

# ROCK THE VOTE

THE MIDTERM: 11.2.2010



**VOTE FEARLESSLY THIS FALL.**

[www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com)

@rockthevote

# DID YOU KNOW? IT'S ROCK THE VOTE'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY.

WE INTEND TO CELEBRATE BY REGISTERING 200,000  
YOUNG PEOPLE IN AN UNPRECEDENTED MIDTERM  
ELECTION OUTREACH EFFORT.

Yep, it's hard to believe that it's been so long since Madonna first draped herself in an American Flag to tell the nation's youth that "Censorship is Un-American." Yet it's been two decades since Rock the Vote's first-ever campaign and this year's midterm election marks our 20th Anniversary. To continue our storied tradition of provoking young people to the ballot box we will be deploying the **most aggressive midterm election strategy in history**.

Despite what you may know historically about midterm elections, in which participation drops off by an average of 15 percentage points in all age cohorts, we believe that the ever-evolving digital civic engagement habits of young people and the desire to do something about the pressing issues impacting their lives will combine for surprising participation this fall.

Like everyone else in the country, young Americans won't turn out to the polls unless someone reaches out to them first. In 2010, that's where Rock the Vote will step in. We will convert their interest and passion for politics into voter turnout using the sophisticated registration tactics we've developed throughout our 20-year history.

For this year's midterm elections, Rock the Vote has designed programs that ensure more young Americans have the opportunity and support they need to register, get educated, vote and ultimately have their say in the direction of our country:

## **Voter registration, education and turnout**

- RTV has surpassed its original goal of registering 200,000 young people in 2010 and has logged over 280,000 registration downloads. This number more than quintuples our 2006 registration levels and represents the largest existing midterm registration effort to date.
- RTV has upgraded our powerful and simple **Online Voter Registration Tool** that dominated the 2008 election registration efforts with the input of top developers (Open Source Digital Voting Foundation, Pivotal Labs, and Open Source Labs!) and elections officials.
- RTV launched an **Online Action Platform** that allows anyone in the country to sponsor an event with Rock the Vote and invite community members to join
- RTV hosts an **Online Election Center** that provides the most accurate and comprehensive voting information available to youth.
- RTV has targeted five states (FL, OH, PA, NC and CO) through **on-the-ground**

**efforts** led by State Coordinators who have register young people at local events and concerts and are now running peer-to-peer turnout efforts statewide.

- RTV launched its celebrity **Ad Campaign**, developed with the help of Jesse Dylan and FreeForm media, to encourage civic engagement among youth through PSAs and viral videos that have aired everywhere from Hulu to CBS to YouTube.
- And through door-to-door knocking (in costume on Halloween!), phone banking, text messaging, and more we will ensure that young voter turnout in our five targeted states exceeds 2006 levels!

### **High school civics education**

- RTV developed an engaging curriculum for its high school civics education program, **Democracy Class**, which brings the history and importance of voting as well as voter registration to high schools across America. By providing opportunities to learn about politics and government to predominantly low-income high schools, RTV State Coordinators and volunteers will teach the curriculum in local school classrooms in our five target states and make it available online to teachers everywhere this fall

### **Polling, research, evaluation and outreach**

- RTV will engage in **ongoing research** and disseminate our **best practices and findings** in order to make outreach to young voters more widespread and effective.
- This year RTV is doing significant testing around best practices using mobile technology as well as how to reach young Hispanic voters.
- In addition, its 2010 BattleGround Poll will be released in early September.

In 2010, we will galvanize Rockers of all ages to embrace the youthful idealism that led them to participate in our work over the last two decades. Some may say this is unlikely, but armed with the most effective online voter registration tool available, the work of innovative artists, journalists, bloggers, candidates and the relentless spirit of the Millennial Generation, let's just say: You heard it here first.

