



**ROCK  
THE  
VOTE**

2012 | [www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com) | [@rockthevote](https://twitter.com/rockthevote) | 202.719.9910



## bring it, ballot box.

Rock the Vote's mission is to engage and build political power for young people in our country.

Founded twenty-one years ago at the intersection of popular culture and politics, Rock the Vote has registered more than five million young people to vote and has become a trusted source of information for young people about registering to vote and casting a ballot. We use music, popular culture, new technologies and grassroots organizing to motivate and mobilize young people in our country to participate in every election, with the goal of seizing the power of the youth vote to create political and social change.

The Millennial Generation is diverse and huge in number, making up nearly 1/4 of the entire electorate in 2012. This is both the challenge and the opportunity. Rock the Vote is dedicated to building the political power of young people by engaging them in the electoral process, urging politicians to pay attention to issues that matter to young voters, and protecting their fundamental right to vote. Our goal is to reinvigorate our country's democracy and redefine citizenship for a generation in 2012 and beyond.



## 2012 programs

### **Elections:**

- Our 2012-election program will aim to register 1.5 million individuals to vote and ensure that they have the information they need to cast a ballot on November 6, 2012.
- We'll work with candidates and campaigns to educate them on the best ways to engage and involve young voters in the process and encourage them to implement best practices for young voter mobilization in 2012.

### **Democracy Class:**

- Democracy Class is a one-class-period program that uses video, a classroom discussion and a mock election to teach young people the skills they need to navigate the elections process and engage as active citizens.
- The program is a collaboration of educators, artists, elected officials and students and is designed to reinvigorate our country's democracy by reaching and exciting potential voters as they turn 18.
- On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012 we celebrated the second annual Democracy Day, asking educators across the country to bring Democracy Class into their classrooms through the end of the school year and teach their students about the power of participation.

### **Rock the Vote, Don't Block the Vote:**

- In more than 30 states in America, the failure of governments to modernize the voter registration system is being taken out on the voters, disproportionately impacting young people.
- We will continue to push for a modernized, streamlined voter registration process that actively serves young voters in a technological age and we will push back on laws that try to make it more difficult for young people to register and cast a ballot.
- We will educate young people affected by these new voter laws by educating them about the type of identification they will need to show at the polls, the materials they need to obtain this proper identification if necessary, and changes to Same Day Registration and Early Voting dates.

### **Rock the Vote Southwest (RTVSW):**

- RTVSW aims to increase the electoral participation of young adults ages 18-29 in Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico with a special emphasis on Latinos and Native Americans.
- Efforts will include the leveraging of radio DJs to reach their stations' young audiences as well as online and on-the-ground efforts.



## elections & on the ground activation

### **Roadtrip 2012:**

- Rock the Vote's Roadtrip includes a state-of-the-art mobile bus and concert tour through approximately 16 states that utilizes on-the-ground activation and celebrity engagement to register voters, educate them on the issues at stake and draw media attention to Rock the Vote's efforts to register, engage and build political power for young people in the 2012 elections.
- Previous Roadtrip celebrity performances and meet-and-greets have included Ben Harper, the Beastie Boys, TV on the Radio, Ben Stiller, Norah Jones, Bow Wow, and Nelly.

### **Festivals:**

- Rock the Vote is an ever-present name at popular music festivals such as Lollapalooza, Austin City Limits, and South by Southwest. Our activations include participation in the festivals' high-end gifting suites, interviewing celebrities about their views on the importance of voting and youth political engagement, and on site voter registration reaching thousands of young people directly.

### **Rock the Vote Nights:**

- Rock the Vote Nights is a monthly concert series that raises awareness for young people to become involved in the 2012 elections, while highlighting the hottest bands and DJ performances.
- The series has featured sold-out shows with major artists such as the Beastie Boys, Sheryl Crow, Ke\$ha, Santigold, Wale, Fall Out Boy, NERD, Tenacious D, Jack Johnson, Passion Pit, OK GO, Jason Mraz, Maroon 5, and more.

