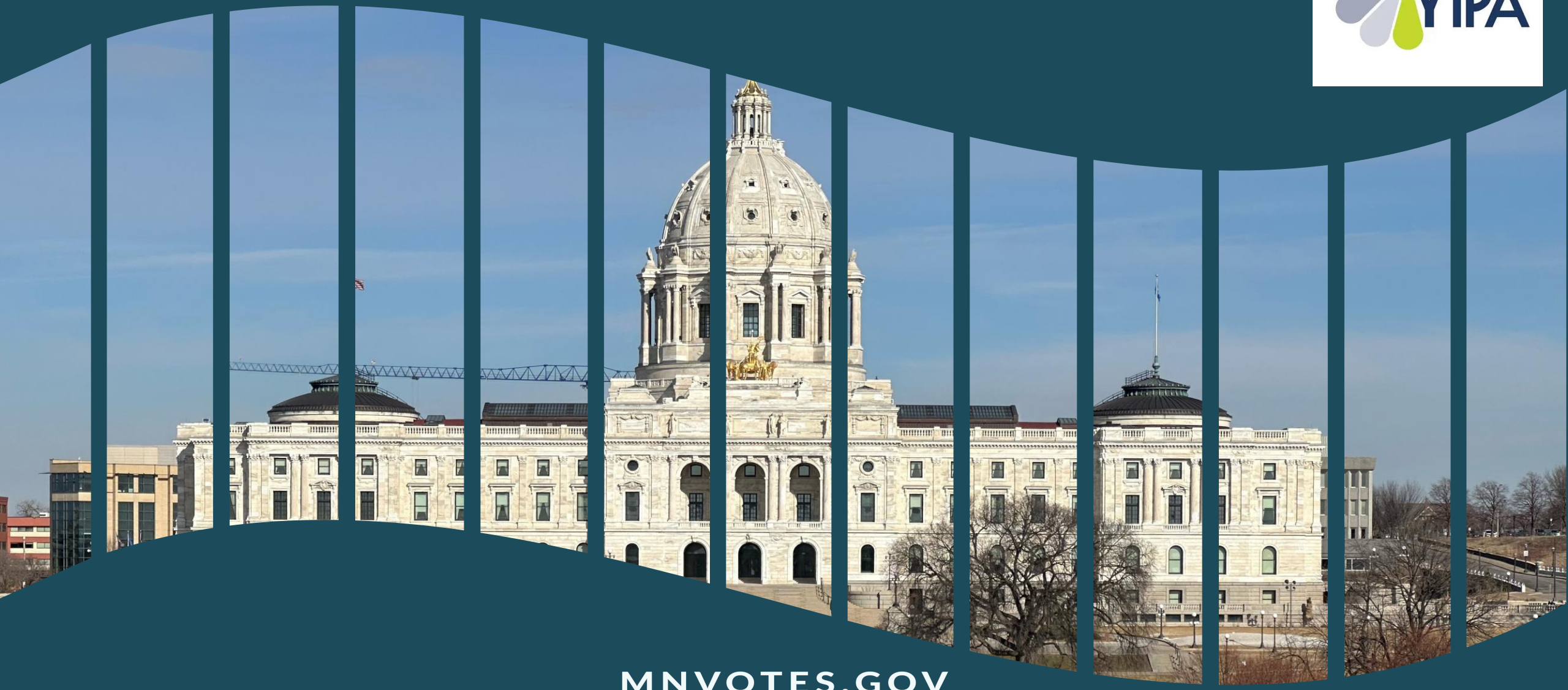


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Voter Outreach with (and for) Young People

YIPA



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Voter Outreach with and for Young People

- Setting Up for Success
- The WHY is the Thing
- Never Too Young or Old
- It’s ALL in the Details



Civic Engagement is not a plated meal.



It's a...



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What kind of civic engagement will you serve up the youth?

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How?
Who?
Why?
When?
What?

How?

Your Choice:

Relationship, or ‘hit-and-run’

How?

Anything wrong with a single event or volunteering/participating just once?

-Not at all, but it has limits

How?

Relationship-Based Outreach:

- ‘Hand shake’ (connection to the why)
- THEIR reasons (the young person’s)
  - What do they want/need?
  - What are their goals that you can support?

Who benefits from civic engagement experiences?

-Late high school (opportunities at 16)

-Pre-registration and Student Election Judge

-The longer you wait, the more you are playing catch-up

Who?

-Younger high school (witness, P.P.)

-Middle school (fun activities; before they get too self conscious; adolescence)

-Elementary school (what IS voting? they decide; they advise the decider)

Why?

-For students, voter registration is the LAST step.

-Voting is but one kind of advocacy, one kind of civic engagement, one way to use their voice

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What? (High School)

-Inoculate against the ‘excuses’

-#1 reason young people report that they don’t vote:

“I don’t have enough information”

“I don’t have enough information”

CIRCLE:

Learning the mechanics (the how-to) of voting increases voter turnout the first time they are eligible.

Learning the mechanics (the how-to)
of voting increases voter turnout
the first time they are eligible.



Why? Because in an age of instantly finding every fact, not-knowing (or being seen or perceived that way) is worse than ever before. We used to expect it. Now they are afraid of it.

