



Youth Voting: Why It's Important to Start in K-12

Please let us know who you are in the chat!

Where are you from, what's your role, and what's your first elections-related memory?

CIRCLE



@TischCollege @civicyouth

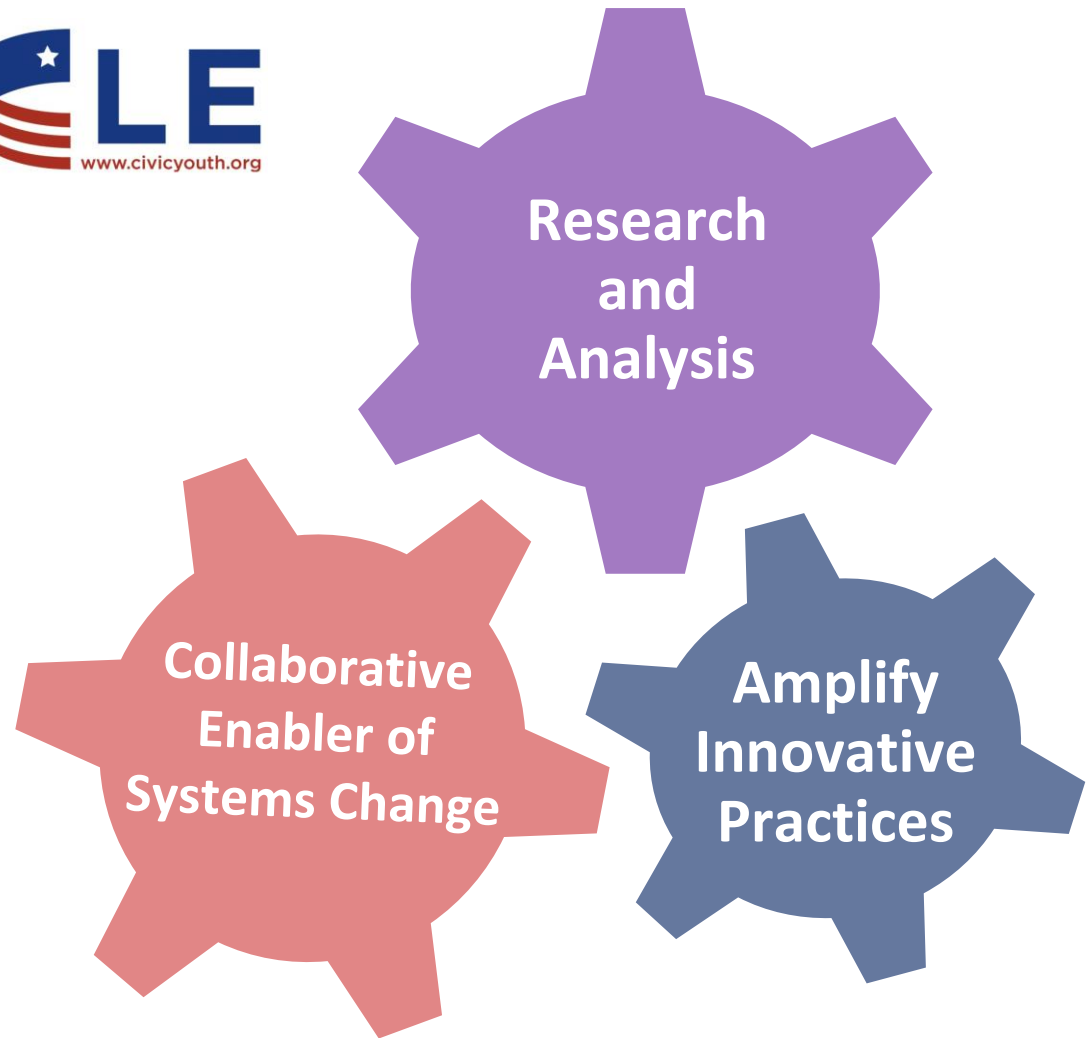


Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Civic Life

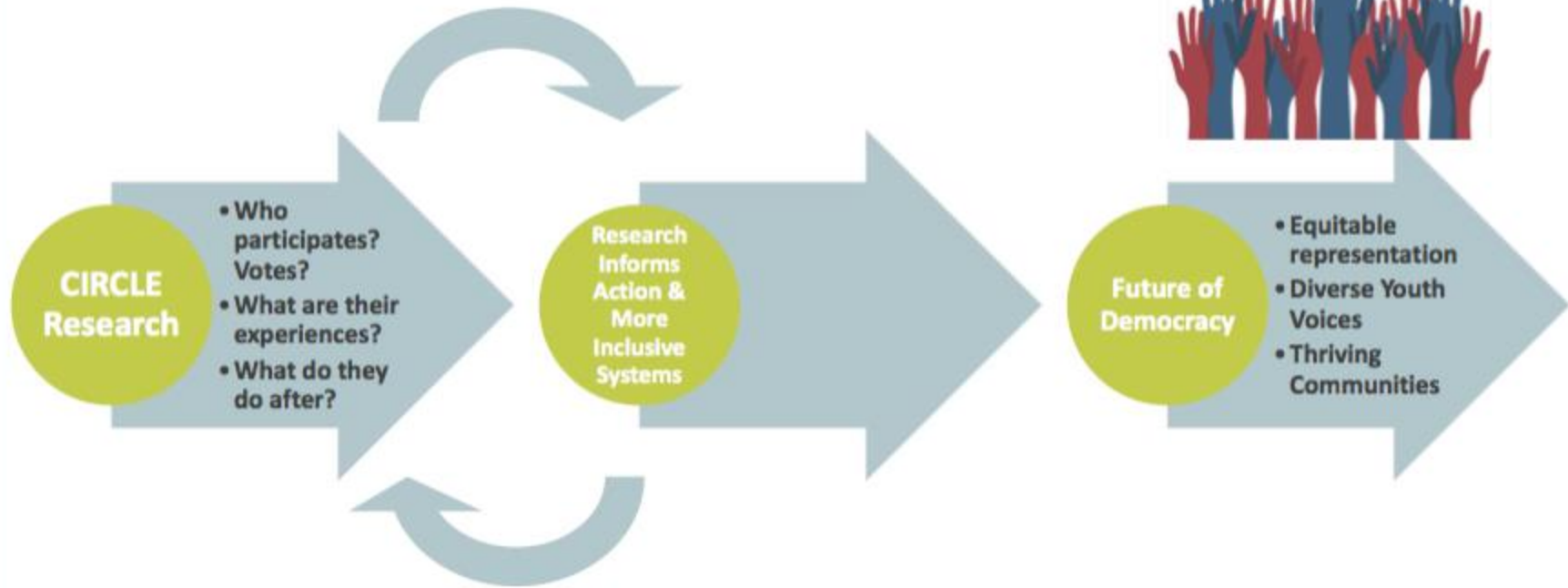


A national, nonpartisan research center founded in 2001 and focused on young people in the United States, **especially those who are marginalized or disadvantaged in political life.**

CIRCLE's scholarly **research informs policy and practice** for healthier youth development and a better democracy.



What We Do



Quick Chat: What do you hope to get out of this session?



