



The Associated Press-NORC
Center for Public Affairs Research

MTV/AP-NORC: YOUNG AMERICANS AND THE MIDTERM ELECTION

The next generation of potential voters can turn their political pessimism into action in the 2018 midterms, according to the latest wave of the MTV/AP-NORC Youth Political Pulse Survey.

Young people age 15 to 34 express widespread pessimism toward the political system and discourse in the United States today. Fifty-seven percent say they are doubtful that people of different political views can come together and work out their differences, and less than 1 in 5 hold out hope that these political divisions will heal over the next five years. Just 1 in 10 have felt positive or excited about the state of the country in the past month, and about 7 in 10 say American politics are dysfunctional.

But many young people believe that negativity may fuel action by their generation. Sixty-two percent believe that their generation is motivated to make positive changes in the U.S., and 63 percent of young people say that voting in the 2018 midterms will allow their generation to effect real change in the government.

This November, young people say they will be motivated by the issues, and are looking for a different type of candidate on the ballot. Less than 1 in 5 express excitement about voting for a lifelong politician, or a candidate who is white, older, or a celebrity. Instead, two-thirds express excitement for a candidate who cares about the issues that affect them and their generation. And when it comes to the issues, more than half say health care, immigration, and the economy will be at the forefront when deciding how to vote.



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Three Things You Should Know

About the MTV/AP-NORC
Youth Political Pulse Survey
Among Young People Age 15 to 34:

- 1) Six in 10 say that their generation is feeling motivated to make positive change in the country. And 79 percent think leaders from their generation would do a better job running the country.
- 2) Political candidates that care about the issues that affect the younger generation generate the most excitement. Candidates who are white and older are among those who generate the least excitement.
- 3) Heading into the general election, less than a quarter are confident they have enough information about the candidates for the 2018 midterms to make an informed choice.

While emotions toward the upcoming elections are somewhat tempered overall, likely voters¹ express higher levels of excitement, interest, pride, and hope than those who say they are less likely to vote. Likely voters are also more likely than others to express excitement about voting for candidates who have certain qualities, including those who care about issues that affect them, are teachers, are black, and who share their religious beliefs.

This survey is the third in a multiwave series aimed at taking the political pulse of the next generation of voters ahead of the November 2018 Midterm elections. This nationwide poll by MTV and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research was conducted using AmeriSpeak®, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Interviews were conducted with a total of 1,030 young people, including 878 adults age 18-34 and 152 teens age 15-17.

MOST YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A BLEAK OUTLOOK ON THE CURRENT POLITICAL CLIMATE.

Young Americans express pessimism when it comes to Americans' ability to work through political differences, and most believe that the country will become more politically divided over the next five years. Fifty-seven percent say they are skeptical that Americans of different political views can still come together and resolve their differences, while just 42 percent are optimistic that this can happen.

Looking ahead, 57 percent of teens and young adults believe that America will become more politically divided over the next five years, 17 percent think the country will become less politically divided, and 25 percent say it will remain as it is now.

Young people are more closely divided in their general outlook; 51 percent think the country's best days are in the past, and 48 percent believe the best days still lie ahead. Forty-three percent say they are generally optimistic about the future of the United States, similar to the 46 percent who expressed optimism in May and March.

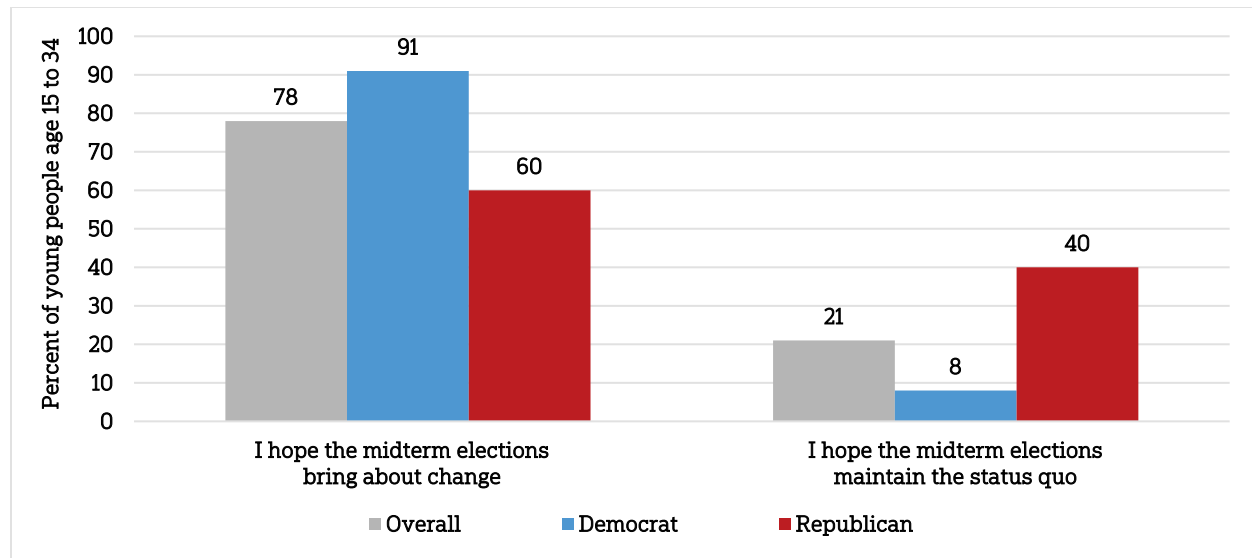
MOST YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL THE MIDTERM ELECTIONS WILL BRING ABOUT CHANGE AND WILL GIVE THEM A SAY IN HOW THE GOVERNMENT WORKS.