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Show them how:

1) Exposure to the real aspects of voting

Official Ballot

Judge_____ Judge_____

State General Election Ballot
Hennepin County, Minnesota
November 6, 2018

Instructions to Voters:

To vote, completely fill in the oval(s) next to your choice(s) like this: ●

Federal Offices

U.S. Senator
For term expiring January 3, 2025
Vote for One

- ○ Jim Newberger — Republican — January 3, 2025
- ○ Amy Klobuchar — Democratic-Farmer-Labor — January 3, 2025
- ○ Dennis Schuller — Legal Marijuana Now — January 3, 2025
- ○ Paula M Overby — Minnesota Green Party — January 3, 2025
- ○
- write-in, if any

U.S. Senator
Special Election for term expiring January 3, 2021
Vote for One

- ○ Karin Housley — Republican — January 3, 2021
- ○ Tina Smith — Democratic-Farmer-Labor — January 3, 2021
- ○ Sarah Wellington — Legal Marijuana Now — January 3, 2021
- ○ Jerry Trooien — Unaffiliated — January 3, 2021
- ○
- write-in, if any

U.S. Representative
District 5
Vote for One

- ○ Jennifer Zielinski — Republican
- ○ Ilhan Omar — Democratic-Farmer-Labor
- ○
- write-in, if any

State Offices

State Representative
District 60A
Vote for One

- ○ Kelly Winsor — Republican
- ○ Diane Loeffler — Democratic-Farmer-Labor
- ○
- write-in, if any

Governor and Lieutenant Governor
Vote for One Team

- ○ Jeff Johnson and Donna Bergstrom — Republican
- ○ Tim Walz and Peggy Flanagan — Democratic-Farmer-Labor
- ○ Chris Wright and Judith Schwartzbacker — Grassroots - Legalize Cannabis
- ○ Josh Welter and Mary O'Connor — Libertarian
- ○
- write-in, if any

Secretary of State
Vote for One

- ○ John Howe — Republican
- ○ Steve Simon — Democratic-Farmer-Labor
- ○ William Denney — Independence
- ○
- write-in, if any

MINNEAPOLIS W-1 P-01
1360

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State Offices

State Auditor
Vote for One

- ○ Pam Myhra — Republican
- ○ Julie Blaha — Democratic-Farmer-Labor
- ○ Michael Ford — Legal Marijuana Now
- ○ Chris Dock — Libertarian Party
- ○
- write-in, if any

Attorney General
Vote for One

- ○ Doug Wardow — Republican
- ○ Keith Ellison — Democratic-Farmer-Labor
- ○ Noah M. Johnson — Grassroots - Legalize Cannabis
- ○
- write-in, if any

County Offices

County Commissioner
District 2
Vote for One

- ○ Irene Fernando
- ○ Blong Yang
- ○
- Write-in, if any

County Sheriff
Vote for One

- ○ Dave Hutch
- ○ Rich Stanek
- ○
- write-in, if any

County Attorney
Vote for One

- ○ Mark Haase
- ○ Michael Freeman
- ○
- write-in, if any

City Questions

To vote for a question, fill in the oval next to the word "Yes" on that question. To vote against a question, fill in the oval next to the word "No" on that question.

City Question

Remove Area and Spacing Requirements for Liquor Licenses

Shall the Minneapolis City Charter be amended to remove from the City Charter the area and spacing requirements pertaining to liquor licenses?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

School District Offices

School Board Member at Large
Special School District No. 1 (Minneapolis)
At Large
Vote for Up to Two

- ○ Sharon El-Amin
- ○ Josh Pauly
- ○ Rebecca Gagnon
- ○ Kimberly Caprini
- ○
- write-in, if any

School Board Member
Special School District No. 1
(Minneapolis) District 1
Vote for One

- ○ Jenny Arneson
- ○
- write-in, if any

School District Questions

To vote for a question, fill in the oval next to the word "Yes" on that question. To vote against a question, fill in the oval next to the word "No" on that question.

School District Question 1

Approval of School District Referendum Revenue Authorization

The Board of Special School District No. 1 (Minneapolis Public Schools) has proposed to increase its general education revenue by $490.00 per pupil. The proposed referendum revenue authorization would increase each year by the rate of inflation and be applicable for seven years beginning with taxes payable in 2019, unless otherwise revoked or reduced as provided by law.

Shall the increase in the revenue proposed by the board of Special School District No. 1 be approved?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

BY VOTING "YES" ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

School District Question 2

Approval of School District Capital Project Levy Authorization

The Board of Special School District No. 1 (Minneapolis Public Schools) has proposed a capital project levy authorization in the amount of 2.249% times the net tax capacity of the school district to provide funds for the purchase, installation, and maintenance of software applications and technology equipment, and for training and directly related personnel costs. The proposed capital project levy authorization will raise approximately $12,000,000 for taxes payable in 2019, the first year it is to be levied, and would be authorized for seven years. The estimated total cost of the projects to be funded over that time period is approximately $84,000,000.