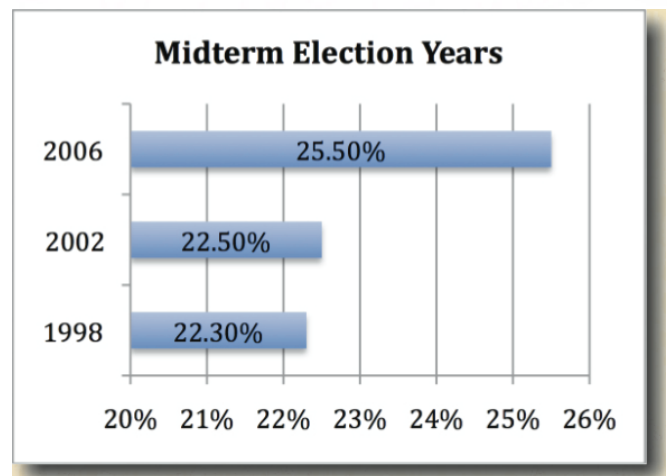
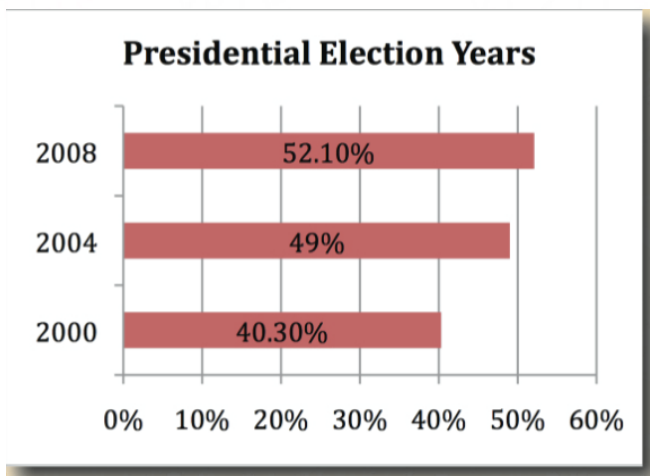
# YOUTH VOTE STATS

## BEGINNING WITH THE 2004 ELECTION

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BOOSTED THEIR PRESENCE AT THE BALLOT BOXES IN BOTH MIDTERM AND GENERAL ELECTIONS.

A new generation of young voters has arrived! The momentum has been building since 2004, and this generation hopes to continue their successes. Just like the increases we saw in participation during Presidential election years, the number of young people who turned out for midterm elections is on the rise. The Millennial Generation views 2010 as a challenge to push this exciting trend, and Rock the Vote is doing everything we can to help by executing the most aggressive midterm election campaign in our organization's 20-year history.

### Voter Turnout for 18 – 29 Years-Olds



Information from CIRCLE, based upon Census Current Population Survey

### Young people are a large, diverse and powerful voting bloc...

- Millennials outnumber all previous generations (NDN) as one in five American adults are under the age of 30.
- Nearly 45 million Millennials are eligible to vote (US Census).
- Nearly 13,000 Americans turn 18 and become eligible to vote every day (US Census).
- By 2012, Millennials will represent 24 percent of the voting age population, and 36 percent by 2020 (NDN).
- Millennials are the most diverse generation in history, with 39% coming from ethnic and racial minorities (Pew).

### **They are interested in politics...**

- A majority agree that political involvement has tangible results (IOP).
- And believe (42%) politics is relevant to their lives (IOP).
- Millennials remain optimistic despite the hard times; an overwhelming majority (83%) still believes their generation has the power to change our country. (RTV Poll 2010)
- But they are frustrated at the pace of change in Washington, with 59% reporting they feel more cynical about politics than they did two years ago. (RTV Poll 2010)
- They also don't like the appearance of partisanship with 46% agreeing that politics has become too partisan (IOP) and a plurality (36%) of young people reporting that they are indifferent in regards to which party controls Congress. (RTV Poll 2010)
- Recent studies show that the top issue of concern for young people is the economy and unemployment (93%).