### **Political Nominating Conventions:**

- Rock the Vote's past events around the Democratic and Republican National Conventions (DNC and RNC) have included highly visible parties and concerts with performances by Jakob Dylan, Fall Out Boy, NERD, and Nick Cannon.
- During the 2012 conventions, Rock the Vote will host highly-visible parties at the RNC in Tampa, FL and the DNC in Charlotte, NC.



## democracy class

11,500 young people turn 18 every day.

Rock the Vote's Democracy Class program is designed to educate and excite high school students about voting, elections and governance. This nonpartisan lesson plan uses music, pop culture, video, classroom discussion and a mock election to teach young people the skills they need to navigate the elections process and engage as active citizens.

Research has shown that civic education and early participation in elections creates a habit of ongoing engagement. That's why Democracy Class targets high school students across the country, bringing them into the political process and encouraging their involvement at an early age.

Democracy Class is supported by a trusted advisory board of teachers, research experts and non-profit leaders in the education field, including The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, the Center for Civic Education, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), among many others.

Innovations and new program materials are being designed for students and teachers to use for Democracy Class. We're working hard to ensure that every minute of the program educates students about the 2012 presidential election and beyond.

DemocracyClass.com offers interviews with Alicia Keys, NBA All-Star Baron Davis, singer Michael Franti, Big Boi, John Legend, Nick Cannon, Good Charlotte and Cali Swag District, and others; in the interviews, these youth popular artists discuss the issues that concern them most. The site also has information on Rock the Vote volunteer opportunities and free music from more than 20 different bands.

Over the past 30 years, civic education has been systematically cut from public schools and as a result, opportunities to learn about active citizenship are rare. As programs to register newly eligible high school students are not widespread, Democracy Class is the next frontier in youth civic engagement. Seeing as almost 11,500 young people turn 18 every day, Democracy Class is an important part of Rock the Vote's outreach plan in 2012 and beyond



## democracy day

A year ago on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, Rock the Vote announced its first-ever Democracy Day, a national effort to promote civic education in high schools and celebrate young people winning the right to vote through the passage of the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Today, over two thousand schools – in all 50 states – have taught Democracy Class and leaders across the country have committed to improving civic engagement in our nation’s high schools.

This year, Rock the Vote kicked off the 2nd Annual Democracy Day at the National Constitution Center (NCC) where we hosted a Democracy Class lesson for students of Constitution High School followed by short program launching 100 Days of Learning throughout the end of the school year. More than 200 students from Philadelphia high schools participated in the Rock the Vote pep rally led by Power 99 FM’s Dr. O, Rock the Vote President Heather Smith, National Constitution Center President and CEO David Eisner and recording artist and Philadelphia native, Nikki Jean. Followed by an impressive slew of speeches from Pennsylvania elected officials, including Secretary of State Carol Aichele, former Governor Ed Rendell, and Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter who spoke to the students via a video message.

3,000 miles away, Rock the Vote teamed up with Youth Policy Institute (YPI) to celebrate Democracy Day with 300 students at Los Angeles’ Edward Roybal High School. At Roybal, the students participated in Democracy Classes during the day, and then came together for a special Democracy Day “political fair,” circulating through various booths for voter registration, pledge to vote, specific issue conversations, citizenship rights, and local voting laws, as Celebrity High DJ James Andre Jefferson Jr. played their favorite songs. Students then heard from a number of impressive speakers, including Secretary of State Debra Bowen, Los Angeles Unified School District Board’s President Monica Garcia, LA County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Dean Logan, YPI President Dixon Slingerland and Rock the Vote’s Amanda Brown. Coverage of the launch included The New York Times, The Nation, and CBS Philly just to name a few.

As part of the celebration this year, an impressive bipartisan group of Mayors and Secretaries of States have pledged to integrate civic education into their state’s school systems with programs like Democracy Class. South Dakota Secretary of State Jason Gant took the pledge a step further by visiting two schools to talk to students about the importance of civic participation. He also worked with Governor Dennis Daugaard to get an Executive Proclamation issued, proclaiming March 23<sup>rd</sup> as Democracy Day in South Dakota.