Though many young people express pessimism toward the current political landscape, a majority are optimistic that the midterm elections present an opportunity for change and to give their generation a voice.

Sixty-three percent of young people say voting in the midterms will give their generation a say in how government runs, while 36 percent think voting won't really affect what the government does.

More than three-quarters of young people, including majorities of Republicans and Democrats, are hopeful that the midterm elections will bring about change.

¹ Respondents were asked to rate their likelihood of voting on a scale of zero to 10 where 10 means that they're certain they will vote and zero means there is no chance they will vote. Those who answered an 8, 9, or 10 are classified as likely voters.

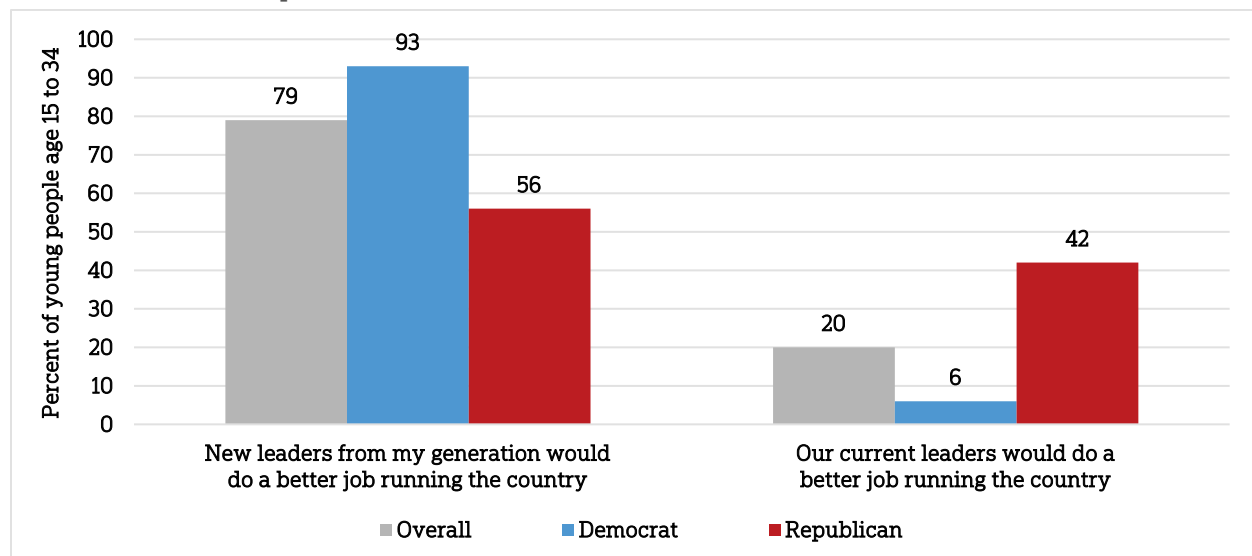
Across party lines, young Americans hope the midterm elections will bring change.

Question: What best describes your attitudes toward the outcome of the 2018 midterm elections, even if neither is exactly right?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted June 21-July 9, 2018, with 1,030 young people age 15-34 nationwide

Young people are optimistic that their generation is motivated to make positive changes, though there are considerable differences between partisans. Overall, 62 percent of young people believe their generation is motivated to make a positive change in America, while 37 percent say their generation isn't motivated to do so. Seventy-three percent of Democrats say their generation is motivated compared with 54 percent of Republicans.