Objectives

By the end of this session, you will have:

- Considered data to help support you in prioritizing teaching about elections and voting this fall
- Reviewed recommendations and TFDA resources for implementing civic learning in your institution
- Drawn on the experiences of others in planning next steps

Agenda

- I. Grounding & Introductions
- II. Lessons and Resources from the Research
- III. Lessons and Resources from the Field
- IV. Lessons and Resources from One Another
- V. Moving Forward



Four Corners

Let's explore our experiences related to participating in and teaching about elections

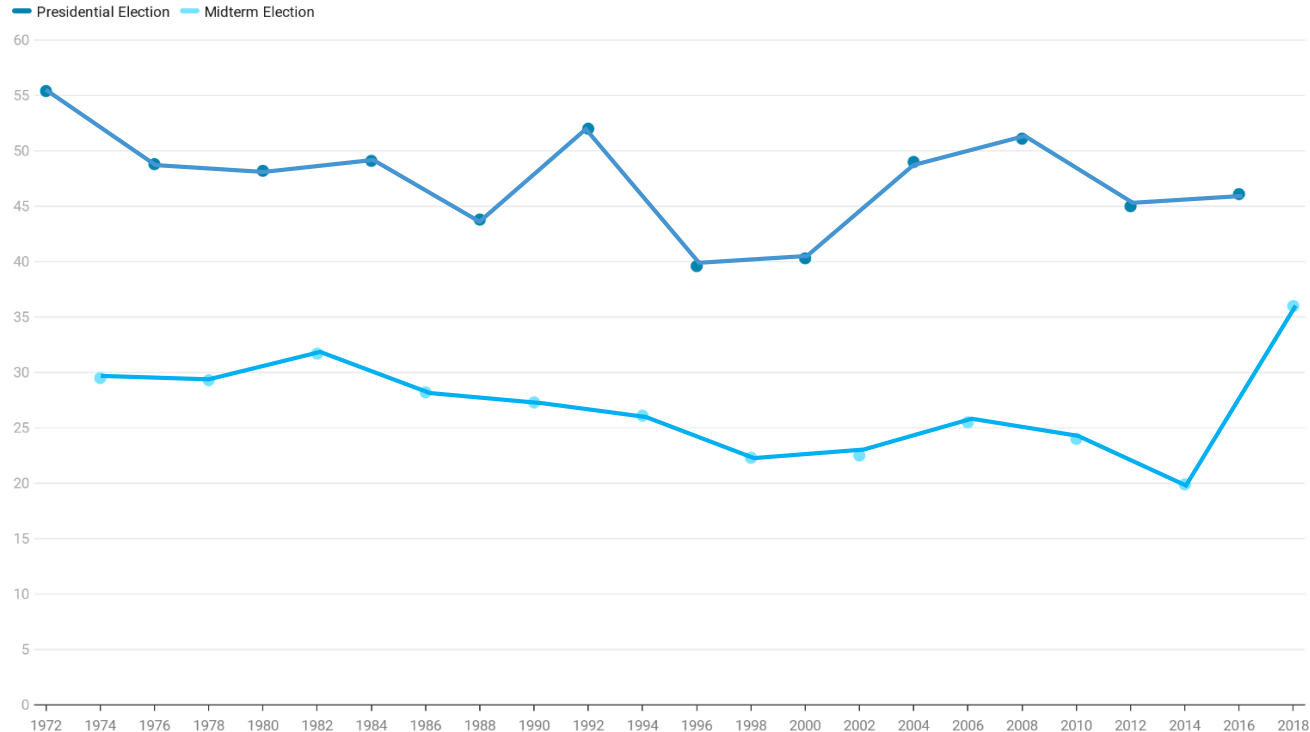
MYTHS

- Youth voting has been declining for decades.
- Young people are apathetic.

Presidential Elections Have Seen More Up and Down

Historical Youth Voter Turnout: 1972-2018

The estimated percentage of eligible young citizens, ages 18-29, who voted in each national election.



While Midterm Youth Turnout Had Been Fairly Static, It Surged in 2018

Youth Voter Turnout (Ages 18-24) in Midterm Elections, 1974-2018

Each highlighted year represents the first midterm in election in which members of each generation made up most or all of the age 18-24 voting eligible cohort:

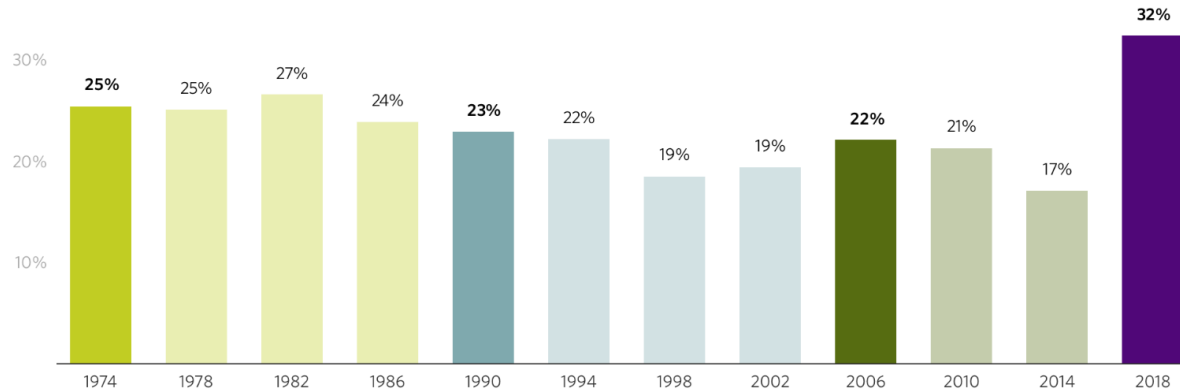
1974: Baby Boomers

1990: Generation X

2006: Millennials

2018: Generation Z

40%



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Source: CIRCLE analysis of Census Current Population Survey, 1974-2018

Millions of Youth Are Engaged, Seeking Ways to Make Change

Exclusive Poll: Young People and the 2020 Election

Youth Ready to Seize their Power

- 83% believe young people have the power to change the country
- 60% feel like they're part of a movement that will vote to express its views
- **79% say the COVID-19 pandemic has helped them realize that politics impacts their everyday lives**

Youth Take to the Streets

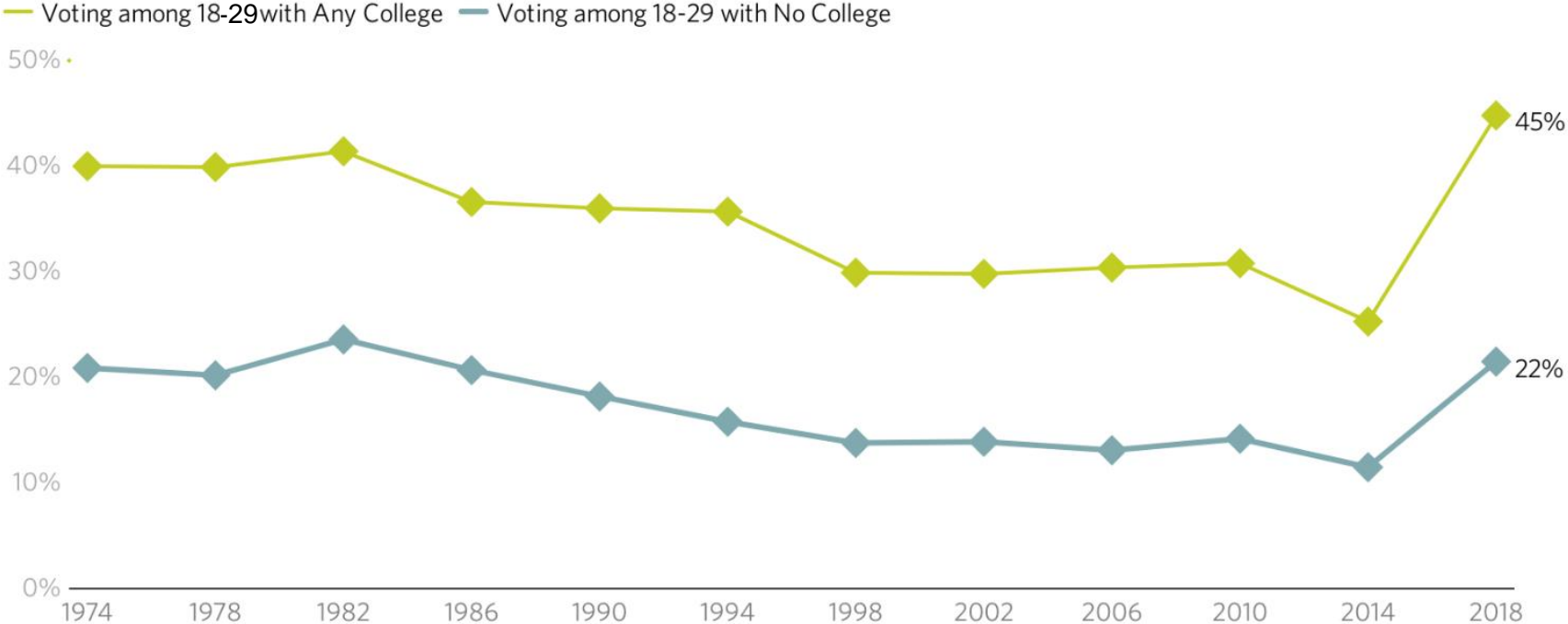
- **27% of young people say they have attended a march or demonstration in 2020**
- Big increase from the 2016 (5%) and 2018 elections (16%)
- Young women of color more likely to protest than other youth

Strong Preference for Biden

- By a staggering 34-point margin, 58% of youth support Biden, compared to 24% for Trump
- **Driven by youth of color; only 23 pt. margin among White youth**
- 18% of youth say they would prefer to vote for another candidate

Youth Voting Rate by College Experience

Data points represent the size of gap in turnout among eligible 18-29 year olds and those who are 30 and older.



