



Carsey: New Voters Make The Granite State One To Watch In November

Media Contact: [Beth Potier](#)
603-862-1566
UNH Media Relations

[Amy Sterndale](#)
603-862-4650
Carsey Institute

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Editors and reporters: Kenneth Johnson is available for comment at Ken.johnson@unh.edu or 603-862-2205 (office); Andy Smith is available at Andrew.smith@unh.edu, 603-862-2226 (office) or 603-868-3309 (home); Dante Scala is available at dante.scala@unh.edu or 603-540-4018 (cell).

DURHAM, N.H. - A third of potential voters in New Hampshire this fall have only recently become eligible to vote in the state. Further, these potential new voters are more likely to identify with the Democratic Party and less likely to identify as Republicans than are established New Hampshire voters, contributing to the state's "purple" status. These findings, from the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire, are based on analysis by three experts — in demography, polling, and election registration data — of recently released demographic, polling and voter registration data.

"New Hampshire has one of the most mobile populations in the nation, resulting in significant turnover in the electorate," says co-author Kenneth Johnson, Carsey Institute senior demographer and professor of sociology at UNH, who wrote the report with UNH Survey Center Director Andy Smith and associate professor of political science Dante Scala.

Drawing on recent U.S. Census Bureau and Internal Revenue Service data, the report finds that between 2000 and 2008, 208,000 potential voters moved to New Hampshire — including many from the Boston area. These newcomers, combined with 113,000 young residents reaching their 18th birthdays in the past eight years, represent a significant new electoral force. In a state with only 991,000 potential voters, these 321,000 new voters could play a critical role in the upcoming election.

"These new voters are more likely to identify with the Democratic Party than established New Hampshire voters," adds Smith, who is also an associate professor of political science. "While our first-in-the-nation primary is long over, New Hampshire is still very much in the national spotlight as a traditionally red state becoming blue."

Both young voters (53 percent) and migrants (52 percent) are more likely to identify themselves as Democrats than the state's more established voters (43 percent), according to analysis of the UNH Survey Center's Granite State Polls.

While preferences of new potential voters have yet to be fully reflected in voter registration

data, in general, New Hampshire counties with greater migration gains experienced larger gains in Democratic registrations. Traditionally Republican counties such as Grafton, Carroll, and Belknap saw the most dramatic changes in partisanship; the share of registered Democrats in these counties grew at nearly twice the statewide Democratic growth rate.

"In Carroll and Belknap counties in particular, these rapid gains coincided with many new migrants, suggesting that voter turnover contributed to these Democratic gains," says Scala, who is also chair of the political science department at UNH. "These two traditional Yankee Republican counties also experienced the second and third largest declines, behind Coos, in Republican registrations."

To download a copy of the report, go to <http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/publications/IB-NHVoter08.pdf>.

The Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire conducts research and analysis on the challenges facing rural families and communities in New Hampshire, New England, and the nation. The Carsey Institute sponsors independent, interdisciplinary research that documents trends and conditions affecting families and communities, providing valuable information and analysis to policymakers, practitioners, the media, and the general public. Through this work, the Carsey Institute contributes to public dialogue on policies that encourage social mobility and sustain healthy, equitable communities. The Carsey Institute was established in May 2002 with a generous gift from UNH alumna and noted television producer Marcy Carsey. Visit us online at <http://carseyinstitute.unh.edu/>.

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