Overwhelmingly, young people think their generation is poised to do a better job than politicians currently in office. Four in 5 say leaders from their generation will be better at running the country, while 1 in 5 say current leaders are preferable. Large differences by party emerge, though majorities of both Democrats and Republicans say new leaders will do a better job.

Majorities of young Democrats and Republicans say leaders from their generation will do a better job than current leadership.

In your opinion, which of the following would do a better job running the country?

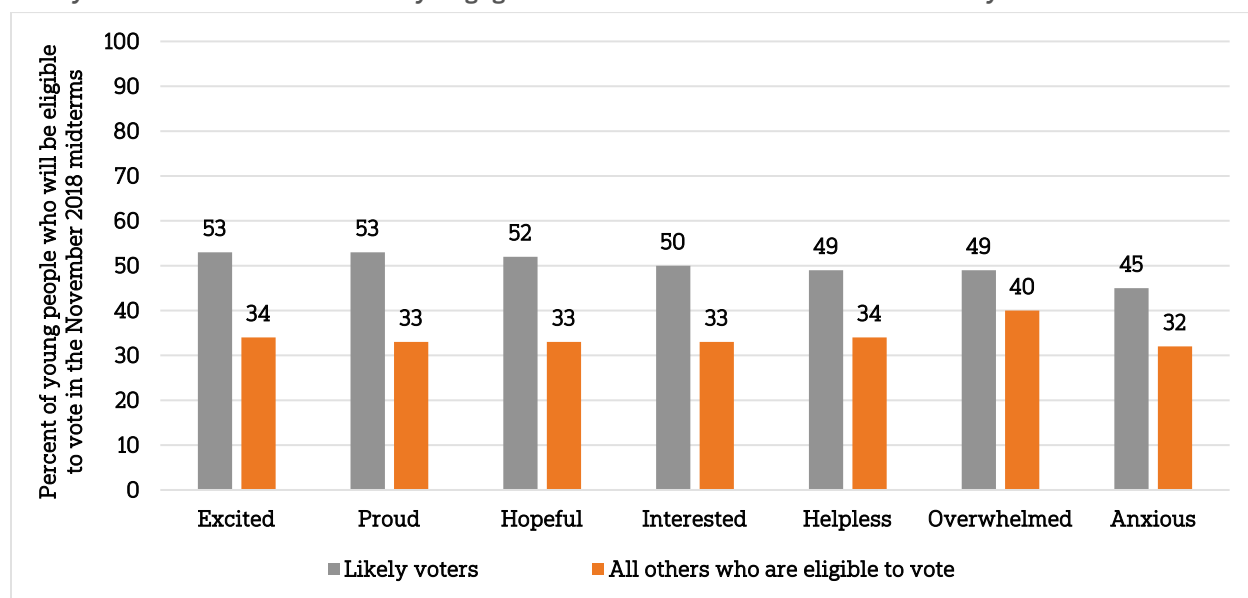
Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted June 21-July 9, 2018, with 1,030 young people age 15-34 nationwide

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERALL HAVE TEMPERED EMOTIONS WHEN IT COMES TO THE UPCOMING ELECTION, THOUGH MORE THAN HALF OF LIKELY VOTERS EXPRESS EXCITEMENT, PRIDE, AND HOPE.

When asked which words describe how they feel about the upcoming elections, teens and young adults report having a mix of emotions. Similar proportions of young people age 15 to 34 feel excited, interested, proud, and hopeful as those who feel helpless, anxious, and overwhelmed.

Among young people who will be eligible to vote in November, likelihood of voting is a significant predictor of emotions. Those who are the most likely to vote are also the most likely to feel each of the seven emotions asked about. Forty-five percent of those who will be eligible to vote in the midterms say they are likely to vote, which remains unchanged since March.

Likely voters are more emotionally engaged in the midterm elections than unlikely voters.



Question: Please say if each of the following words describes or does not describe how you feel about the upcoming midterm elections.