### **And they are voting...**

- For the past seven election cycles, the national turnout rate in midterm elections average 15 percentage points lower than the preceding Presidential election for **ALL** voters and **ALL** age groups ("US Census & The Youth Vote in 2008").
- However young voter turnout has been on the rise for the past three major election cycles.
- In the **2004** Presidential election, youth voter turnout increased nine percentage points for 18 to 29 year-olds - a turnout increase far higher than any other age group (CIRCLE).
- In the last midterm election in **2006**, young voter turnout increased by 2 million over 2002 levels - a turnout increase 4 times higher than that of the overall voting population (US census).
- In **2008**, 84% of registered voters age 18 to 29 cast a ballot. These young voters had their highest turnout since 1972, when 18 year-olds were first given the right to vote. In fact, as turnout of this age group increased, the turnout for the overall population went down.

### **Sources:**

- US Census = United States Census Bureau
- CIRCLE = The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement
- IOP = Harvard Institute of Politics Survey. Spring 2010.
- NDN = 21 Century America Project. "National Poll Summary." March 2010.
- Pew = Pew Research Center. "Millennials: A portrait of a Generation." February 2010.
- "US Census & The Youth Vote in 2008." August 17, 2009. Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement.

\*Rock the Vote has many resources to track these constantly changing trends. Please visit [www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com) to find the most recent statistics from our research.

# TEAM RTV

## MEET THE FEARLESS LEADERS

BEHIND THIS FALL'S MIDTERM ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

**FOR INTERVIEW REQUESTS, CONTACT MAEGAN@ROCKTHEVOTE.COM.**

### **Heather Smith**

#### *President*

In 2008, Heather Smith led RTV to achieve its highest voter registration numbers in the organization's 20-year history. During the historic election season, RTV ran the largest non-partisan youth voter registration campaign in history that saw nearly 22.5 million young people cast a ballot. Heather appeared on NBC News, the Today Show, FOX News, CNN, NPR, BBC and other major news outlets in the US and around the world.

Prior to taking over RTV, Heather 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 public, parties, candidates, consultants and nonprofits with data and research on the youth vote as well as best practices to effectively mobilize young people. In 2006, Heather and Young Voter Strategies coordinated the nation's largest non-partisan project to register young voters in a midterm election using innovative and replicable methods of voter outreach. The project registered over 540,000 youth ages 18-30 and played a large role in the young voter turnout increase in 2006.

In 2004 Heather served as national field director for the Student PIRGs New Voters Project, the largest nonpartisan *grassroots* effort ever undertaken at that time to register and mobilize young voters. Across the country, 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, Heather was an organizing director for Green Corps' Field School for Environmental Organizing in Boston. She received a B.A. with honors in economics and public policy from Duke University. In 2006, Heather was named one of Campaign & Elections magazine's Rising Stars for her work with young voters. She has also been named one of Esquire Magazine's Best and Brightest of 2007.

## **Thomas Bates**

### *VP, Civic Engagement*

Thomas Bates oversees Rock the Vote's civic engagement programs—elections, advocacy and high school civics—developing ways to foster continued engagement for young people year-round.

Prior to RTV, Thomas was the co-founder and executive director of Democrats Work, a national organization that connects grassroots Democrats with community service projects. Before starting Democrats Work in late 2006, Thomas had been active in a number of political organizations and campaigns, beginning in 1992 when he volunteered after high school basketball practice at the Clinton-Gore National Campaign Headquarters in Arkansas. While at Duke University, he worked on David Price's successful 1996 congressional campaign and then served on his staff in both Washington, D.C. and North Carolina from 1997 to 2001, including as his Communications Director and Deputy Campaign Manager. Thomas graduated from New York University School of Law in 2004, where he was the president of the NYU Law Democrats. During the 2004 election, he helped organize the voter-protection legal network in North Carolina. He has been a member of the Democratic National Committee Youth Council, on the board of the Young Voter PAC, and a fellow at the Service Politics Institute.