Shall the increase in the revenue proposed by the board of Special School District No. 1 be approved?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

BY VOTING "YES" ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

Vote front and back of ballot

SAMPLE

Official Ballot

Judge_____ Judge_____

State General Election Ballot
Hennepin County, Minnesota
November 6, 2018

Instructions to Voters:

To vote, completely fill in the oval(s) next to your choice(s) like this: ●

Federal Offices

U.S. Senator
For term expiring January 3, 2025
Vote for One

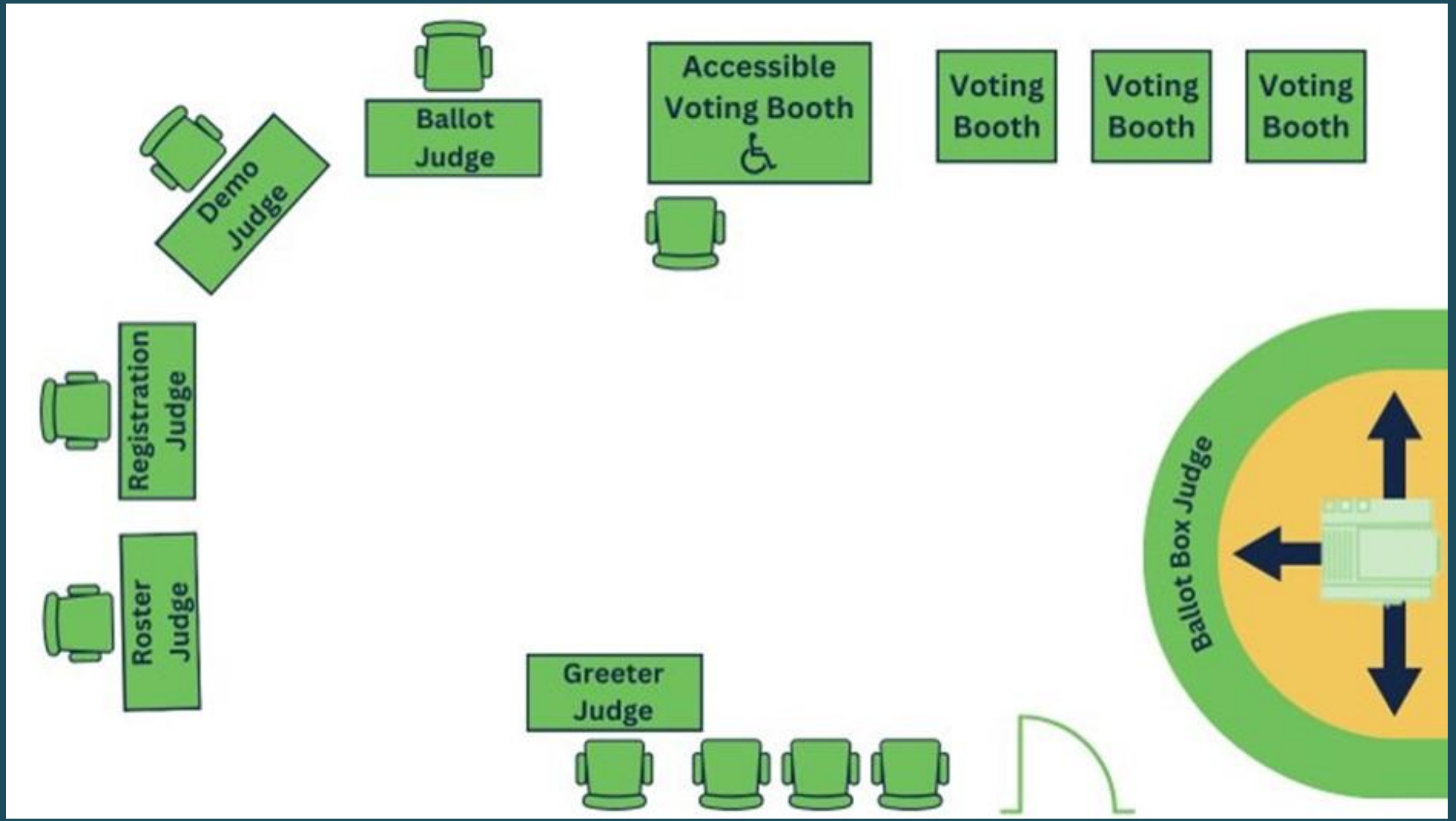
- ○ Jim Newberger — Republican — January 3, 2025
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- ○ Dennis Schuller — Legal Marijuana Now — January 3, 2025
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- ○ Sarah Wellington — Legal Marijuana Now — January 3, 2021
- ○ Jerry Trooien — Unaffiliated — January 3, 2021
- ○
- write-in, if any

U.S. Representative
District 5
Vote for One

- ○ Jennifer Zielinski


Ballot Judge
Accessible Voting Booth
Voting Booth
Voting Booth
Voting Booth
Demo Judge
Registration Judge
Roster Judge
Greeter Judge
Ballot Box Judge

Learn the Process:



KNOW:

- Yourself (learn what you care about)
- The Issues (What are laws controlling?)
- What you think about the issues
- Who is running? (What's on My Ballot)
- Which candidates *most closely* match your views

Learn the Process:

ADVOCATE:

Once they are elected, they need to hear from you.
(Letters, Email, Phone Calls; Petitions; Visits…)

Who Represents Me?