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Source: Census Current Population Survey

Chart: CIRCLE/Tisch College

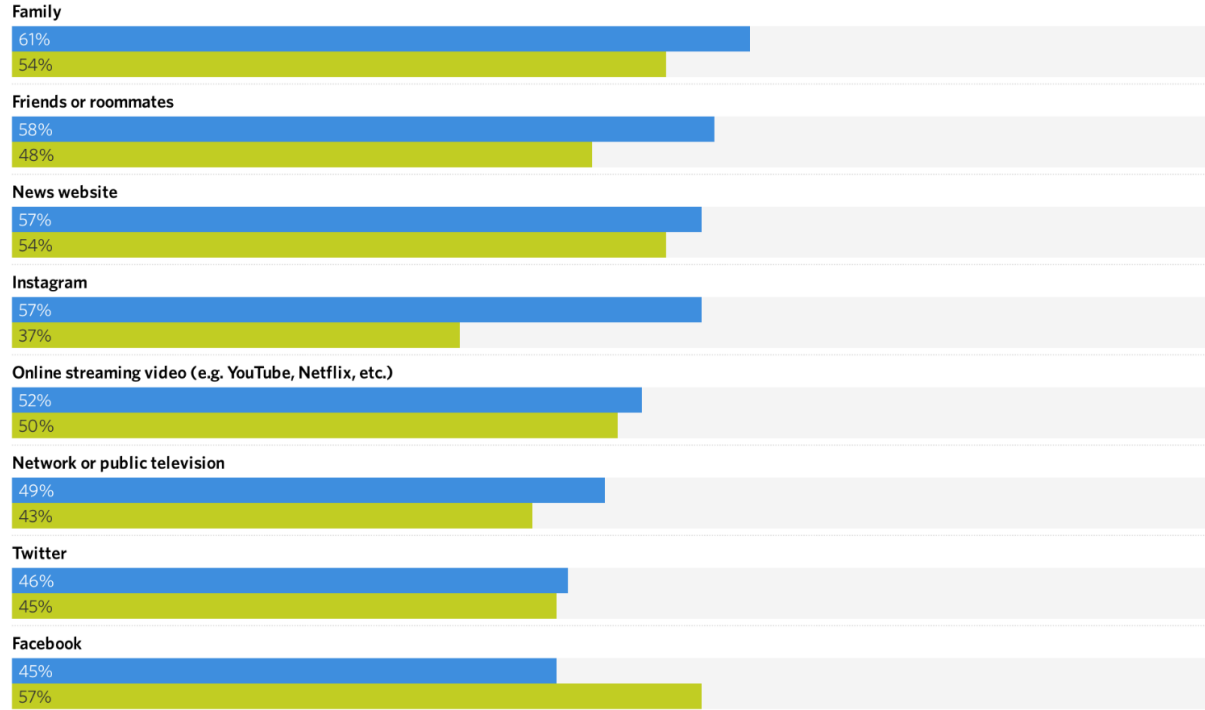
Myths

- Young people ignore ways to participate and find out about elections.
- Young people choose not to vote.

Top 8 Ways Youth Hear About the 2020 Election

The percentage of young people in each age group who said they have seen or heard information about the election from each source

■ Ages 18-21 ■ Ages 22-29



Note: Our survey asked about other sources of election information; a selection is shown here.

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Source: CIRCLE/Tisch College 2020 Pre-Election Youth Poll

Myth #3: Young people ignore ways to find out about elections

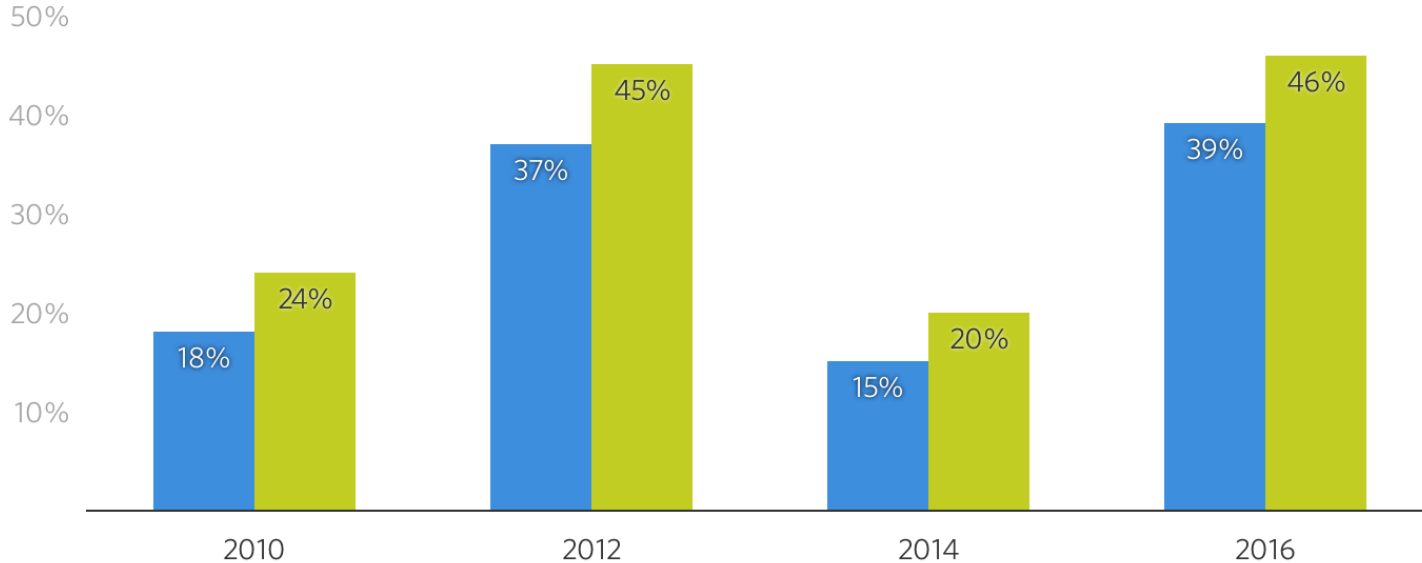
Young people hear about elections from a wide variety of sources

And trusted relationships matter a great deal

The Youngest Eligible Voters Turn Out at the Lowest Rates

The percentage of eligible voters in each age group who cast ballots in each election

■ Ages 18-20 ■ Ages 18-29



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Source: CIRCLE analysis of Census CPS November voting supplement

Chart: Alberto Medina

[“From #Parkland to the Polls: Teen Activism and Youth Voting in 2018”](#)



AND EVEN IN A YEAR WHEN YOUTH
TURNOUT/ENGAGEMENT WAS HIGH

...YOUTH ARE UNDERMOBILIZED

...SOME YOUTH FACE MORE BARRIERS

WHO'S SYSTEMATICALLY LEFT OUT?

Contact Matters, but some are contacted more than others...

