



High schoolers pick Kerry in landslide

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October 28, 2004

A large majority of the 3,400 Marin high school students who participated in a mock election endorsed Sen. John Kerry over President Bush, according to officials who announced the results yesterday. The students also came down in favor of Rep. Lynn Woolsey, D-Petaluma, and Assemblyman Joe Nation, D-San Rafael, over their Republican opponents.

The students were among 12,000 in Marin and San Francisco counties who participated in YouthVOTE 2004, which invited students to cast their votes for candidates and initiatives in local and national elections scheduled Tuesday.

"I hope it inspires young people to be involved in the democratic process overall, and for adults to understand that young people have a good grasp of the issues and that they are saying, follow our lead when you go to the ballot box," said Maureen Sedonaen, president and chief executive of the Youth Leadership Institute, a Marin- and San Francisco-based organization aimed at encouraging youth involvement in the community. The institute runs the Marin County Youth Commission, a 22-member board that helped run the event.

Other groups that helped organize the YouthVOTE included the San Francisco Unified School District's Student Advisory Council and the San Francisco Youth Commission.

Results of the mock election included: 73 percent favored Kerry; 71 percent favored U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif.; 64 percent favored Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco; 76 percent favored Woolsey; 75 percent favored Nation; 68 percent favored Proposition 66, which would amend the "three strikes" law; 72 percent favored the \$249.5 million bond measure to renovate College of Marin; 75 percent favored the half-cent sales tax to reduce traffic congestion; and 57 percent favored Measure B, which would prohibit the growing of genetically modified organisms, except for medical and treatment purposes.

"It is a great opportunity for youth to get their voices heard," said Katie Bartunek, 16, a senior at San Domenico School in San Anselmo. "I hope that other young people (who are over 18) that can vote are inspired to vote by YouthVOTE and that maybe parents will be influenced by YouthVOTE."

Bartunek said she believed the majority of students who participated endorsed Kerry because "his stance on education and the environment are views that are on the youth level more than Bush."

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