Two Schools:
Elect to follow you, or *elect to do the best job they can*

GET INVOLVED. GET ENGAGED. USE YOUR VOICE.

Youth Advocacy Academy

Student Election Judge

Vote16 MN

Minnesota Youth Council

Youth in Government

League of Women Voters Fellows Program

National Voter Registration Day at MN High Schools

Youth Day at the Capitol

Model United Nations

Run a Pre-registration Drive

Students Voting Mock Election

Youth Voter Project

Speak at a School Board Meeting

WHAT ELSE?

Volunteer for a campaign

LEVELS OF YOUTH ACTION

ADVANCED
Work with a government leader to sponsor legislation
Join a board
Volunteer with a political or issue campaign
Advocate on behalf of a cause or issue with decision-makers
Meet with government official to discuss issues
Conduct a voter registration campaign
Convene a group to take action on a cause or issue
Join a local club or a community organization

*****Participate in civic youth program or encourage youth you know (Youth & Government, Model UN, Achievers, Leaders Club)

INTERMEDIATE
Research issues or causes of interest
Vote in an election
Attend a demonstration
Donate funds to a campaign, candidate or non-profit organization
Contact a public official on a matter of public interest
Volunteer for a campaign, candidate or non-profit organization
Register to vote

ENTRY LEVEL
Participate in a school-based voting opportunities
Sign a petition
Promote a cause or issue on social media
Follow a candidate or campaign on social media
Display a sticker or sign supporting a cause or candidate
Listen to a speaker
Talk about issues with peers
Write a letter to the editor
Consume media critically
Watch a debate – candidates or about issues

VOTING IS POWER

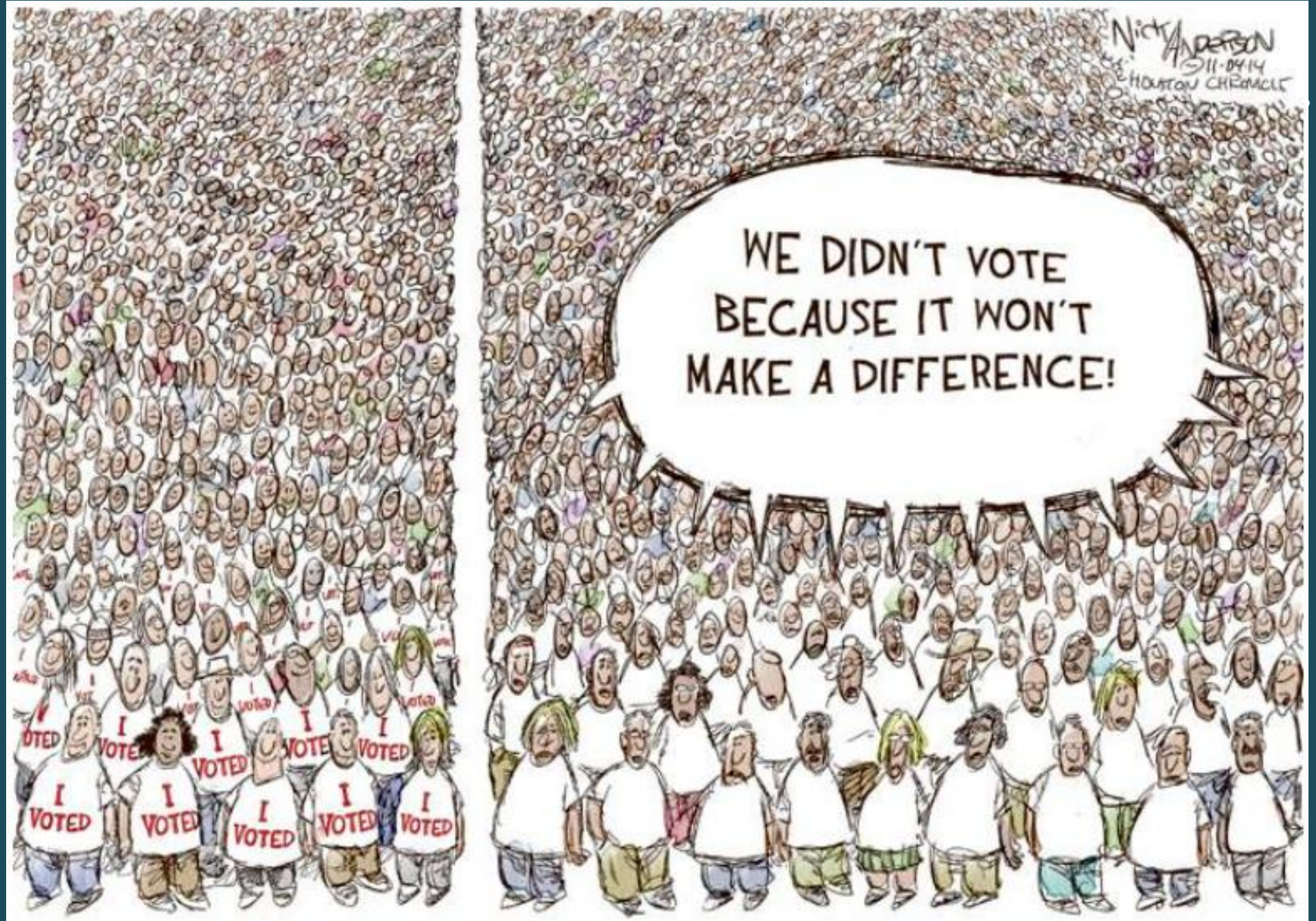
- When you don't vote, someone else has your say
- Politicians listen to those who vote.
- Call, write, & visit your elected representatives (all levels)
- Encourage others to register, research, and vote
- HELP others to register, research, and vote!
  - Ask them, answer questions, share resources, register…
  - 1st-time voters? Ask for SHARE/SHOW/TAKE!