Campaigns didn't reach as many potential new or newly eligible voters in 2018

18-19 year olds were less likely to be reached and cast ballots, especially those in high school

Young people not on campuses or without college experience are less likely to be contacted

Clear Information and Accessible Opportunities Needed in 2020

Exclusive Poll: Young People and the 2020 Election

Inequities in Information about Online Voter Registration

- 32% of youth said they did not know if online voter registration was available in their state
- Of those who ventured a guess, 25% of youth were incorrect.
- **In effect, only half of youth could correctly identify whether online voter registration was available in their state**

Lack of Information about Mail-In Voting

- Only 24% of respondents reported having voted by mail in a previous elections
- Only 78% have seen information about how to cast an absentee ballot
- 73% report that they would know where to go to find absentee ballot info

Black Youth and Youth of Color Hit Hardest

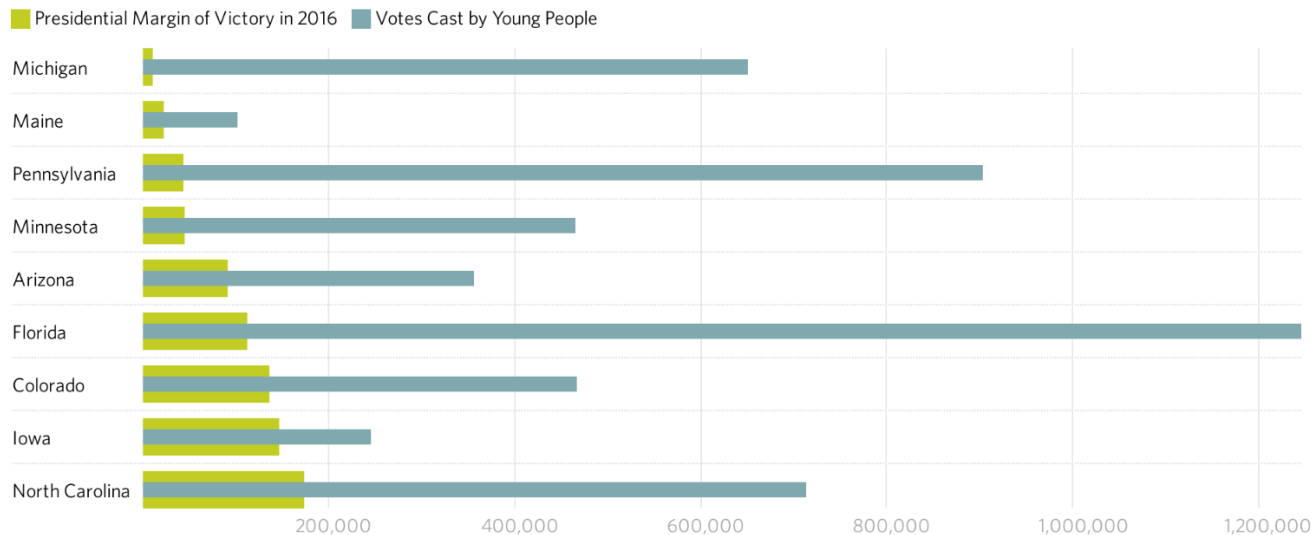
- Two-thirds of youth report that the pandemic has had a moderate or significant impact on them
- 37% said it has increased their daily responsibilities. Black youth more likely to say so
- **Increased news attention during the pandemic and economic impacts are related to increased interest in political engagement**

PAUSE...

- Before I thought... and now I think...
- I'm still wondering...

The Power of the Youth Vote: 2016 Battlegrounds

In Key States, Young People Cast Many More Votes than the Margin of Victory in the 2016 Presidential Race



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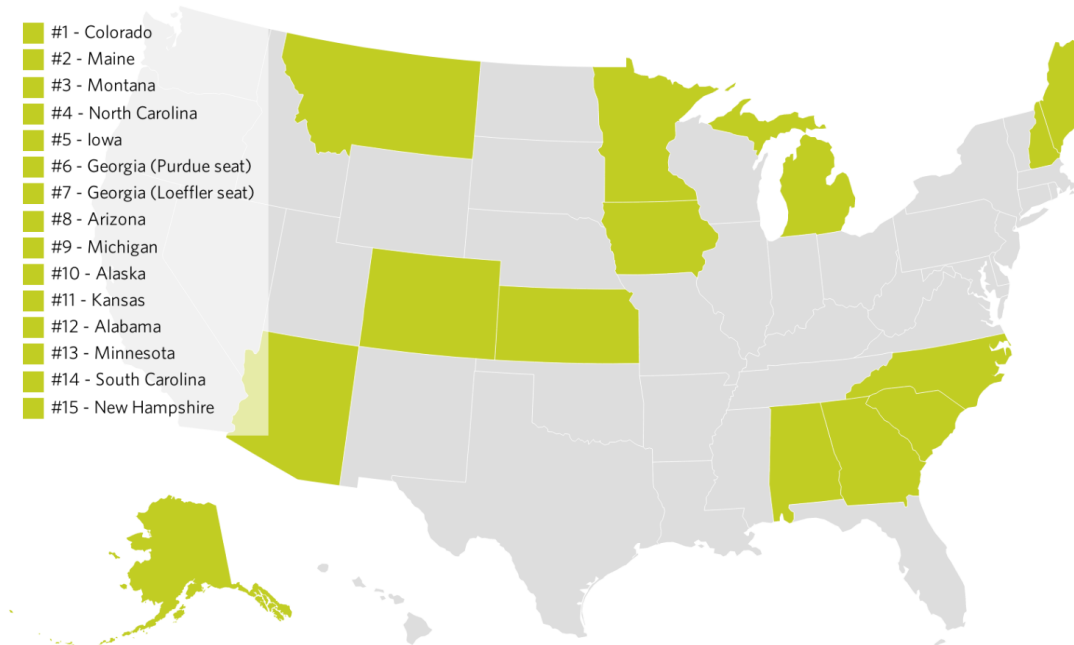
Source: Margin of victory from official election results; youth votes cast from Catalyst voter file

Youth Electoral Significance Index

2020 YESI Rankings: Senate

The top-15 U.S. Senate races where young people have the highest potential to influence the results in 2020

- #1 - Colorado
- #2 - Maine
- #3 - Montana
- #4 - North Carolina
- #5 - Iowa
- #6 - Georgia (Purdue seat)
- #7 - Georgia (Loeffler seat)
- #8 - Arizona
- #9 - Michigan
- #10 - Alaska
- #11 - Kansas
- #12 - Alabama
- #13 - Minnesota
- #14 - South Carolina
- #15 - New Hampshire



MAINE!

circle.tufts.edu/yesi2020

MAINE!



Top 50 U.S. House Races in CIRCLE 2020 Youth Electoral Significance Index

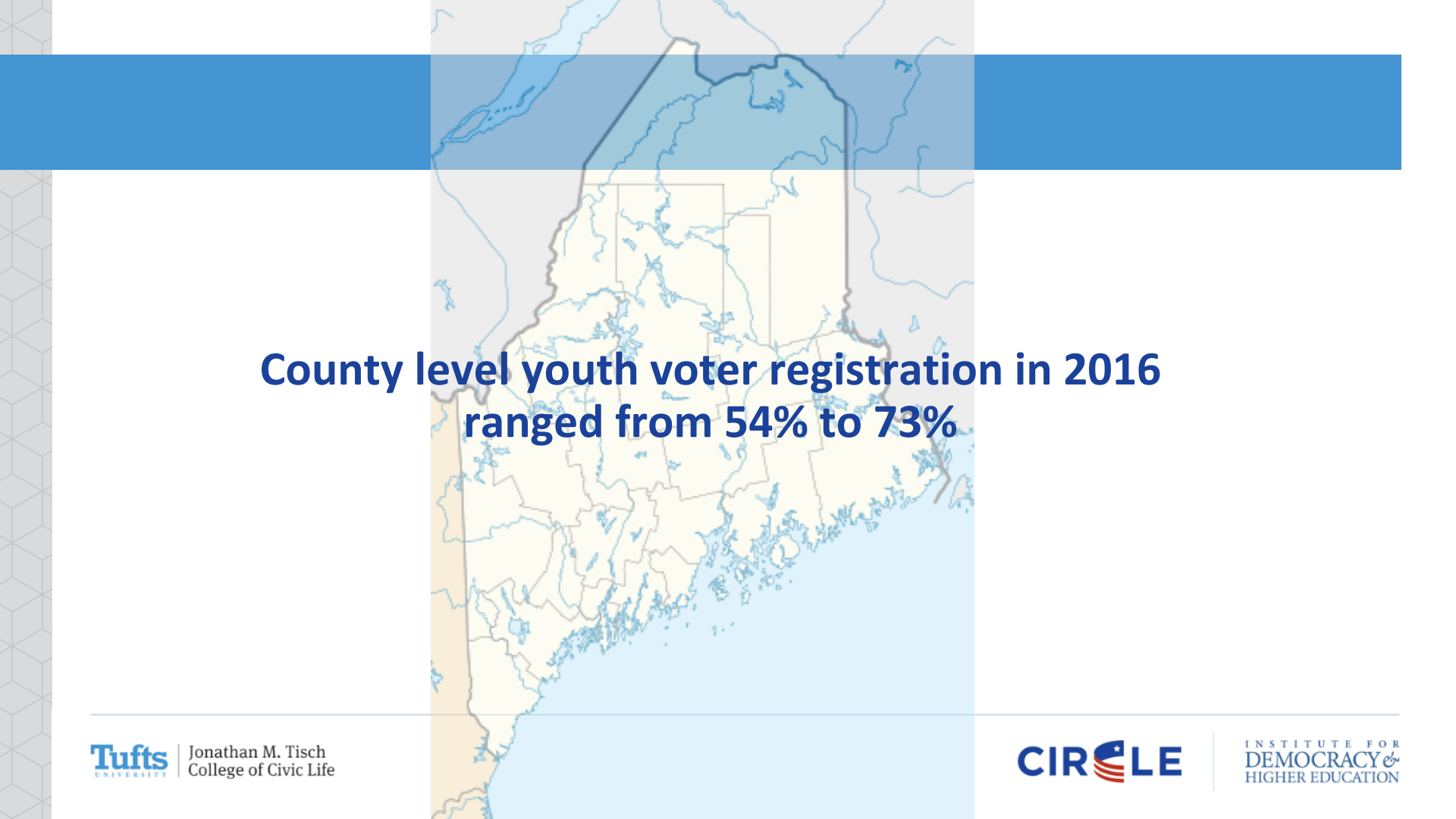
The top 50 U.S. House Races where young people have the highest potential to influence results in the 2020 Congressional elections.