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted June 21-July 9, 2018, with 1,030 young people age 15-34 nationwide

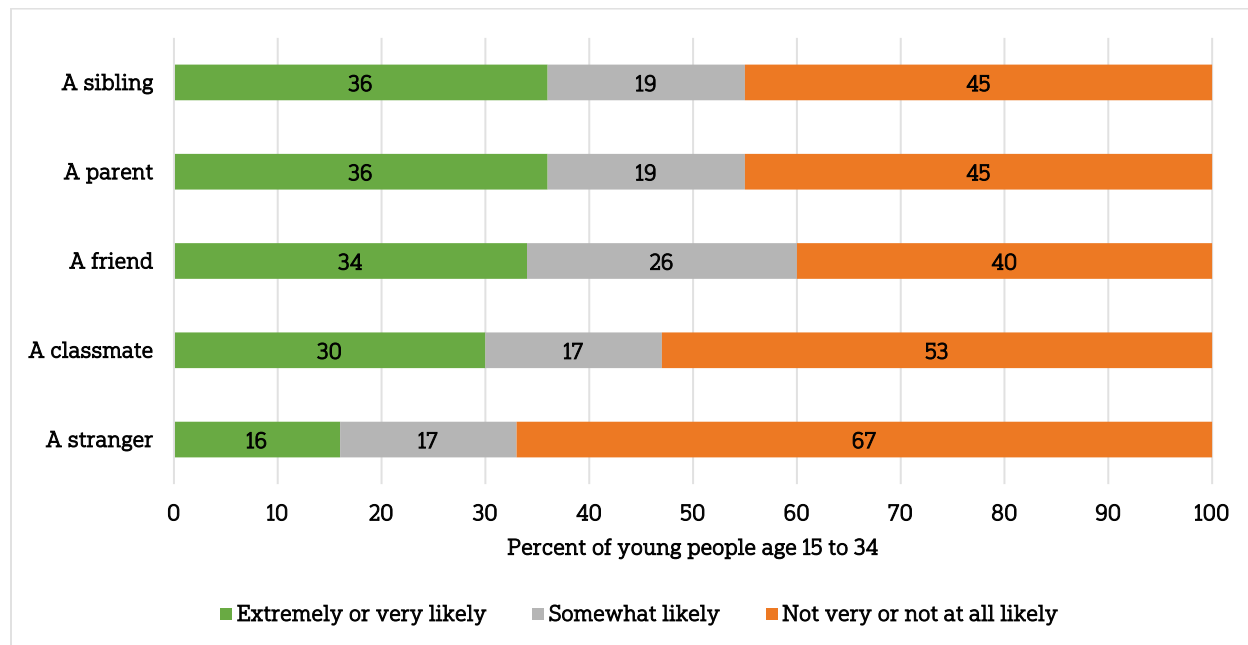
For 42 percent of young people, Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 election increased their overall interest in the 2018 midterms, while 18 percent say their interest was decreased. Thirty-nine percent say the outcome of the 2016 election had no impact on their interest in the 2018 midterms. Over half of Democrats say they are more interested in the midterms because of the result in the last Presidential election compared to 35 percent of Republicans.

MANY YOUNG PEOPLE REMAIN ENGAGED WITH NEWS ABOUT THE MIDTERMS, AND A THIRD SAY IT'S LIKELY THEY'LL ENCOURAGE A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND TO VOTE.

Similar numbers of young people report reading news about the midterms (52 percent), posting or commenting about the elections on social media (27 percent), sharing political memes (25 percent), and participating in candidate forums or rallies (13 percent) as they did when the questions were last asked earlier this spring.

About one third of young people say it is extremely or very likely that they will try to encourage a sibling, parent, or friend to vote, and about another 2 in 10 say they are somewhat likely to do so. Fewer are very likely to encourage a classmate or stranger.²

Young Americans are more likely to encourage a friend or family member to vote than a classmate or stranger.