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HOW TO RESPOND...

1. “No one asked me to.”
    1. One of the top reported reasons by young people for NOT voting is that no one asked them to.

2. “One vote doesn’t matter.” (“My vote doesn’t count.”)
    a. Your vote is your voice
    b. Every large group is made up of individuals; what if *everyone* stayed away?
    c. BIG elections, sure, but in Minnesota since AT LEAST 2015, every year had an election that tied or was won by one vote



TWO THIRDS OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS DON'T VOTE

HOW TO RESPOND...

3. “There is too much on the ballot!”
   a. Vote what you know and care about. (National? Local? School board?)
   b. Voting less than 100% doesn’t spoil your ballot
   c. No one will know! (Secret ballot)
   d. The Hope: Someday learn and vote the whole ballot. For now, don’t worry.

4. “I’m not into politics”
   a. Politics are into you! Laws affect you, your life, your family and community.
   b. Ignore parties. Vote ISSUES.
   c. DISCUSS: Look for common ground. Ask about why/motivations rather than focus on difference.

HOW TO RESPOND...

5. “I’m not voting as a protest against the system.”
   a. Silence makes no statement. When you don’t speak, others still will.
   b. “Failure to vote is not an act of protest, it’s an act of surrender.”

6. “I don’t like any of the candidates.”
   a. BE A PRIMARY VOTER.
   b. Support underdog candidates who are awesome.
   c. Encourage people you know and like to run.
   d. When the menu doesn’t have items you love: ordering nothing leaves you hungry. *Sometimes it’s about better, not great (or good).*

HOW TO RESPOND...

7. “I don’t want to look stupid.”
   a. Paraphrase of the other major reason reported by young people.
   b. “I’ll vote when I understand it.” When and how will that happen???
   c. Voter EDUCATION raises rate of eligible voters who actually vote. (CIRCLE) Students Voting. NVRD in MN HS.

www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/get-involved

Michael Wall

Michael.Wall@state.mn.us

651-201-6892

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Growing Voters:
18 Ways Youth Under 18 Can Contribute to Elections

Underage youth may not be able to vote in the general election, but their voices and actions can be a vital part of the political process

Being under 18 years old may mean that you cannot vote in the general election, but it doesn't mean that young people cannot contribute to political engagement and to conversations about what's important in an election year. For starters, in some states, 17-year-olds can vote in primaries, and youth who are 16 or 17 years old may be able to pre-register to vote so that they're ready for the next election.

But beyond voting, whether in local, state, or national elections, there are countless ways for young people under 18 to participate in democracy. These contributions can occur in a range of settings and have a wide-reaching influence. These ways of engaging are steps on a path to growing as a future voter and to help grow voters in your community.

Here are 18 ways that youth under 18 can participate. We know there are more; explore what you and your peers can do in your community!

Support Your Family & Friends' Participation

1. Ask your friends and family if they are eligible and registered to vote, and if necessary bring them information to help them register. If they're not eligible, ask them how they are going to participate
2. Help friends and family find reliable information about the election, the candidates, and important issues that they care about
3. Watch and discuss a local or national debate/forum with your family and friends
4. Organize or support conversations at school about elections and voting
5. Bring the Teaching for Democracy Alliance checklist or commitment to school leaders and work with them to make a plan to support student learning

Uplift Stories & Issues You Care About

6. Do research on an issue/policy you're interested in to find reliable information on the candidates' stance on the issue, and then share your viewpoint with those who can vote
7. Factcheck your research and then create media (e.g. images, videos, music) about candidates or issues you're interested in and share them with others
8. Evaluate a range of news media coverage of the issues and candidates to understand how journalists are covering the election
9. Contact local media outlets about the issues you care about and offer to share your opinions and insights
10. Create media about the people and issues in a community that has few local media outlets or that you think hasn't been portrayed accurately in election coverage
11. Tell stories about how youth of all ages—especially those from communities of color—are engaging in the election and share it with news organizations and social media so that a wider diversity of young people are better represented

Support a Candidate's Campaign

12. Volunteer on a local, state, or national political campaign
13. Attend a campaign event with a family member
14. Talk to those who are eligible to vote about your preferred candidates, what they stand for, and why it matters to you

Be a Part of the Process

15. Find out if you can work at the polls on Election Day—many states allow 16- and 17-year-olds to do it!
16. Work with a local organization that is registering others to vote
17. Design posters with key information about how, when and where to vote, and put them up at school and in your community
18. Send your friends and family reminders of when and where to vote on Election Day—even drive them if they need a ride!

https://www.thecivicscenter.org/blog/report-strengthen-young-voters-turnout

New Report Explains How States Can Support Young Voters And Strengthen Turnout

Jan 17

Written By Laura Brill

A Silenced Generation: How the Power of the Youth Vote Collides with Barriers to Voting authored by Movement Advancement Project (MAP) and released in partnership with The Civics Center

Since ratification of the 26th Amendment in 1971, young people have had the right to vote, starting at age 18. More than five decades later, however, the 26th Amendment still has not lived up to its promise. Youth voter registration continues to lag far behind registration rates of older voters, suppressing overall youth turnout.