Ranking	District	Ranking	District	Ranking	District
1	Iowa 1st	18	New Jersey 3rd	35	Texas 21st
2	Maine 2nd	19	Virginia 2nd	36	Texas 7th
3	Georgia 7th	20	New Mexico 2nd	37	New Hampshire 1st
4	Iowa 3rd	21	Pennsylvania 10th	38	Michigan 11th
5	South Carolina 1st	22	New Jersey 7th	39	Kansas 3rd
6	Iowa 2nd	23	Pennsylvania 1st	40	New York 24th
7	Minnesota 7th	24	Ohio 1st	41	Pennsylvania 8th
8	Virginia 7th	25	Nebraska 2nd	42	Texas 32nd
9	Oklahoma 5th	26	Minnesota 1st	43	California 21st
10	Georgia 6th	27	Indiana 5th	44	California 39th
11	New York 11th	28	Michigan 3rd	45	Arizona 6th
12	California 25th	29	Illinois 14th	46	Texas 23rd
13	Illinois 13th	30	California 4th	47	Florida 26th
14	New York 22nd	31	Utah 4th	48	Montana at-large
15	Texas 24th	32	New Jersey 2nd	49	Texas 10th
16	Texas 22nd	33	Michigan 8th	50	Minnesota 2nd
17	Missouri 2nd	34	New York 2nd		

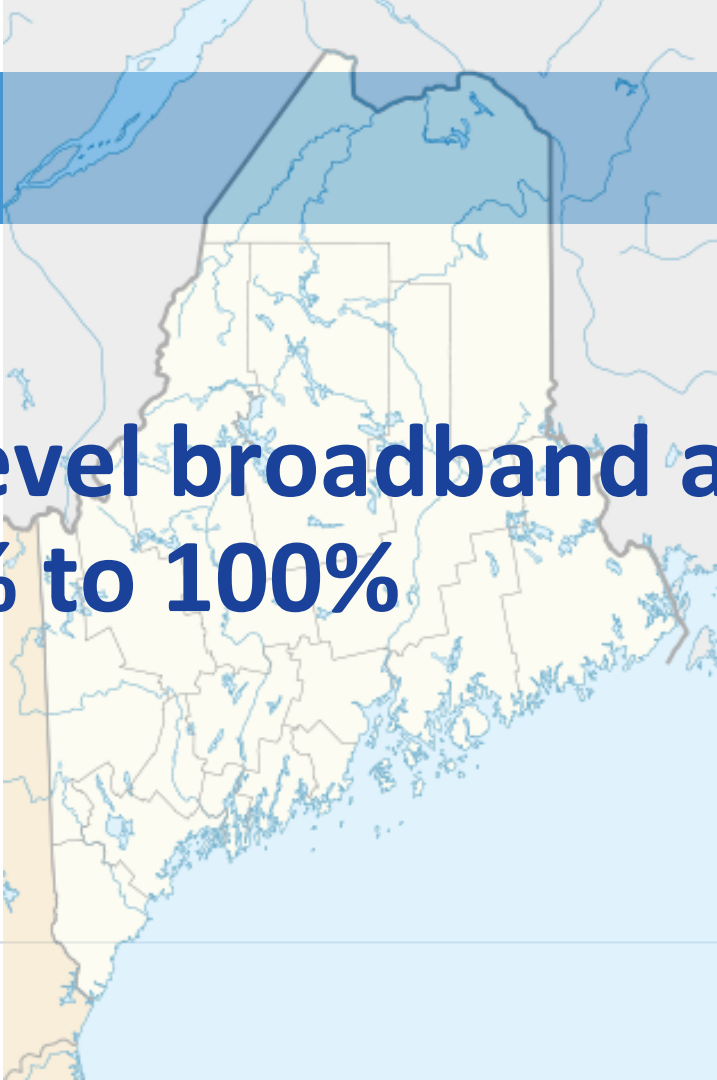




**County level youth turnout in 2016 ranged from
46% to 59%**



**County level youth voter registration in 2016
ranged from 54% to 73%**

A map of Massachusetts showing county-level broadband access. The map is overlaid with a blue horizontal bar at the top and a light blue vertical bar on the right. The text 'County level broadband access ranged from 40% to 100%' is centered over the map. The map shows various counties with different shades of blue and yellow, indicating varying levels of broadband access. The text is in a large, bold, dark blue font.

