

18-year-olds take lead among new voters



1) The Yomiuri Shimbun voter turnout in the constituency section of Sunday's House of Councillors election was 51.17 percent among 18-year-olds and 39.66 percent among 19-year-olds, according to a survey released Monday by the Internal Affairs and Communications Ministry.

2) The combined voting rate for both age groups was 45.45 percent.

3) The figures reveal a gap between 18-year-olds, who have had opportunities to participate in high school education programs aimed at helping them understand the meaning of sovereignty and the importance of exercising the right to vote, and 19-year-olds, who are mainly university students or workers.

4) According to the ministry's survey, turnout among those in their 20s has been in the range of 20 percent to less than 40 percent since 1992. Turnout among 18- and 19-year-olds was thus higher than the recent voting levels of people in their 20s.

Administrative factors

5) The survey extracted polling data from four polling districts in each of 47 prefectures to calculate the turnout of voters aged 18 and 19. The total number of votes extracted was 11,480, comprising 0.01 percent of all eligible voters.

6) One likely reason for the discrepancy in voter participation between the two ages is that some 19-year-old voters fail to transfer their residency cards to new municipalities when they move away from home to attend university or for other purposes, and are therefore unable to vote.

7) A separate survey by the Yomiuri Shimbun found that overall turnout in the constituency section of the upper house election was 54.70 percent. Though 2.09 percentage points higher than that of the previous House of Councillors election in 2013, it was still the fourth-lowest turnout ever for an upper house election.

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☆Ice breaker for active discussion

1. What can you say about the decision to lower voting age from 20 to 18?
2. If you were 18 or 19 years old, would you exercise your right to vote? Why or why not?
3. In your opinion, why do you think the voter turnout was higher among 18 year-olds than 19-year olds?
4. How can younger people be encouraged to be more interested and to participate in elections?
5. Make sentences using the following words: reveal, sovereignty, right to vote, factor, extract and discrepancy.

voter turnout 投票率
constituency 選挙区
House of Councillor 参議院 = upper house(7)

the Internal Affairs and Communications Ministry 総務省

reveal 明らかにする
sovereignty 主権
right to vote 選挙権

administrative 管理の、行政の

factor 要因

extract 抜く、抽出する

comprise 構成する

eligible voters 有権者

discrepancy 不一致、食い違い transfer 移す

residency card 住民表

municipality 地方自治体

upper house 参議院 =

House of Councillors (1)

7月10日の参院選は、選挙権年齢を18才以上に引き下げた改正公職選挙法施行後、初の国政選挙となった。新たに有権者となった18、19歳は全国で約240万人、有権者全体の2パーセントほどだ。前回選挙権が拡大されたのは終戦後の1945年。25歳以上の男子から、20歳以上の男女に変更になった。