Congress has never enacted robust protections to enforce the 26th Amendment. Today, with a divided Congress and many Members opposed to expanded protections for voting rights, national solutions remain some distance away. State legislatures are key bodies to engage today in creating the policy foundation to strengthen democracy and to broaden youth electoral participation. They play a significant role in determining the time, place, and manner of elections.

As the 2024 election cycle ramps up, a new report from MAP, in partnership with the Civics Center, examines specific barriers that young voters face, what states can do to support young voters, and how each state's election policies impact this important demographic.

I was delighted to provide a Forward for the report, and we're thrilled to provide highlights below from Brian Hinkle, Senior Voting Policy Researcher at Movement Advancement Project (MAP). Everyone who cares about youth and democracy and the state level policies to support both, please read on.

For media inquiries about this report, please contact Rebecca Farmer.

A Silenced Generation: How the Power of the Youth Vote Collides with Barriers to Voting

Authored by Movement Advancement Project (MAP) and released in partnership with The Civics Center, this report creates a framework for evaluating states' policy climate for youth voting. The report also details policy solutions to remove obstacles that impact youth voter turnout. Analysis in the report finds that nearly one in ten young voters live in a state with a low Youth Democracy Score. Included in the report is a foreword by Laura W. Brill, Executive Director of The Civics Center.

An estimated 53 million voters under 30 will be eligible to vote this year, including an estimated 8 million young people who have become newly eligible to vote since the 2022 midterm elections.



Youth Democracy Scores

MAP analyzed 11 key policies that particularly impact young voters to develop Youth Democracy Scores. This metric provides a look at the electoral landscape for young voters across the states, showing which states are providing robust youth voter environments and those that are not.

View fullsize

Why They Say They Don't Vote *and what to say in response*

Michael Wall, Office of Minnesota Secretary of State, michael.wall@state.mn.us 651-201-6892

a. "No one asked me to." Ask them. Encourage them. Ask again. Remind them. Ask again. Members of a community/society owe it to the group- as a member of the group- to vote: to voice their concerns; support issues and policies; and help select the best representatives to make the laws and policies we live by. It's also good for THEM (self-serving) to vote. Communities (any definition) who vote tend to get more of what they want.

b. "My vote won't change anything/my vote doesn't count." Every year since 2015 (maybe earlier), at least 1 MN election tied or won by 1 vote.

c. "I don't like any of the candidates." A) GREAT reason to vote in primaries, where candidates for the ballot are chosen. B) Restaurant analogy: eat the item you dislike least, let someone else order for you, or go hungry.

d. "I don't want to look stupid." This is a paraphrase of what young people report, which is that they don't want to enter situations where they don't know what to expect, what they will be asked, and what they will have to do. "I'll vote after I learn all of that stuff." That's why we teach the mechanics of voting: what does the registration form look like, and what does it ask; what a ballot looks like, what a polling place looks like…

e. "That ballot is huge! I might know-MAYBE-two or three people I want to vote for." Vote for them and leave the rest blank. It's perfectly legal. There is nothing wrong with doing that. And no one will know.

f. "I'm not into politics." Politics are into you. Laws/policies affect your life: money, housing, etc. Think issues, not parties. What do you care about?

g. "The system is not fair/is a mess/ needs massive changes. I'm not voting to show them I don't like it." *The failure to vote is not an act of rebellion; it is an act of surrender.* Inaction changes nothing. Those who act decide.

h. "Politicians don't listen to people my age." It's just the opposite. They listen to voters. Vote, and they will listen to young people. A lot!

The Steps to Deciding Who Gets Your Vote

Michael Wall, Office of Minnesota Secretary of State, michael.wall@state.mn.us 651-201-6892

1) **Know Yourself**

What do you care about? Who do you care about, and what is important to them? What are your goals? What are you happy about (and don't want to lose)? What should change? What kind of life do you dream about?

2) **Know the Issues**

Issues are defined as, "An important matter for debate, discussion, or public concern." You might think of issues as the areas of life that laws affect. Money, Housing, Crime, the Environment, Healthcare, and on and on. Limits and opportunities are based in law. Each connects with issues.

3) Figure out (using #1 and #2) where you stand on the issues

Pick an issue (let's start with the outdoors). Laws are made about hunting, fishing, hiking, boating, swimming, beaches, forests, farming, and more. Now look at what's important to you. Depending on what you want and what you value, you will want certain laws to pass, or fail.

4) **Learn About the Candidates**

Everyone who runs for an office has plans. "If I'm elected, I will..." Their website might have their positions, what they support and what they don't. When they speak in public or get quoted in a story, what can you learn about their goals?