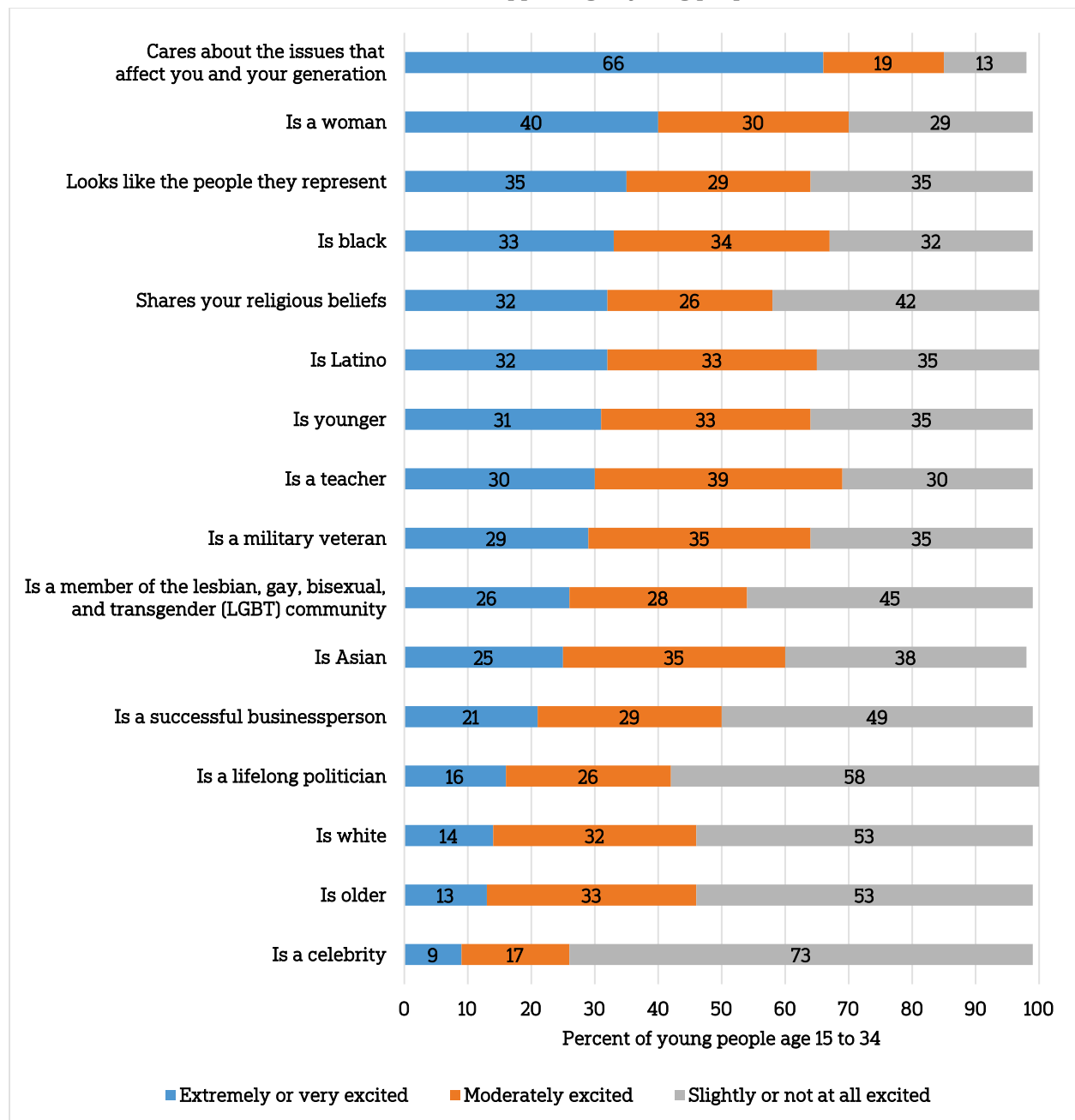
Question: How likely is it that you will try to encourage any of the following to vote in the upcoming midterm election?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted June 21-July 9, 2018, with 1,030 young people age 15-34 nationwide

VIEWS ON CANDIDATES: IT'S THE ISSUES THAT MATTER MOST.

Two in 3 young people say they would be very excited to vote for a candidate who cares about issues affecting them and their generation. They express the least excitement about candidates who are white, older, celebrities, or lifelong politicians.

² Those who responded that an item is “not applicable” to their situation were removed from the total for purposes of analysis. Full tabulations are available in the topline on [APNORC.org](https://www.apnorc.org).

