

# Text Reminders Increase Primary Youth Turnout



## October 2008

The Student PIRGs New Voters Project and Credo Mobile, in cooperation with the University of Notre Dame recently released a study demonstrating the effectiveness of using text /SMS messages to mobile phones to mobilize young voters during the 2008 primary election. The study found that text message reminders to young voters increased turnout by 4.6 percentage points.

Messages sent the day before the election increased turnout by 2.1 percentage points.

The results are consistent with a study released in September 2006 by the Student PIRGs, Credo Mobile, the University of Michigan and Princeton University that found text message reminders increased a young voter's likelihood of voting by 4.2 percentage points.

## The Study

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008 (Super Tuesday) researchers sent text message reminders to 3600 mobile phone numbers chosen at random from a pool of 5400 mostly young people who had completed voter registration applications. Afterward, participants were matched to voter records to determine if they had voted in the election.

## The Findings

	Turnout Increase
Message Sent on Election Day	4.6 percentage points
Message Sent Day Before Election Day	2.1 percentage points

## Why Text Messaging?

Young voters matter and are a very mobile population that is increasingly difficult to reach by traditional campaign outreach channels such as telephone calls to landlines.

- A quarter of Americans under the age of 25 used a mobile phone as their only telephone in the first half of 2006
- The mobile-only population is projected to reach 30 percent of the entire American public by the 2008 election
- Text/SMS messaging is already widely used among young people as a form of communication

## The Youth Vote

For the past several elections, young people have turned out in bigger numbers.

- In 2004, 20.1 million 19-29 year-olds voted, up 4.3 million votes over 2000.
- In 2006, 18-29 year old turnout increased by nearly 2 million votes, nearly twice the increase of voters of all ages
- In the 2008 primaries, young voter rates doubled over 200 levels in states with available data

Both the Student PIRGs and Credo Mobile are making extensive use of texting technology to mobilize more young people to the polls on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

*CREDO Mobile supports serious causes with cool phones, making it easy for cell phone users to support the causes they care about with every call. In its history, the company has donated more than \$60 million to progressive nonprofits, helped over four million people register to vote and recruited over 10,000 pollworkers to help strengthen American democracy.*

*The Student PIRGs' New Voters Project is the nation's largest non-partisan, on-the-ground student voter mobilization program. Our voter registration and Get Out the Vote work has been extensively studied, the results of which can be found at [www.NewVotersProject.org/Research](http://www.NewVotersProject.org/Research).*