5) **Discover Which Candidates Most Closely Match Your Views**

You know what and who is important to you. You understand what the issues are and where you stand on them. You have learned what each candidate says they would do. Now you match. Ask yourself, "Who will work on laws and policies that support my goals and priorities the best?" No one will be a perfect fit. That's okay! Vote for the one who would be the best- to you- out of those running

How Schools Can Prepare Students to Vote for the First Time

By Evie Blad — January 31, 2024 3 min read

Schools can help students build a lifelong voting habit by equipping them with the practical information they need to participate in their first election, civics organizations say.

"There's a lot of opportunities for educators and schools to start to talk about voting as a really concrete way citizens make decisions together," said Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, director of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University, which conducts research on young voters.

Some youth activists have pushed communities to lower the voting age for school board elections to 16 so that they can vote for the first time while they are in high school. That way they can develop the habits of regular voters, and be supported by educators and mentors who can guide them through the process, Education Week reported recently.

But, even in communities without such an on-ramp to full electoral participation, schools can get students in a voting mindset by discussing the process—and the role of voting in their communities—early and often, youth advocacy groups said.

That's because researchers have found that successful voting experiences in early adulthood correlate with more consistent voting later in life.

"We want to strengthen our democracy by increasing voter turnout in the future," said Yenjay Hu, a 17-year-old New Jersey student advocate who supported a recent successful effort to lower the school board voting age in nearby Newark.

Here are three things to know.

1. A lack of information can be an obstacle to voting

In a nationally representative poll of Americans ages 18-34 released by CIRCLE last November, 57 percent of respondents said they are "extremely likely" to vote in 2024. Fifteen percent said they are "fairly likely" to vote.

Sixty-two percent of respondents said they feel qualified enough to vote in the next election, and 88 percent of those who felt prepared said they are likely to vote. Among those who said they felt unprepared, though, only 42 percent said they were likely to vote.

The majority—67 percent—said they'd seen and heard information about the election from family and friends. Fifty-nine percent said they'd gotten information from local media, 55 percent from national media. By comparison, 19 percent said they'd heard from campaigns and candidates and 14 percent said they'd heard from community groups.

2. Voter preparation should start early

The information gap suggests educators could play a key role in helping students understand how to weigh issues and candidates, and how to register, locate a precinct, and understand election laws, Kawashima-Ginsberg said.

CIRCLE's Growing Voters framework provides a roadmap for schools to engage with their communities and identify ways to help students feel more connected with the democratic process.

That can start early by helping young students identify themselves as part of a community when they go on field trips or discuss public resources, Kawashima-Ginsberg said.

Older students need to understand the role policymakers have in shaping the issues that are most important to them, the framework says. And discussions of elections should happen regularly, not just during the lead-up to presidential elections.

3. Teaching about elections promotes other school priorities

The Teaching for Democracy Alliance, a coalition of 19 youth and civics organizations formed in 2016, asks school administrators to sign a pledge to help prepare future voters.

The alliance provides resources on topics like media literacy, civics education, and experiential learning. It also provides recommendations for the classroom, school, and district level on a variety of issues that can build voter engagement.

Teachers should bring in nonpartisan community groups to discuss voter registration and ask students to break into discussion groups to weigh the pros and cons of ballot issues, the recommendations say.

Districts should provide practical voting materials to high school students and engage in early registration efforts where students are eligible. (Many states allow students to preregister to vote before they turn 18. Although more than half of states encourage or require schools to provide voter registration forms to students, many districts don't follow these guidelines, analyses have found.)

Beyond increasing students' likelihood of voting, such lessons connect to other school priorities, the alliance said. For example, election lessons can:

- Build "21st century skills" like critical thinking, communication, and collaboration.
- Promote youth voice by including avenues for students to identify and share their concerns.
- Help students develop a "civic identity" and recognize their ability to influence their communities.

https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/how-schools-can-prepare-students-to-vote-for-the-first-time/2024/01

Young People and the 2024 Election: Struggling, Disconnected, and Dissatisfied

January 15, 2025
Initial findings from CIRCLE's post-election youth poll highlight diverse barriers and a focus on economic issues among youth who didn't vote

Authors: Alberto Medina, Kelly Siegel-Stechler, Sara Suzuki
Contributors: Ruby Belle Booth, Katie Hilton

At a Glance: Main Findings

- **Multiple Barriers:** Some youth were ignored by campaigns or lacked support to vote, but 44% of young nonvoters were disinterested or disliked the candidates.
- **Informed and Qualified:** 3 out of 4 youth saw at least some information about registering to vote and felt well-qualified to cast a ballot.
- **Politically Homeless:** Less than 1 in 4 youth, and just 13% of those who didn't vote, feel like they belong to a group that expresses itself politically.
- **Issues Are Key:** Nearly half of youth who voted said one of their top motivations was the desire to have an impact on the issues they care about.
- **Diverse Priorities:** The cost of living/Inflation was far and away youth's top issue, but they were also concerned with healthcare, abortion, climate and immigration.
- **Struggling Financially:** More than 40% of youth, and over 60% of young nonvoters, sometimes or often find it difficult to meet basic needs.