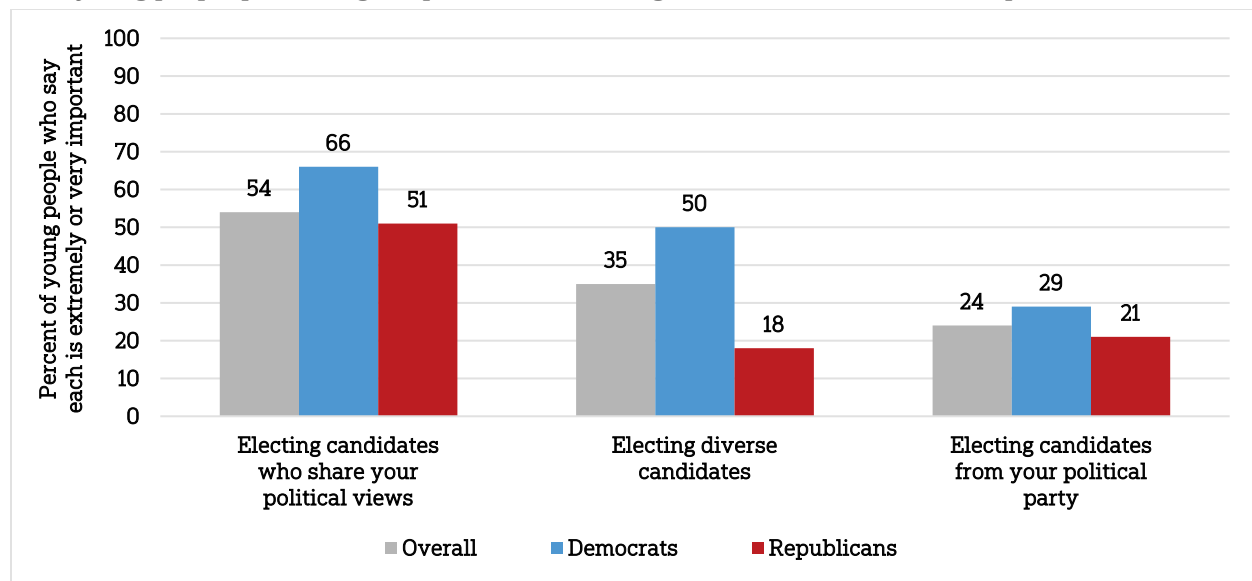
Candidates who care about the issues are most appealing to young people.

Question: How excited would you be to vote for a candidate who...?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted June 21-July 9, 2018, with 1,030 young people age 15-34 nationwide

Likely voters are more likely than other eligible voters to be excited to vote for a candidate who cares about issues that affect them (77 percent vs. 59 percent), is a woman (46 percent vs. 32 percent), looks like the people they represent (43 percent vs. 30 percent), is a teacher (40 percent vs. 25 percent), is black (38 percent vs. 26 percent), shares their religious beliefs (37 percent vs. 27 percent), or is a successful business person (25 percent vs. 17 percent).

Overall, young people place a higher level of importance on electing candidates who share their political views than electing diverse candidates or candidates from their political party. But Democrats are nearly three times as likely as Republicans to say it's important to elect diverse candidates.

Most young people place a high importance on electing candidates who share their political views.

Question: How important are each of the following to you personally?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted June 21-July 9, 2018, with 1,030 young people age 15-34 nationwide

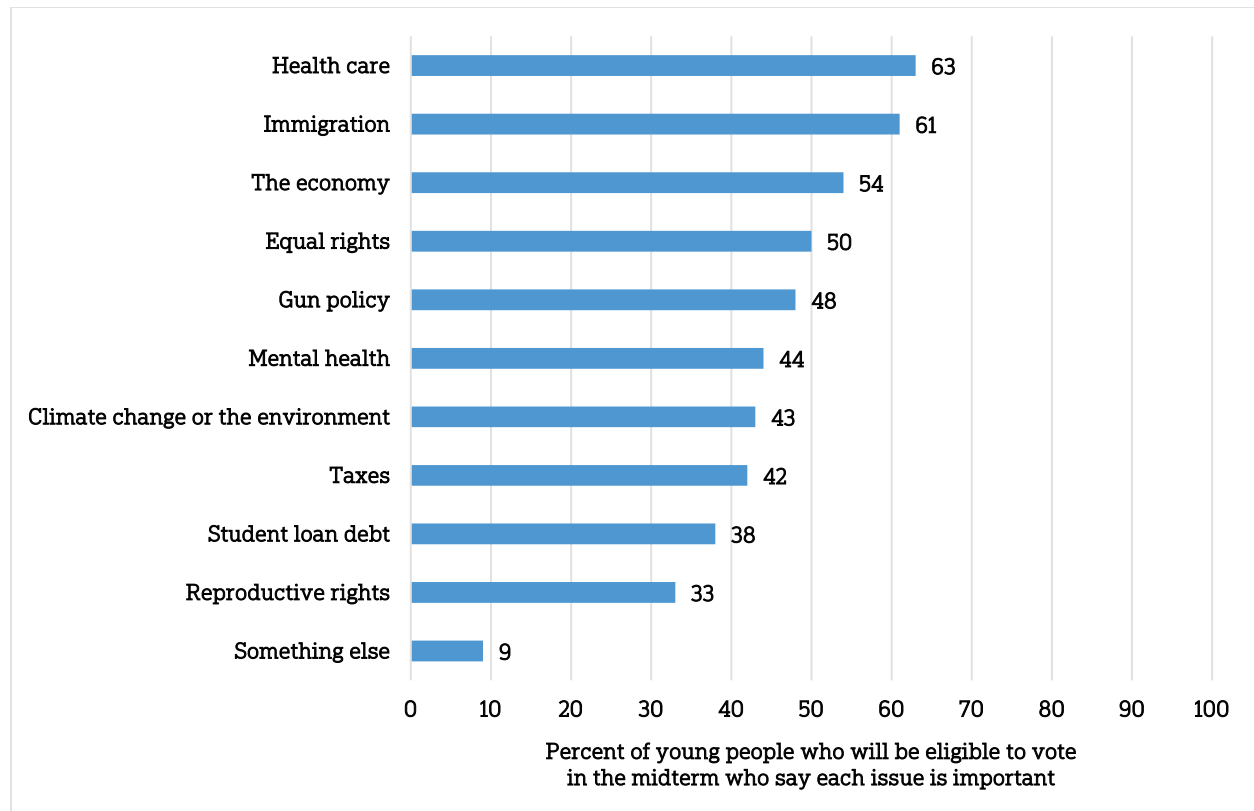
When it comes to local elections, a majority of young people are satisfied with their options. Fifty-seven percent feel like there is generally at least one candidate who shares their views, while 42 percent say they usually feel like none of the candidates represent their views well.

