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**BATTLEGROUND STATE MOBILIZATION EFFORTS
PROPEL VOTER TURNOUT SLIGHTLY UPWARD
IN HISTORIC BUT DISTURBING ELECTION**

WASHINGTON, November 10 – Massive grass-roots voter mobilization efforts in the 16 so-called battleground states propelled national voter turnout up by a modest two percentage points to an estimated 51 percent of eligible voters in the second closest Presidential race in more than a century.

When all the ballots are finally counted (and, in the case of Florida, recounted), an estimated 105 million Americans will have voted for President in the 2000 general election.

Pending final and official figures, it is estimated that turnout will have increased in these battleground states by approximately 2.3 percentage points, while turnout will have declined by a third of a percentage point in the non-battleground states.

Turnout increased in every battleground state except New Mexico, which was one of six states to set new records for low voter turnout. (The final results in Oregon are not, at the time of this writing, sufficiently complete to ascertain whether its turnout went up or down.)

These were among the findings of a preliminary report on voter turnout and registration, based on final but unofficial returns (and in the case of some Western states and New York, incomplete) provided by the Associated Press and CNN and on final and official registration statistics from 35 states and the District of Columbia, by the Committee for the

Study of the American Electorate, a non-partisan, non-profit research organization based in Washington, D.C.

“This has been a good news and bad news election, with perhaps more bad news than good,” said Curtis Gans, CSAE’s director. “The good news is essentially two-fold – voter turnout went up and it went up because of the intensive grass-roots mobilization campaigns that were run in the battleground states by the political parties and various groups across the political spectrum. If that signals a return to an emphasis on grass-roots activities in political campaigns, it is something devoutly to be wished.

“On the other hand, we had an election which was the second closest since 1888, in which the drumbeat of polls prior to the election continuously described how tight the race was, in which more money was spent than at any time in history and in which control not only of the Presidency and both houses of Congress was at stake, and yet nearly half the eligible (See Note 2) nation stayed home. Which is to say that we continue to have a serious problem of citizen disengagement that was not reversed by this election.”

A POLITY WITHOUT MANDATE

What was striking about this election was not only the closeness of the Presidential race but also the equally close division of the electorate on every other level.

Each major party Presidential candidate received the votes of approximately 24 percent of the eligible electorate.

The election produced either a 50-50 or 51-49 partisan split in the U.S. Senate and a U.S. House divided by only one more vote than it had been prior to the election. The split of the eligible vote for the House of Representatives was approximately 22 percent for the GOP to 20 percent for the Democrats.

And this also marked the third consecutive election in which the President and the majority and minority parties of the House each received less than 25 percent of the eligible vote.

“Neither potential President will assume office with anything resembling a mandate,” Gans said. “Neither party in Congress has a mandate. And given the intense and continuing divisions within both parties – among “new,” traditional and “Blue Dog” Democrats and among social and fiscal conservatives and moderates within the Republican Party – it will take virtually superhuman leadership and forbearance in both the White House and in Congress to produce any constructive progress on public policy.

“Unfortunately, the more likely scenario is that there will be continuing gridlock on major public policy issues, intense partisanship and positioning for the 2002 mid-term election and further disaffection by the citizenry from the political process,” Gans said.

TURNOUT ANALYZED

When the final count in this election is complete, there are likely to be 36 states and the District of Columbia whose turnout rates increased since 1996 and 13 states whose turnout declined (with Oregon's vote still pending). But there were six states – Indiana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and South Dakota – which recorded record lows and only one state, South Carolina, which achieved a new high in turnout.

To put the modesty of this year's turnout uptick in perspective, there were only three states – South Carolina, Delaware and Florida – whose 2000 vote exceeded 1992, the only Presidential election since 1960 in which there was a significant increase in turnout.

While there was a modest increase in turnout in the Presidential race, there was evidence in the turnout statistics of only minimal positive feelings about the Presidential candidates. In fully seven states – Delaware, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Vermont and in Gov. George Bush's home state of Texas – more votes were cast for a gubernatorial or U.S. Senate race than were cast for President.

Minnesota led all states in turnout with 68.7 percent of the eligible vote, followed by Maine (66.7), Wisconsin (66.0), Vermont (63.5), New Hampshire (62.2), Montana (61.5), North Dakota (60.7) and Iowa (60.3), the only states to top the 60 percent mark. Arizona at 36.9 percent of eligibles, has the lowest turnout, followed by Hawaii (40.5), New Mexico (41.5), Texas (43.1), Georgia (43.3) and Nevada (43.8).