Young people's electoral participation dropped notably in 2024. After historically high youth voter turnout of over 50% in the 2020 presidential contest, our early estimate is that 42% of youth (ages 18-29) voted in 2024. And after several cycles of overwhelming support for Democratic candidates, exit poll data suggests that young voters supported Vice President Harris over President-elect Trump by just 4 percentage points.

Our initial analyses of those exit polls point to some explanations for those shifts—especially young people's focus on the economy and a more conservative and Republican-leaning group of youth who cast ballots. But exit polls only give us data on youth who voted. To truly understand what happened with the youth vote in 2024, we need data on all young people that directly tackles why many youth didn't vote and what drove or prevented participation beyond a single issue.

The CIRCLE Post-2024 Election Poll gives us that comprehensive data from a nationally representative survey of young people ages 18-34. In this initial analysis from our poll, we answer key questions about what motivated youth to vote and why others stayed home, their diverse issue priorities, and whether campaigns and institutions did enough to reach young voters this past cycle.

Many Young People Lacked Information and Motivation to Register

Young people continue to face a series of structural, informational, and motivational barriers to voting.

We asked young people, ages 18-34, who weren't registered to vote about the main reason they weren't registered. More than 1 in 10 youth (12%) said they did not know how to register or had problems with voter registration forms. Nearly a third of young people (31%) said they were too busy, ran out of time, or missed the registration deadline.

To vote or not to vote: Students opt out of voting - The Brown and White

https://thebrownandwhite.com/2024/11/06/to-vote-or-not-to-vote-students-opt-out-of-voting/

By Holly Souter — ; Published November 6, 2024, 7:51 pm ; **updated** November 11, 2024, 9:03 pm

Millions of Americans prepare to cast their ballots in the presidential election every four years. Yet, for many, the choice to stay at home and sit out the vote isn't uncommon.

In recent presidential elections, the percentage of Americans choosing not to vote has remained between 40 and 50% of the population, or about 100 to 125 million eligible voters, according to a study by Michael P. McDonald, a political science professor at the University of Florida.

Professor Michael Hagen of Temple University said there are multiple reasons why people choose not to vote.

"These reasons range from individuals believing that elected officials have little impact on their lives — to those who feel their vote doesn't matter — to others who simply don't feel like politics is an area where they have enough expertise," Hagen said.

Tim Lynch, '25, is among those who chose not to vote because he said he believes the president hasn't affected him personally in the past eight years, and the election result will have minimal impact on his life.

He also said he didn't notice any major differences between the two administrations during this election cycle.

"When the election is all said and done, I don't know how drastic the difference would be between the two candidates if they were both in office," Lynch said. "I don't think I would notice anything different in my day to day."

He also said he didn't feel obligated to vote because his one vote wouldn't make a difference toward the winner of the election.

G.B. '25, asked to be anonymous and also said they chose not to vote, however, they feel "much differently" than Lynch.

"I think my vote has a purpose," G.B. said. "And that's why I'm not doing anything with it."

In Northampton County, which was a key area in the swing state and where they were registered to vote, every vote could make a difference, they said.

G.B. said their decision not to vote stems from their dissatisfaction with both presidential candidates on the ballot. They said they would rather abstain from voting entirely, as they didn't want their vote to influence either outcome.

Brian Fife, the chair of Lehigh's political science department, said not voting based on not liking the candidates has been happening since the end of the 18th century.

He said it's a common way for non-voters to think. However, he urges people to reconsider and cast their vote for "the lesser of two evils."

For Rebecca Lloyd, '25, determining the lesser of two evils was difficult because of the election's divisive nature.

"I have people that I love and care about that would not talk to me depending on how I voted," Lloyd said.

Growing up Lloyd said she was raised in a conservative household, and her family urged her to vote for Trump. While at Lehigh, her friends largely lean in the opposite direction, advocating for Harris.

Hagen said surrounding the 2024 election, there was a lot of social pressure to vote.

"Everybody's telling us to vote and is pushing their ideas on others," Hagen said. "So if you don't vote, you kind of feel bad about it.

Lloyd said she would've been willing to vote if the people around her didn't feel so strongly about the election.

"If I didn't feel like I was going to get ridiculed, then I'd be a lot more inclined to vote," she said.

Drew Pruyne, '25, was someone who had been planning to vote in the election until a few weeks ago when he realized he had forgotten to register.

He assumed same-day registration in his home state of Maine was the norm everywhere.

"I'm disappointed in myself, just because I should've made a plan before, now I feel kind of ignorant," Pruyne said.

Hagen said the voting process in the U.S. is complicated. The process is burdensome on the voters, not on the government, leaving people like Pruyne unable to vote, he said.

Although he never voted, Pruyne said he was relieved to wake up the morning after the election to news that the candidate he was intending on casting his vote for, Trump, had won the election.

"I regret not voting, but thankfully the outcome I wanted to happen did," he said.

Despite Trump's win, Lynch said he still feels indifferent about not voting.

G.B. said they have small regrets about not voting after seeing the outcome because they feel the next four years might be "very polarizing."

All four students didn't vote in this election but said they plan to vote in the future under different circumstances.

The Brown and White also reserves the right to not publish entirely anonymous comments.

2 Comments

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