NEARLY HALF OF YOUNG PEOPLE CITE AT LEAST FIVE ISSUES THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO THEIR VOTE CHOICE.

When given a list of potentially important issues this November, few young eligible voters say that just one issue will be important to their vote choice. Instead, 87 percent cite 2 or more issues that will be the most important in deciding how to vote in the midterms, including 49 percent who cite 5 or more issues.

Likely voters are more engaged with the issues, choosing an average of 5 issues as important, compared to 4 issues for unlikely voters.

Looking specifically at the issues, more than 6 in 10 young people who will be eligible to vote in November say health care and immigration will be most important to them in deciding for whom to vote in the election. Fifty-four percent say the economy will be important and 50 percent say equal rights will be important.

Health care tops a list of issues that matter most in deciding how to vote.

Question: What issues are the most important to you in deciding how to vote in this year's (2018) midterm election? Please select all that apply.

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted June 21-July 9, 2018, with 1,030 young people age 15-34 nationwide

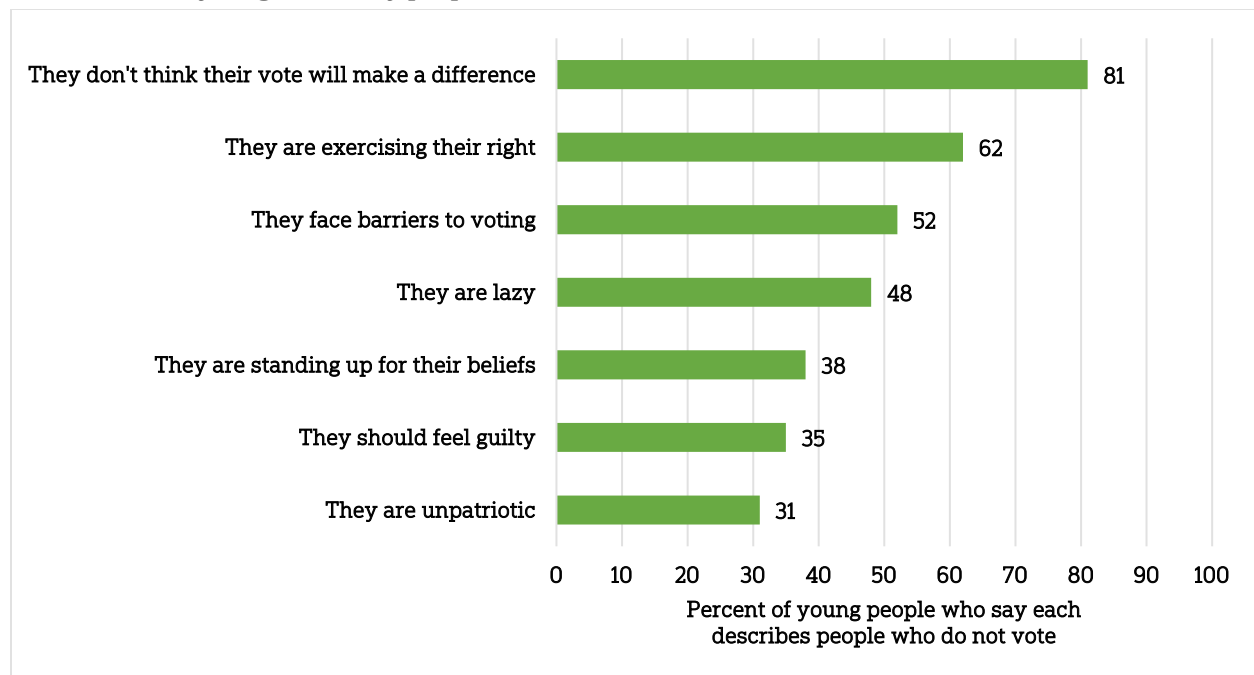
MOST YOUNG AMERICANS FEEL THEY DON'T HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION ABOUT THE CANDIDATES.

