

The year of the Millennials

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Political commentators predict the November elections could make 2008 the year of the young voter. These experts are close but numbers show us something else.

This is already the year of the young voter.

More than 6.5 million Americans younger than 30 voted in the 2008 primaries and caucuses, according to The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE), a youth political researching group based at Tufts University. Those voters comprised 17 percent of the total vote. That number was only 9 percent in 2000.

In Oklahoma, the numbers are more impressive. On Super Tuesday, about 82,600 young Oklahomans voted, according to CIRCLE numbers from exit polling and CNN. That represents a 360 percent increase over 2000 when about 18,000 youths voted. Those numbers are especially exciting to me as a member of that voting bloc. We millennials have finally realized elections affect us, our jobs and our future.

But as proud as I am of my peers, there are concerns. For example, the Pew Internet & American Life Project estimates one in three Internet users younger than 30 surfs social networking sites, such as MySpace, to obtain or share information about political campaigns. We all know the Internet is a powerful researching tool, but one with flaws. On many Web sites there is no way to tell where the information is from — or whether it is even truthful.

At okprosperity.com, voters can find results of a questionnaire that was mailed to candidates running for office in Oklahoma. The survey deals only with economic issues that affect jobs. The Web site does not endorse candidates. We leave that up to the minds of the voters.

The Oklahoma Prosperity Project represents more than 1,300 Oklahoma companies and 466,000 employees. With support from the state's largest and smallest employers, and everything in between, the Prosperity Project allows voters to become informed before we head to the ballot box.

I call on young voters to take responsibility for our future by heading to the Web site to see where candidates stand on the issues affecting our jobs and Oklahoma's economy. Let's vote in record numbers this fall — and let's be informed! Let's not disappoint the political commentators who just hate being wrong.

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