Since its inception, numerous elected officials, partner organizations, volunteers and celebrities have joined Rock the Vote to celebrate Democracy Class with students and educators. Those include: Representative Jay Inslee, Secretary of State Jon



Husted, Senator Jason Carter, Youth Policy Institute, National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, National Council of Social Studies, YouthBuild, The School District of Philadelphia, *Glee*'s Darren Criss, Hip-hop duo the New Boyz, recording artist Jermaine Dupri, rappers David Banner and Asher Roth, platinum-selling artist Jason Derulo, *Vampire Diaries* star and singer Kat Graham, NFL players Shawne Merriman and Bernard Berrian, and Major League Soccer pro Jimmy Conrad.



## rock the vote, don't block the vote

In too many states in America, the failure of governments to modernize the voter registration system is being taken out on the voters and disproportionately impacting young people. Not only are states refusing to modernize election systems, they're moving in the opposite direction of progress and making it harder to vote. These system failures are the result of both concerted acts of suppression and the inability or unwillingness to leverage new technologies to update an antiquated, paper-based process.

Rock the Vote is organizing young people around the country with our "Don't Block the Vote" campaign, meant to propel our registration system into the 21st century while countering efforts to take it back to the 19th century. Some people just don't want voters to turn out, while others like Rock the Vote want to make it easier for more people to participate. Our Rock the Vote Don't Block the Vote website features an interactive map that highlights which states are passing what laws.

States like Texas, Kansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania have already passed legislation that makes it harder for young people to register and vote. Specifically, these states have limited Early Voting and Same Day Registration and have made it harder to actually cast a ballot through restrictive photo ID laws. Through efforts from groups like Rock The Vote, public outcry has ensured vetoes of similar voter suppression legislation in Missouri, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and North Carolina. Even without these new hurdles to civic participation, few Secretary of State web pages are equipped with basic information or digital tools that would simplify important logistical details about the voting process. In an era when we could register young people on their smart phones using QR codes, we're still asking individuals to print and snail mail forms at the post office? #FAIL

In 2011, Rock the Vote created a Voting System Scorecard that evaluates state laws and practices that increase access and foster participation. According to the Voting System Scorecard, the average national overall score for voting accessibility is only 41% (8.6 out of 21 possible points) with Washington ranking highest at 68% and South Carolina and Virginia at the bottom with 18%. Only 15 states scored above 50%.

This year we'll continue our efforts to educate young people affected by these restrictive voting laws. We want to make sure that these young people are not disenfranchised simply because they are uninformed. Thus, we will educate young people on the types of identification required to cast a ballot, the materials needed to obtain these identifications, modified voting dates that pertain to the cancellation of Same Day Registration and the push back



## rock the vote southwest

Rock the Vote Southwest (RTVSW), a program of Rock the Vote's 2012 campaign, aims to increase the electoral participation of young adults ages 18-29 in Southwestern states, with a special emphasis on Latinos and Native Americans. In a coordinated effort using radio DJs, community partners, educators, street-team volunteers, artists, electronic media, RTV online resources and local media in the states of Arizona, Colorado, Nevada and New Mexico, RTVSW will register young people and ensure that they have the information they need to cast a ballot on November 6, 2012.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Latino and Native American populations account for more than 50% of the population growth in the last ten years. They are disproportionately young, unregistered and located in the Southwest. And they have the power to dramatically shape the social, economic and political landscape of our country – but only if they are equally represented in our democracy. RTVSW will focus on the nexus of these audiences, registering them to vote and bringing them into the political process in 2012 and beyond.

RTVSW's efforts will include the leveraging of Radio DJs to reach their station's young audiences. The program will utilize online and on-the-ground efforts such as Rock the Vote's Democracy Class. Our field staff will also coordinate with partner voter-registration organizations and Rock the Vote volunteers at concerts, high schools, and other youth populated places.

