



2011 | [www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com) | [@rockthevote](https://twitter.com/rockthevote) | 202.719.9910

## young people vote

This generation of young voters is the largest this country has ever seen, but the majority of them are not registered. Research shows they are optimistic about the future and believe that they have the power to change the world, so Rock the Vote is helping them get started by educating them and registering them to vote.

### Presidential Turnout

#### 2004

- In 2004, youth voter turnout surged to its highest level in over a decade as turnout at the polls jumped nine percentage points for 18 to 29 year olds, from 40% in 2000 to 49% in 2004. This turnout surge was an increase far higher than any other age group. (US CENSUS)

#### 2008

- 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. (US CENSUS)
- An estimated 22 million young Americans under the age of 30 voted in the 2008 presidential election, two million more voters than in the 2004. The youth voter turnout rose to 51 percent, an increase of two percentage points from 2004. (US CENSUS)

### Midterm Turnout

#### 2006

- The voter turnout rate among 18-to-29-year-olds increased three percentage points between 2002 and 2006 from 22 percent to 25 percent, breaking a trend in declining midterm electoral participation among young people since 1982.
- An estimated 10.8 million young people voted in 2006—an increase of almost 2 million votes from the last midterm election in 2002 (when 8.9 million voted). Furthermore, young people increased their share of all voters by one percentage from 10.2 percent in 2002 to 11.2 percent in 2006. (US CENSUS)

#### 2010

- In 2010, an estimated 22.8% of eligible young American citizens voted, consistent with the past few midterm elections, which was consistent with participation



rates in midterm elections dating back to 1994. (EXIT POLLS, CIRCLE)

- The youth vote surged in key states where Rock the Vote was on the ground. At North Carolina Central University, turnout was 13 times higher in 2010 than it was in 2006. At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, turnout increased 31%. At the University of Florida, turnout increased by 49% and at the University of Pennsylvania, turnout increased by 46%. (Rock the Vote)
- In 2010, under-30 voters were the only age demographic to vote for Democrats, with the youngest voters (18-24 year olds) giving Democrats a 19-point margin. (EXIT POLLS, CIRCLE)
- Young Republicans represented a larger portion of the electorate compared to 2008 with 31% of young voters identifying themselves as conservative compared to 26% identifying as Republican in 2008. (EXIT POLLS, CIRCLE)

### Attributes

#### **The Millennial Generation is the largest in US History...**

- There are nearly **50 million young people** in the US ages 18-29. (US Census)
- Millennials outnumber all generations before them. There are 17 million more Millennials alive than Baby Boomers, and 27 million more Millennials than there are members of Gen X. (NDN)
- By 2012, Millennials will represent **24% of the voting age population** and 36% by 2020. (NDN)

#### **And 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)

#### **But they are less likely to be registered...**

- Compared to 83% of older generations, **only 61% of Millennials** say they are registered to vote. (NDN)
- Nearly **13,000 turn 18 each day** and are newly eligible to register, but they are



rarely given the opportunity to. (US Census)

**Once they have been registered, they vote...**

- In 2008, **84% of 18-29 year old registered voters** cast a ballot. (Project Vote)
- Of the 75 million non-voters in 2008, 15 million were registered voters who had not moved. The remaining **60 million were unregistered.** (Project Vote)

**\*Sources:**

- US Census = United States Census Bureau
- CIRCLE = Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement
- IOP = Harvard Institute of Politics Survey. Spring 2010.
- NDN = 21 Century America Project. "National Poll Summary." March 2010.
- Project Vote = "What Happened to Hope and Change: A Poll of the 2008 Electorate"

\*Please visit [www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com) to find the most recent statistics from our research.