Thomas practiced law as a litigator at Cooley Godward Kronish LLP in San Francisco from 2004 to 2006. He has written extensively, talked incessantly, and provided training about building a new service-based approach to politics, having appeared in publications like the L.A. Times, Denver Post, Roll Call and the Huffington Post. He lives in Seattle.

## **Chrissy Faessen**

### *VP, Communications & Marketing*

Chrissy joined Rock the Vote in January of 2008, overseeing the organization's communications, advertising and marketing strategies. From star-studded events at the Conventions to summer festivals, bus tours and inaugural celebrations, Chrissy helped Rock the Vote use music, popular culture and new technology to engage and mobilize millions of young people in the political process.

Prior to joining RTV, Chrissy was a Business Director at DDB Issues & Advocacy, a progressive issues advertising/marketing/communications practice, which is part of DDB Worldwide Communications. At DDB, Chrissy developed campaigns for clients such as the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Save the Children, Philips Sonicare and HopeLab. Her work included waging advocacy, public policy and advertising strategies including placing stories in the top U.S. media outlets. Her work has received awards from the Public Relations Society of America, International Association of Business Communicators, The Webby's and many others.

## **Eric Axelson**

### *Democracy Class Manager*

Eric Axelson coordinates Rock the Vote's new high school civics program, Democracy Class. Eric brings the rock to Rock the Vote. After graduating college, he played bass for and tour-managed the bands the Dismemberment Plan and Maritime for ten years. His bands released six CDs and toured the U.S., Europe and Japan countless times. Between tours, Eric often tutored students in music and English at local community centers until 2006, when he became a DC Public School teacher. He taught 11th grade English for three years in the Columbia Heights neighborhood, and earned a Master of Arts in Teaching from American University. With the Democracy Class program, Eric combines his love of music and working with high school students to help teach about voting rights and community involvement. For more info: [www.democracyclass.com](http://www.democracyclass.com)

## **Maegan Carberry**

### *Communications Director*

Maegan Carberry is Rock the Vote's Communications Director, coordinating all of our media relations and presswork. She is also a media strategist and commentator who blogs about politics, media, technology and the so-called spoiled Millennial Generation. The former Chicago Tribune columnist previously served as Arianna Huffington's Chief of Staff. She is a frequent guest on FOX Business News, and her writing has appeared on the Huffington Post, CauseCast and Editor & Publisher. Her analysis has been quoted in news outlets such as The New Yorker, U.S. News & World Report, and the Atlantic Wire. She has interviewed everyone from cultural icons like Jennifer Lopez and Hugh Hefner to President Barack Obama. She is also the creator and co-host of Variety's weekly podcast, Wilshire & Washington. Maegan has a master's degree in journalism and media management from Northwestern University and a bachelor's degree in political science from UCLA.

## **Jason Rosenberg**

### *Digital Director*

Jason Rosenberg is Rock the Vote's Digital Director, coordinating all of our digital communications and online content. Jason has worked in politics on and off for the last decade starting with the 2000 Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, CA. Since then Jason has worked directly on about half a dozen campaigns in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Michigan, South Carolina, Louisiana and California. In addition to campaigns, Jason worked at MSHC Partners, a Washington, DC-based mail firm, and helped to launch PoliticsTV, a revolutionary website that aimed to bring regular original political content to the web. In 2008, Jason was the first Director for Online Media for the 2008 Democratic National Convention, where he developed the 50 state blogger corp. He then returned to Los Angeles where he worked with content creators to develop new properties as well as advise commercial clients on how to better communicate and develop relationships with clients online.

**Eric Zoberman**

*Field Director*

Eric Zoberman is Rock the Vote's Field Director, overseeing our voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts on-the-ground. Upon graduating from the University of Maryland in 2007, Eric joined Senator Obama's successful Iowa caucus campaign.

Following the caucus, he spent the rest of the primary traveling from state to state and eventually ended up as the Regional Field Director in St. Louis, Missouri for the general election. Most recently, Eric served as Project Director for the White House's United We Serve national service initiative, where he led the team responsible for developing and implementing the President's community service agenda on a grassroots level.