Wisconsin recorded the largest Presidential vote increase from 1996 at 8.6 percentage points, followed by Delaware (6.8), South Carolina (4.8), Vermont (4.5), Minnesota (4.5), Nevada (4.4), Virginia (4.3) and Pennsylvania (4.3). The largest decrease was recorded in Arizona at 8.5 percentage points, followed by Idaho (5.2), New Mexico (4.5) and Nebraska (3.1).

The highest Democratic turnout was recorded in the District of Columbia at 39.4 percent, followed by Rhode Island (33.6), Massachusetts (33.0), Minnesota (32.9), Maine (32.6), Vermont (32.2), Wisconsin (31.6), Connecticut (31.6) and Delaware (31.0). The lowest Democratic turnout was in Utah at 13.8 percent of the eligible electorate followed by Idaho (15.2), Texas (16.4), Arizona (16.8), Wyoming (16.9) and Arizona (17.5). The greatest Democratic increase in turnout was in Delaware at 5.4 percentage points, followed by Wisconsin (3.6), the District of Columbia (3.1), Nevada (2.9), Pennsylvania (2.5) and Maryland (2.5). The greatest decreases were Montana at 5.4, Louisiana (5.3), Wyoming (5.3), Idaho (4.6) and South Dakota (4.4).

The highest Republican turnout was recorded in Wyoming at 41.3 percent of the eligible vote, followed by North Dakota (36.8), Idaho (36.5), Montana (35.9), South Dakota (35.1), Utah (35.0), Nebraska (33.1) and Wisconsin (31.5). The lowest GOP turnout was recorded in the

District of Columbia at 4.1 percent of the eligible vote, followed by Hawaii (15.2), New York (16.1), Rhode Island (17.6) and Massachusetts (18.1). The largest increase in GOP turnout since 1996 was in Maine at 12.4 percentage points, followed by Louisiana (8.1), South Dakota (7.3), Missouri (6.7) and Wyoming (6.5). The largest decrease in GOP turnout was in Arizona, down 10.4 percentage points, followed by Massachusetts (10.0), Vermont (7.6), Oklahoma (7.3) and Arizona (5.5).

In only three states – Alaska at 7.0 percent, Vermont (5.3) and Montana (5.1) – did the total votes for all non-major party candidates exceed five percent of the eligible vote.

REGISTRATION AND PARTY FRAGILITY

Updated registration statistics (See note 5) from 34 states and the District of Columbia showed the same pattern as in CSAE's earlier report:

- Registration nationally was either flat or increased very slightly from the estimated registration level of 67.0 percent in 1996. Estimated total registration when all states have reported will be 138,000,000.

- Both Democratic and Republican registration will have declined (in the 19 states and the District of Columbia which have reported registration statistics), probably, when all figures are in, by about one percentage point in each party, with Democratic registration declining for the ninth consecutive Presidential election year to a level of 32.8. The GOP registration level will likely be 24.2.

- Registration for third parties or as independents rose for the tenth consecutive Presidential year to 17 percent of eligibles.

- Democratic registration has declined by more than 30 percent since the 1960's, Nationwide Republican registration has stayed relatively stable, balanced by an increase in the South and declines outside that region. And the number of people eschewing the major parties in their registration preferences has increased more than ten-fold.

“While some of the increase in independent registration can be attributed to the Motor Voter Law in increasing the registration rolls with people who are less tied to the political process,” Gans said, “it is clear that both major parties are losing the allegiance of a sizable portion of the citizenry and that threatens the cohesion of American politics.

“The Democrats have failed to find a thread of advocacy that unites its “New” Democrat wing with its traditional wing, and the Republicans are perceived as too far right of the American center. And both, in their conduct in the public policy debate and in the stalemate on important issues, are producing increasing voter disdain.

“If the major parties do not address these problems, the future may well produce either a viable third party challenge or a resumption of the trend of increasing disengagement from the political process,” Gans said.

TWO END NOTES

1. The time has come to end the television network practice of declaring winners on the basis of exit polls and sample precinct analyses. Those tools have their place in enhancing the analysis of elections. But their use in declaring winners produces both inaccuracies, as the nation witnessed on election night, and may affect the integrity of the political process. When rushes to judgement lead to inaccuracy, it is bad journalism. When early projections lead, as the overwhelming majority of studies show, to depressed voter turnout in places where the balloting has not been completed, it may affect the outcomes of races other than the ones being declared. The networks should return to reporting the news of the night – the unfolding picture of the American people speaking through their actual recorded vote tabulations. If they did that, they would never make mistakes and never affect the process.