**County level broadband access ranged
from 40% to 100%**

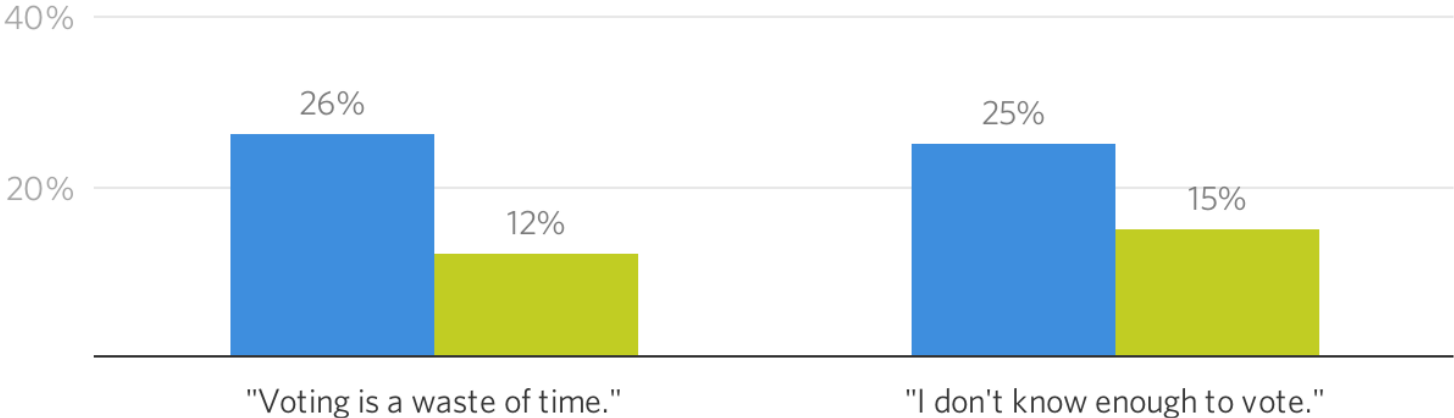


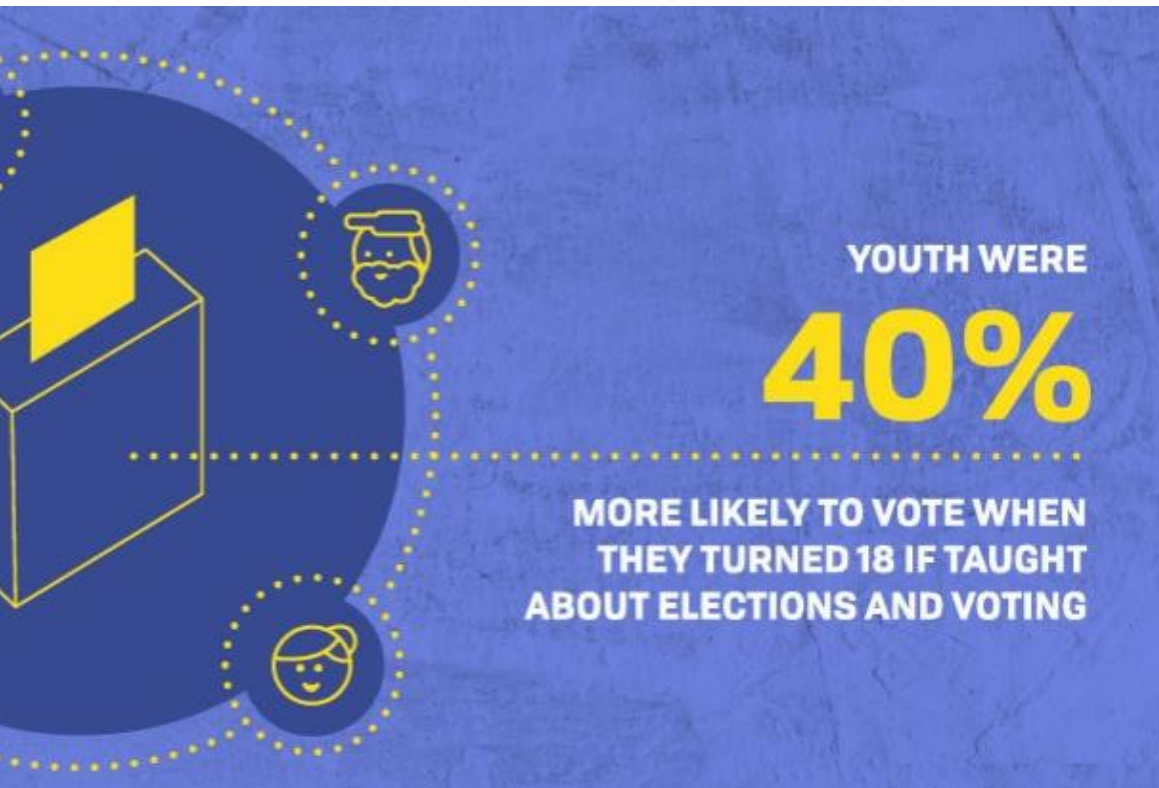
**Young people with any college experience
ranges at the county level from 34% to 67%**

Youth Attitudes toward Voting Affected by Encouragement of Teachers

The percentage of young people, 18-29, in each category who agree with the following statements:

■ Were Not Encouraged to Vote in High School ■ Were Encouraged to Vote in High School





[“All Together Now: Collaboration and Innovation for Youth Engagement”](#)

[“Youth Who Learned about Voting in High School More Likely to Become Informed and Engaged Voters.”](#)

Students Taught or Encouraged to Vote in High School More Civically Engaged

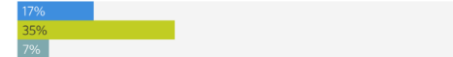
The percentage of young people, 18-29, in each category who have engaged in the following activities:

■ Received Encouragement to Vote in High School ■ Was Taught about Voter Registration in High School ■ Neither

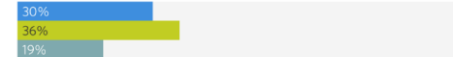
Talked to friends about political issues or elections



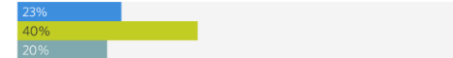
Volunteered on a political campaign



Donated money to a political campaign



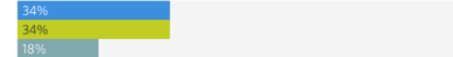
Registered others to vote



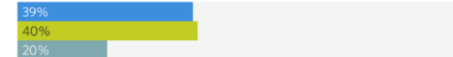
Tried to convince other young people to vote



Attended a march or demonstration about an issue that I care about



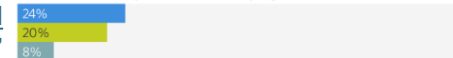
Advocated for a local, state or national policy



Helped someone who was in need of help



Served in a leadership role at a community organization



A Moment for Reflection

Who do you need to convince that this work matters, and what of this data could help you in that persuasion? What other data would you like to see?

How can conversations about and participation be...



VISIBLE



ACCESSIBLE



MEANINGFUL

...to a **WIDE DIVERSITY** of youth?

A paradigm shift . . .

<http://bit.ly/2OV8Fqp>

FROM

**“Mobilizing”
Voters**



TO

**“Growing”
Voters**

LET'S RAISE THE BAR >

EARLY ENGAGEMENT LEADS TO A LIFELONG VOTING HABIT

FOLLOW ON TO PRIME THE NEXT GENERATION OF VOTERS

47%

OF 18 AND 19-YEAR-OLDS REGISTERED TO VOTE IN THE 2016 ELECTIONS.

1

PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY CIVIC EDUCATION

Discussions of current issues in young adulthood were related to greater electoral engagement in 2012.



THERE ARE 16.5 MILLION YOUTH WHO TURNED 18 YEARS OLD BETWEEN THE 2012 AND 2016 ELECTIONS



3

OUR COUNTRY WILL HAVE MORE INFORMED AND SKILLED YOUNG PEOPLE



2

AND DO SO FOR ALL YOUTH, FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS.

We need many stakeholders to provide all youth with an equal opportunity to learn about elections.



YOUNG PEOPLE WHOSE PARENTS ATTENDED COLLEGE



WERE 10+ POINTS MORE LIKELY TO BE EXPOSED TO HIGH-QUALITY CIVIC EDUCATION PRACTICES

4

YOUTH WILL FEEL EMPOWERED ABOUT THEIR ROLE IN DEMOCRATIC LIFE

5

WHEN ELIGIBLE, THEY WILL BE MORE LIKELY TO CAST THEIR BALLOT

The quality of high school civics classes predicted young adults' electoral engagement and their informed voting in 2012.