According to the Pew Internet and Life Project, 79% of Hispanics are online and 79% of Native Americans with Internet service have high-speed access. The U.S. Latino youth demographic also significantly uses mobile technology more than their non-Latino counterparts. According to the ComScore Media Metrics, 71% of Latinos consume content on their cell phones compared with 48% of the general population. Similarly, 73.5% of Native Americans have cell phones and regularly send and receive text messages. Taking these statistics into account, Rock the Vote will use online and mobile technologies to reach, educate, register and engage young Latinos and Native Americans in the 2012 elections.



## team Rock The Vote

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### **Heather Smith**

#### *President*

Under Smith's leadership during the past two election cycles, Rock the Vote built new tools and refined best practices for the continued engagement of young voters, setting the highest voter registration records in both midterm and presidential elections in the organization's 21-year history. In 2010, Smith led Rock the Vote in its largest midterm election effort that generated more than 300,000 voter registration applications, engaged thousands of volunteers, and increased youth turnout in targeted precincts. This work built on the successful efforts of 2008, when Rock the Vote registered a record-shattering 2.25 million people.

Prior to Rock the Vote, Smith founded and directed Young Voter Strategies, a nonpartisan project in partnership with The Graduate School of Political Management at The George Washington University with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts. Young Voter Strategies provided the general public, political parties, candidates, consultants and non-profits with data and research on the youth vote as well as best practices to effectively mobilize young people.

In 2004, Smith served as national field director for the Student PIRG's New Voters Project, the largest nonpartisan grassroots effort ever undertaken to register and mobilize young voters. Under Smith's direction, the New Voters Project registered nearly 600,000 voters and conducted an intensive, multi-faceted get-out-the-vote effort to bring these newly registered voters to the polls on Election Day. Youth turnout was 11 percentage points higher than in 2000.

Prior to her work at the New Voters Project, Smith was an organizing director for Green Corps' Field School for Environmental Organizing in Boston.

Smith has served as a youth vote expert appearing on programs such as MSNBC, CBS 'Washington Unplugged,' Fox News, and CNN, in addition to writing for and being quoted in publications such as *Rolling Stone*, *The Huffington Post*, *National Journal*, *The Hill*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Nation*, *The Washington Post*, *POLITICO*, *The Atlantic*, and more.

Smith received a B.A. with honors in Economics and Public Policy from Duke University. In 2006, Smith was named one of Campaign & Elections magazine's Rising Stars for her work with young voters. She was also named one of Esquire Magazine's Best and Brightest of 2007.



## **Chrissy Faessen**

### *VP, Communications & Marketing*

With over 15 years of experience in advertising, marketing and communications, Chrissy Faessen joined Rock the Vote's team in 2008 as the Vice President of Communications and Marketing. In her capacity as Vice President she is responsible for creating and executing effective grassroots, broadcast, digital and mobile strategies to accomplish the ambitious goals of this dynamic organization.

Faessen is also responsible for executing a range of events from star-studded concerts at the political nominating conventions to summer festivals, bus tours, and inaugural celebrations. One of the major projects Faessen undertook at Rock the Vote was spearheading the organization's first high school civics program, Democracy Class. The program, supported by an advisory board of innovative professionals from the education, media and music communities, is designed to educate and excite high school students about voting, elections and governance. Overall Faessen helps Rock the Vote use music, popular culture and new technology to engage and mobilize millions of young people to participate in the political process.

Prior to joining the Rock the Vote team, Faessen served as Business Director at DDB Issues and Advocacy, a progressive issues advertising practice, part of DDB Worldwide. In her capacity as Business Director at DDB, she waged advocacy, public policy, and advertising strategies including placing stories in the top US media outlets. Faessen worked with clients such as the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Save the Children, PATH, Reproductive Health Technology Project, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies, and HopeLab. Additionally, as part of various campaign spotlight stories, she has been quoted in the PR Week and numerous other trade publications.

While Faessen's work product speaks for itself it has also received awards from the Public Relations Society of America, International Association of Business Communicators, and The Webbys.