2. We had a campaign which targeted only certain groups of people, resulting in higher turnout among those groups but lower turnout on those who were not targeted. The major candidates never deviated from scripts that left many citizens out of the debate and a whole range of issues – the cities, income inequality, housing, transportation and the content of education, among many other things – totally out of the dialogue. At some point, it is devoutly to be wished that we had candidates who had the presence to transcend their consultants and speak to the whole range of the nation’s concerns and to offer some broad, rather than narrow, vision of a better America.

NOTES AND SUMMARY CHARTS

1. Turnout, the percentage of citizens who cast ballots, is measured as a percentage of those who are eligible to vote, **NOT** as a percentage of those who are registered. Many election officials like to use registration as the standard for measuring turnout, but it is an inadequate and inconsistent standard. In the first place, using registration as a standard eliminates the non-voters who are not registered. Perhaps more importantly, this standard is subject to the vagaries of changes in election law and administration. When the nation enacts a change in registration, such as the motor voter law, registration may increase substantially and thus, when voting occurs, the rate of participation by this standard may plummet in excess of the real level of voting. When a state decides to be more zealous in the cleaning of its lists of those who die or move, registration rates may plummet and the percentage of those casting votes may artificially increase. Only by using voting age population as a denominator can one get a relatively accurate and consistent gauge of voting in the United States.

2. This said, there are also flaws in the Voting Age Population standard. The figures for Voting Age Population in common use are the Census Bureau's estimate of age eligible population in November, usually published in January of each election year. This is a flawed figure insofar as it includes aliens, convicted felons and people deemed incompetent in mental institutions who cannot vote and does not include citizens residing abroad, those uncounted due to the Census undercount and newly naturalized citizens who can. According to various sources, there are approximately 14.8 million aliens, about 4 millions felons and ex-felons, the vast majority of whom cannot vote and about 600,000 people in mental institutions deemed incompetent. In the best of all possible worlds, the Voting Age Population estimate would be reduced by 19.4 million. But then, it should be increased by the estimated 3 million age-eligible Americans living outside the United States, by an estimated 2 million citizens who have not been enumerated because of the Census undercount and by the approximately 600,000 aliens who are naturalized every year. Even with these flaws, this remains the only widely used consistent standard for gauging turnout and has been used by the Committee. A better standard, although not in common use, has been developed by Dr. Walter Dean Burnham of the University of Texas, which by using the decennial Census and interpolating for the years in between, eliminates aliens – the largest cause of distortion in the Census' Voting Age Population figures – in both national and individual states. At some point in the future, the Committee hopes to be able to present both the VAP standard and Burnham's in its report. Nationally Burnham's denominators would produce a turnout about three percentage points higher than using the VAP standard, but the distortion is greater in states such as California and Texas with high alien populations. The trend lines over time are similar with a slightly lower (about one percentage point) decline.

3. In estimating how many people may or may not vote (numerically) this year, CSAE is using an adjusted Voting Age Population of 190,000,000. But for comparison purposes with figures used for other years and in most media, CSAE is using the unadjusted Census Bureau

estimates November Voting Age Population.

4. Figures for votes cast for non-Presidential primaries this year and in previous years are final, official and certified by the agency in each state responsible for compiling such statistics. In those states with more than one primary, the race (for governor or U.S. Senate) in which the highest number of ballots were cast overall is used for comparisons.

5. Registration figures in this report are final and official (except for Arkansas which is final and unofficial) and provided by the chief election officer of each state and the District of Columbia and are only for those states which have certified their registration as of the date of this report. These figures are deeply flawed and while charts for these figures are provided in the white pages of this report for the record, they are not accurate estimates of the actual registration level. (For instance, it can be noted that Alaska's official registration is 110 percent of Voting Age Population.) The lists from which these numbers are derived contain the names of citizens who have either died or moved but whose names have not been removed from the registration lists. The degree of inflation of these lists depends in each state on the frequency, thoroughness and proximity to the election that the lists have been cleaned of the names of those who should not be on them and that process varies widely from state to state. It used to be that it would be possible to estimate the degree of national inflation of these lists and place it at approximately 10 percent. That is no longer possible thanks to the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1995 (the so-called Motor Voter Law) which specifically prohibits the removal of anyone from a list until two Federal Elections have passed. In addition, there is a regulatory prohibition on using non-voting as a trigger for ascertaining whether a registered citizen still resides in any given jurisdiction. This has resulted in millions of names being kept on voting lists although they are not eligible to vote in a particular jurisdiction and offers a potential for future fraud by people voting in the names of those who have either died or moved. States are, however, required to create an inactive list of those voters who would have been purged from the list (as having died or moved) were such purging not prohibited until the passage of two Federal elections. Two Federal elections have happened since the NVRA was enacted in 1995, so those who were placed on the inactive list in 1996 and who have not reinstated their voting credentials can be removed this year, which still leaves the lists three years and several million voters behind the curve.