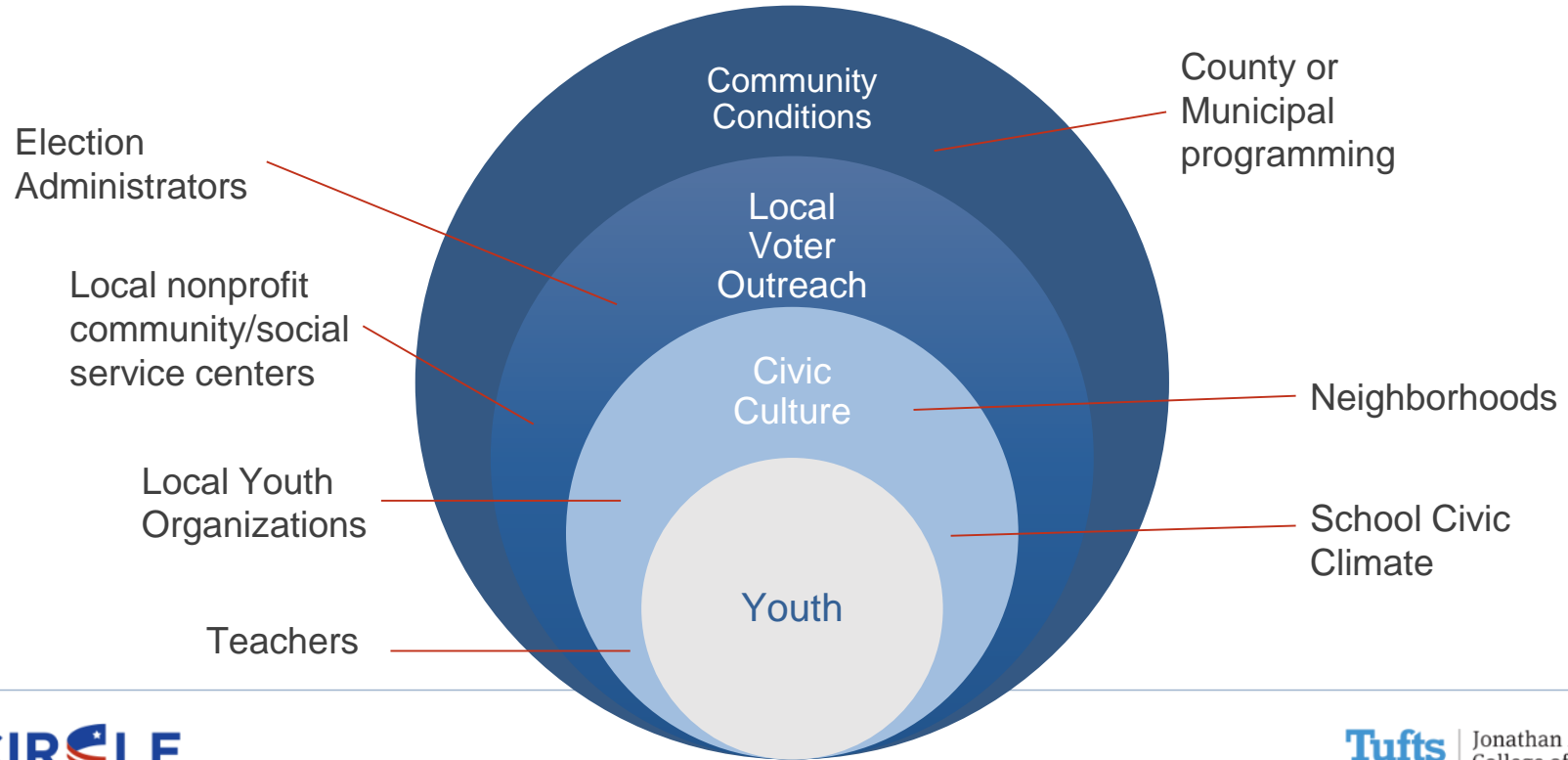


YOUTH WERE

40%

MORE LIKELY TO VOTE WHEN THEY TURNED 18 IF TAUGHT ABOUT ELECTIONS AND VOTING

Many stakeholders can influence youth engagement, both positively and negatively...



Lessons & Resources from One Another

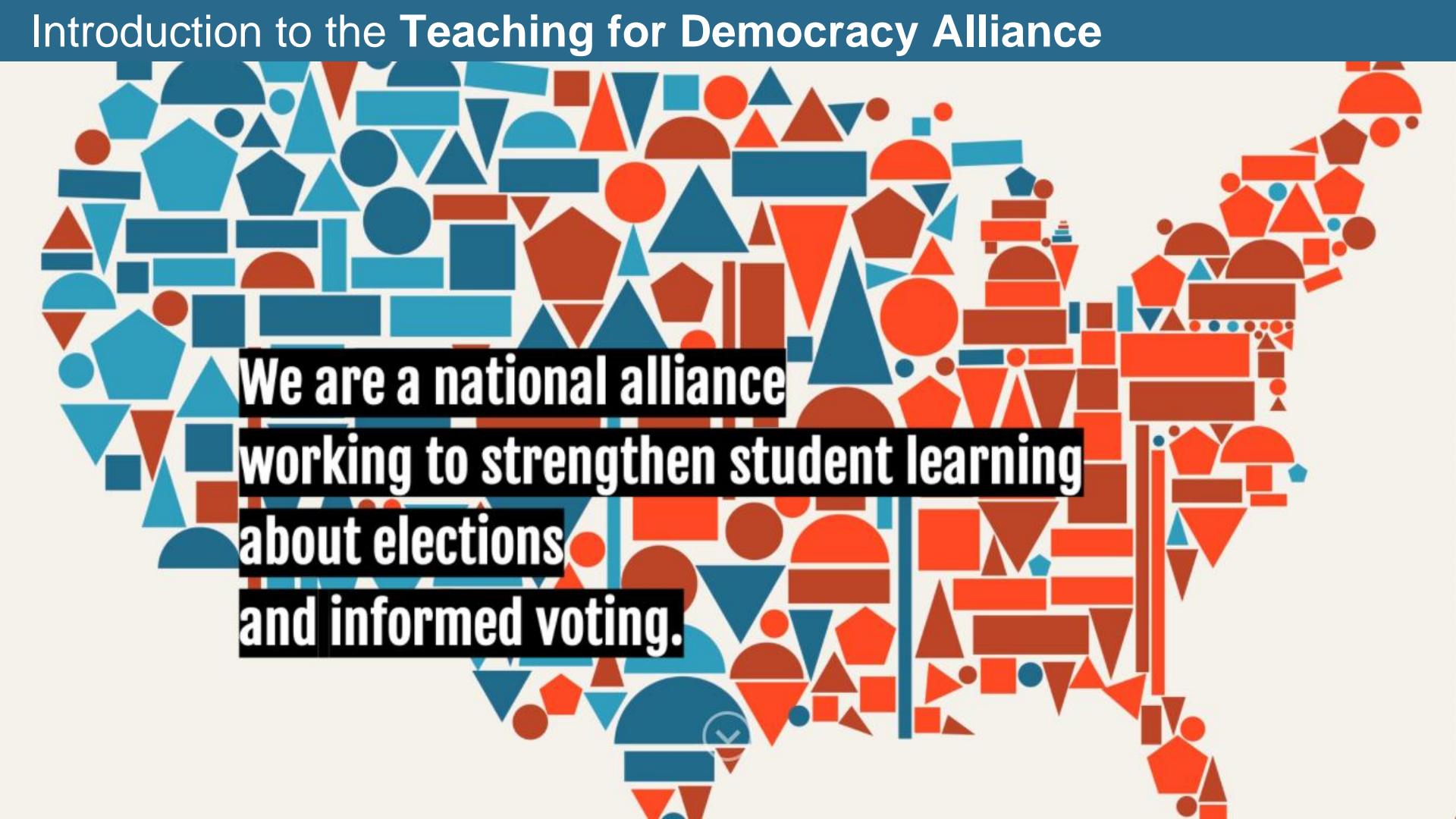
Use the CHAT function to tell us:

1. **What are you or your team already doing** (programs, partnerships, lessons, etc.) to teach about elections and voting?
2. **What else** would you like to do?
3. **What obstacles stand in your way?** What resources or support or partners do you need?

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Introduction to the Teaching for Democracy Alliance



