited about a Democrat: 8% of them name Barack Obama.
 - Republican primary voters are more likely than Democratic ones to say there is no one they're enthusiastic about.
- Seven in 10 young Americans say the current roster of presidential candidates represents a wide array of personal backgrounds and experiences. 22% say their backgrounds and experiences are basically the same.

THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES REPRESENT...

Diverse backgrounds and experiences	71%
Mostly the same backgrounds and experiences	22

- Americans 17 to 29 do not think race or gender would affect the vote of people they know. 66% think most people they know would vote for a black candidate, and 59% say most would vote for a woman candidate.
 - o Nearly seven in 10 think most people they know would have no problem voting for a candidate who had smoked marijuana, while less than one in four say most would vote for a candidate who had used cocaine.

- o However, young people think a candidate's religion or sexual orientation could be factors with the people they know: only 28% of 17 to 29 -year olds think most people they know would vote for a candidate who was a Mormon, and only one in four think most would vote for a gay or lesbian candidate.

WOULD MOST PEOPLE YOU KNOW VOTE FOR A CANDIDATE WHO ...?

	Would	Would not
Ever smoked marijuana	68%	28
Is black	66%	30
Is a woman	59%	38
Is a Mormon	28%	59
Is gay or lesbian	25%	70
Ever used cocaine	22%	74

- According to younger Americans, the best age for a President is in their 40s or 50s. By comparison, a majority of all registered voters nationwide - 55% - think the best age is the 50s.

BEST AGE FOR A U.S. PRESIDENT

	17-29	Registered voters
	Now	3/2007
30s	14%	5%
40s	44	26
50s	33	55
60s	5	9
70s	1	5

VIEWS OF THE CANDIDATES

- 41% of Americans 17 to 29 have a favorable opinion of Barack Obama and 19% view him unfavorably.
- 41% of younger Americans view Hillary Clinton favorably, but even more - 43% - view her unfavorably.
- Of all the Republican candidates, Rudy Giuliani is viewed favorably by the largest number of younger Americans - 32% of younger Americans have a favorable opinion of him while 19% view him unfavorably. A majority of younger Americans who consider themselves Republican have a favorable opinion of him.
- A majority of younger Americans are unable to form an opinion yet about John McCain, Fred Thompson, or Mitt Romney.

OPINION OF THE CANDIDATES

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Undecided/ Don't know
Barack Obama	41%	19	39
Hillary Clinton	41%	43	17
Rudy Giuliani	32%	19	49
John Edwards	24%	24	51
John McCain	20%	26	53
Fred Thompson	10%	8	82

METHODOLOGY

Interviews were conducted among 659 17 to 29 year olds by telephone from June 15-23, 2007. The poll was conducted jointly by CBS News, The New York Times and MTV. These respondents were part of nationwide representative samples identified in households previously interviewed by CBS News Polls and from RDD samples.

Weighting

The sample is weighted to ensure that the distribution of interviews mirrors the distribution of the entire population of 17 to 29 year-olds across a variety of variables.

The weighting procedures are as follows:

1. Each respondent receives a weight inversely proportional to his or her probability of selection. For respondents in previously interviewed households, this weight is the household weight in the original survey, times the number of 17-29 year olds now in the household. For the RDD sample, it is the number of 17-29 year olds in the household divided by the number of telephone lines. These weights are normalized so that the average weight in the RDD sample and in each of the original surveys is one.
2. The weights were then adjusted to match Census Bureau estimates of 17 to 29 year-olds by age, presence of both 17-24 year olds and 25-29 year olds in the same household, education, gender, marital status, and census region.

Margin of Error

The margin of error for this survey is plus or minus four percentage points for results based on the entire sample. That means that 95 times out of a hundred, the results are within four percentage points of what they would be if the entire universe of 17 to 29 year-olds were interviewed. The error for subgroups is larger.