CSAE's estimate of national registration is based on the official registration figures, minus the number of citizens on the inactive lists, and then reduced by 10 percent. Below is a chart comparing adjusted registration (official registration minus inactive lists) for the states that have so far reported their inactive lists:

STATE	2000 Pct. Reg	1998 Pct. Reg.	1996 Pct. Reg	1994 Pct. Reg
Colorado	72.1	70.9	66.8	74.9
Georgia	65.4	68.9	70.3	58.2
Louisiana	78.4	79.7	79.2	69.4
Missouri	79.0	80.2	N/A	75.7
South Dakota	86.7	84.2	86.5	88.8
Texas	69.1	67.0	70.2	66.6
Virginia	71.6	67.2	62.6	60.4

(Note: All figures are based on active registrants as a percentage of VAP [total minus inactives] except for 1994, before the motor voter act was in place but after states had conducted their most recent list cleaning. Missouri did not have an inactive list in 1996.)

6. For an extended account of the lack of correlation between turnout and partisan result, see Jack Nagel and John McNulty, "Partisan Effects of Voter Turnout in Senatorial and Gubernatorial Elections," *American Political Science Review*, December 1996; and Jack Nagel and John McNulty, "Partisan Effects of Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections," *American Politics Quarterly*, July 2000.

7. The Committee wishes to express its gratitude to those election officers who provided the raw 2000 data for this report and their goodwill despite the Committee's constant hounding.

8. The Committee also expresses its gratitude to the Federal Election Committee Clearinghouse whose reports on the implementation of the NVRA (the Motor Voter Law) make possible relatively accurate year-to-year comparisons of actual registration.

9. This analysis has been made possible by a custom computer program created by Gary Corbin and Laura Lee Guimond, revised to make it Y2K compliant by Alan Decher.

10. Much of the primary data compilation and spread sheet work for this particular report was compiled by Sean Greene, committee research associate.

11. Analysis has been provided by Curtis Gans, CSAE's director, who is responsible for all errors which may flow from that analysis.

SUMMARY CHARTS

1. Estimated Registration Rate: Estimated national rate of registration, projected from the 27 states and the District of Columbia which have reported registration so far, with adjustments made for reducing registration by the percentage on inactive lists and ten percent for inflation based on those who have either died or moved but have remained on the registration lists:

YEAR	ESTIMATED REGISTRATION	PCT. OF VAP
2000	137,920,000	67.0
1996	132,000,000	67.0
1992	123,649,000	65.4
1988	116,820,000	64.0
1984	114,750,000	65.8
1980	103,500,000	62.9
1976	95,850,000	63.0
1972	92,700,000	65.7
1968	81,000,000	67.3
1964	78,300,000	69.1
1960	74,250,000	67.9

2. Estimated Partisan Registration Trend: The estimated registration percentages of VAP by major party and other (independents and other parties). Three notes: 1. Only 28 states and the District of Columbia have partisan registration and only 13 states and the District of Columbia have reported as of the date of this report. 2. It should also be noted that these numbers do not add up to 100 percent. The balance are not registered. 3. These percentages do not add up to the adjusted registration and are based on the gross registration numbers.

YEAR	DEMOCRATIC	REPUBLICAN	OTHER
2000	32.8	24.5	16.5
1996	33.8	25.2	15.0
1992	34.2	23.5	12.0
1988	35.0	23.7	9.8
1984	37.8	22.3	9.6
1980	38.3	21.1	7.9
1976	40.4	20.8	6.6
1972	43.5	23.9	4.5
1968	45.0	25.5	3.1
1964	48.2	24.1	1.6
1960	46.6	26.7	1.5

3. Non-Presidential Primary Turnout Comparison: Comparison of turnout in 2000 statewide non-Presidential primaries and previous years as percentage of VAP:

YEAR	TOTAL	DEMOCRATIC	REPUBLICAN
2000	17.3	8.5	8.6
1996	15.5	7.7	7.7
1992	22.8	12.5	9.9
1988	20.4	13.0	7.2
1984	20.3	14.4	6.4

1980	27.7	14.9	11.0
1976	26.9	15.7	9.6
1972	26.8	18.4	7.4
1968	32.7	17.4	11.3
1964	33.8	22.0	12.2
1960	30.5	20.1	11.0