**We are a national alliance
working to strengthen student learning
about elections
and informed voting.**

Introduction to the Teaching for Democracy Alliance



A Union of Professionals

BITES

CIRCLE

THE
CIVICS
CENTER



CERG

Civic Engagement Research Group
University of California, Riverside

CLOSE UP
WASHINGTON DC



FACING
HISTORY
AND
OURSELVES



GENERATION
CITIZEN

iCIVICS

LWV

NAMLE



UCF

**Lou Frey
Institute**

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



PBS NEWSHOUR

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION

EXTRA



NCSS

**Mikva
Challenge**

ROBERT R.
McCORMICK
FOUNDATION



RONALD REAGAN
PRESIDENTIAL
FOUNDATION
& INSTITUTE

Teaching about Elections & Voting Self-Assessment Matrix

	Voter Registration or pre-registration opportunities are widespread	Voting and Timely Election-Related Content in the classroom or as homework (any elected office)	Media Literacy skill development embedded with elections and voting topics	Classroom Discussion with a commitment to all voices, creating space for disagreement	Action Civics and other Experiential Learning	Teacher Support and Resources
Teacher	Provide concrete registration information & opportunities in the classroom; bring in League of Women Voters, the Civics Center, or other non-partisan voter registration organization to support this work.	Study history of voting rights; follow news about the election (at any level); assign students to watch debates and discuss; assign games that simulate real life elections or campaigns.	Use an activity that meshes media literacy skill development and election/voting content in various formats, such as youth media creation that includes print, visual, audio, or digital elements.	Assign and facilitate discussion and deliberation of local or national issues or ballot initiatives; teach students about deliberation. Seek opportunities for training in controversial issue discussion.	Enable students to work or observe polls on Election Day; register and mobilize voters; support non- or bipartisan campaigning; invite candidates to speak with students. Advise or start a club that facilitates student involvement in school governance and/or community issues and/or share information about such opportunities with students.	Share instructional resources about elections and voting with other teachers. Participate in professional learning experiences about elections and voting.
School	Offer concrete information and opportunities to register for all those eligible (more than a blast email and forms in the main office). Explicitly support efforts to register students to vote.	Include elections-related content and activities in all social studies and ELA classes, and support these activities school wide.	Ensure that teachers are aware of resources that support student media literacy application relative to elections and voting. Amplify media created by youth in support of election engagement and voting.	Explicitly support classroom discussion. ("Support" is defined broadly.) Provide training on classroom discussion for teachers. Provide discussion activities in all social studies classes about timely material or connecting history to today's election topics.	Actively seek out ways in which students can meaningfully participate or have a voice in school governance, through student council, school newspapers, and others.	Distribute resources on teaching about elections and voting to all social studies and ELA teachers. Dedicate a PD day to best practices. Train social studies and ELA teachers on discussions of current controversial issues.
District	Provide all students who are eligible with concrete information and opportunities to register (more than a blast email and forms in the main office) in every high school in the district.	Include elections-related content and activities in all social studies classes or in a combination of social studies and ELA or other classes district-wide.	Create avenues for students to post student-created media items and share throughout the district.	Explicitly support classroom discussion with resources, when appropriate, and potentially accompanied by a letter of support.	Support and, if needed, establish opportunities and systems for student participation in district governance (e.g., student advisor to the school board) and policies (e.g., student evaluation of teachers).	Show explicit support for teachers talking about elections and voting; distribute resources on teaching about elections and voting to all social studies and ELA teachers; offer training on discussion for social studies and ELA teachers.

This matrix is based on research about best practices in high quality civics education in the K-12 context.

Moving Forward

TEACHING FOR DEMOCRACY ALLIANCE ABOUT WHY TEACH ELECTIONS & VOTING RESOURCES **GROWING VOTERS COMMITMENT**

Growing Voters Commitment: A Promise from K-12 School and District Administrators

I hereby recognize:

1. the responsibility of schools to offer students an education which holistically prepares them to be active and engaged members of their communities, and
2. that an integral part of growing lifelong civic participants and voters involves teaching young people explicitly about elections and voting.

Given such, I commit to providing my teachers, staff, and students the leadership and support to facilitate and/or engage in these important elections- and voting-related learning opportunities, including some or all of the following:

- Widespread voter registration or pre-registration,
- In-class (or homework) content related to elections

Join us now:

** Indicates required field*

Do you agree to living out this commitment between now and December 2020? *

Yes

No

By typing your name in this box, you indicate that you have completed this yourself and commit to the above: *

Name *

First Last

Role *

Principal

School level subject area leader

Other school administrator

District leader



Moving Forward

TEACHING FOR DEMOCRACY ALLIANCE

ABOUT

WHY TEACH ELECTIONS & VOTING

RESOURCES

GROWING VOTERS COMMITMENT

FOR TEACHERS

- September 2nd, 4:30-5:30pm EST: **"The State of the Race"** (IllinoisCivics.org)
- September 9th, 7-8:30pm EST: **"Engaging Youth in Elections"** (Mikva Challenge) - free by entering discount code VOTE2020 during check out
- September 15th, 5-6:30pm EST: **"Engaging Youth in Elections"** (Mikva Challenge) - free by entering discount code VOTE2020 during check out
- September 15th, 7-8pm EST: **"Bringing Civic Learning to Distance Learning"** (IllinoisCivics.org)
- September 16th, 4:30-5:30pm EST: **"Access to the Ballot"** (IllinoisCivics.org)
- September 23rd, 7-8pm EST, **"Social-Emotional Learning for an Antiracist Classroom"** (Facing History) **Dena Simmons**
- September 29th, 7-8pm EST: **"Young People are Talking about Politics, but are they learning? Classroom Discussion: Why We Need to Help Students Navigate the 2020 Election So"** (Teaching for Democracy Alliance)
- September 30th, 4:30-5:30pm EST: **"Polls, Political Advertising, and the Media Literacy"** (Media and the ADL)
- October 14th, 4:30-5:30pm EST: **"The Electoral College: Is There A Better Way?"** (IllinoisCivics.org)
- October 15th, 7-8pm EST: **"Election 2020 and Managing Post-Election Conversations"** (Bites Media and the ADL)
- October 28th, 4:30-5:30pm EST: **"Engaging Your Students on Election Night"** (IllinoisCivics.org)
- November 4th, 4:30-5:30pm EST: **"Processing the Results of the 2020 Election"** (IllinoisCivics.org)
- November 18th, 4-5pm EST: **"Leaning into Difficult Conversations"** (Bites Media and the ADL)

FOR STUDENTS

- September 17th, 6:30-8:30pm EST: **"Youth Issues Summit"** (Mikva Challenge)
- September 24th, 6:30-8:30pm EST: **"Virtual Campaign Fair"** (Mikva Challenge)
- October 8th, 6:30-8:30pm EST: **"Voter Education and Ballot Party"** (Mikva Challenge)

For Distance Learning

Voter Registration

Instruction on Elections and Voting

Media Literacy

Classroom Discussion

Action Civics and Experiential Learning

Teacher Training, Support, and Resources



Moving Forward

youthdata.circle.tufts.edu

SELECT DATA

Maine Select Congressional District OR Select County Not all data are available for states. [Find out why.](#)

YOUTH VOTING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT (select up to 3)

YOUTH & ELECTIONS ⓘ

2018

- Voter turnout (2018) ⓘ
- Voter registration rate (2018) ⓘ
- Votes cast (2018) ⓘ
- Vote choice, Senate (2018) ⓘ
- Vote choice, Governor (2018) ⓘ
- YESI Ranking, Senate (2018) ⓘ
- YESI Ranking, Governor (2018) ⓘ
- YESI Ranking, Congressional District (2018) ⓘ

Youth Civic Engagement ⓘ

- Belong to a group ⓘ
- Volunteering ⓘ
- Make consumer choices for political reasons ⓘ
- Work with neighbors to do something positive for community ⓘ
- Do favors for a neighbor ⓘ
- Discuss political/social issues with neighbors ⓘ
- Discuss political/social issues with friends or family ⓘ
- Talk with people of different backgrounds ⓘ
- Share views about news/politics on social media ⓘ
- Contact or visit public official to express opinion ⓘ

CONDITIONS THAT SHAPE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT (select up to 3)

Population ⓘ

- Youth citizen population ⓘ
- Youth/adult ratio ⓘ

Education ⓘ

- Youth enrolled in college ⓘ
- Youth with college experience ⓘ
- Youth without high school diploma ⓘ

Quality of Life ⓘ

- Median household income ⓘ
- Income disparity ⓘ
- Child poverty rate ⓘ
- Violent crime rate ⓘ
- Broadband internet access ⓘ

Civic Culture ⓘ

- Nonprofits per capita ⓘ
- Nonprofits serving youth ⓘ
- Rate of Associations ⓘ
- Youth residential stability ⓘ
- Residential racial segregation ⓘ

Political Landscape ⓘ

- Partisan lean ⓘ
- Winning Presidential candidate ⓘ
- Was the last Presidential election close? ⓘ
- Facilitative Election Laws ⓘ
- Statute on high school voter registration? ⓘ

SEE DATA **CLEAR** **CLOSE** **X**

Moving Forward

→ What's ONE thing you will do to find resources or prepare to teach about elections and voting?



Tisch
College  20 years of civic
leadership

Questions?

Learn more:

tischcollege.tufts.edu
circle.tufts.edu

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