Moving into the general election, few teens and young adults feel confident that they have enough information about the candidates to make an informed choice between them. Overall, only 22 percent feel extremely or very confident about their information levels, while 41 percent feel not very or not at all confident.

Likely voters are more confident in their information levels. Thirty-four percent of likely voters say they are extremely or very confident about the amount of information they have about the candidates compared to 11 percent of other voters.

YOUNG PEOPLE TEND TO BE SYMPATHETIC TOWARD THOSE WHO DON'T VOTE.

When it comes to people who are eligible to vote in elections but don't, fewer than half of young people shame them for it. More than 6 in 10 say people who don't vote think their vote will not count and that they believe they are exercising their right to not vote. Roughly half say those who don't vote face barriers to voting, while fewer believe they are standing up for their beliefs, that they should feel guilty, and that they are unpatriotic.

Most teens and young adults say people who don't vote think their vote will not make a difference.

Question: Next, we'd like you to think about people who are eligible to vote in elections but don't. Please say whether or not the following describes how you feel about people who do not vote.

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted June 21-July 9, 2018, with 1,030 young people age 15-34 nationwide

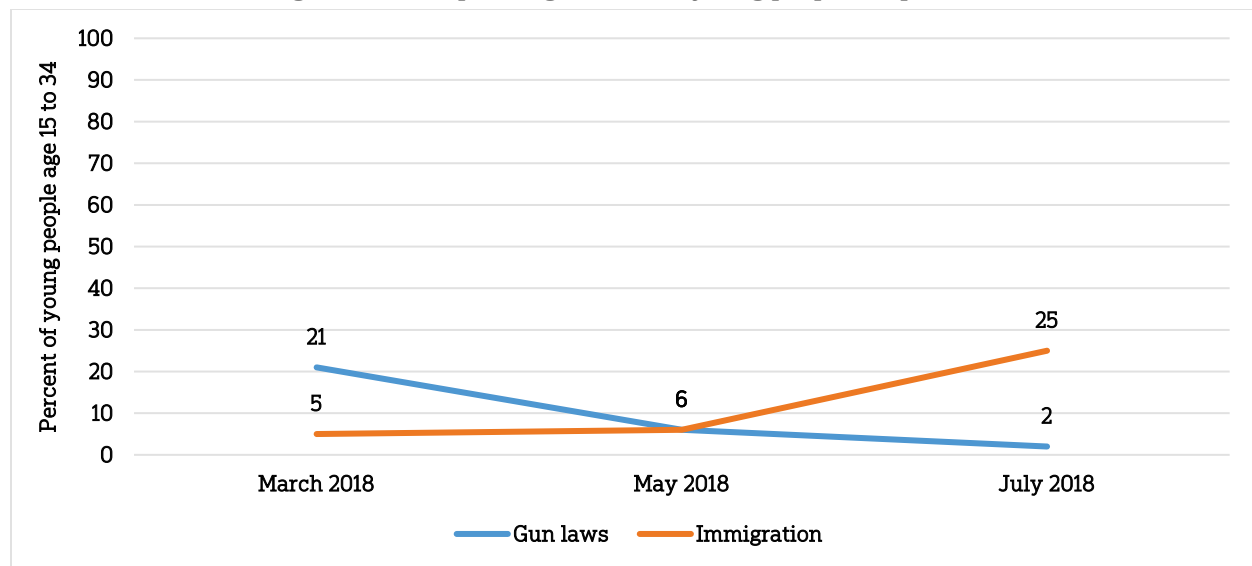
There are partisan differences in these opinions. Sixty-two percent of Democrats think people face barriers to voting, while only 40 percent of Republicans agree. Furthermore, 61 percent of Republicans say people who don't vote are lazy compared with 46 percent of Democrats.

Further, likely voters are more likely than others to say that people who do not vote are lazy (58 percent vs. 40 percent) and that they should feel guilty (50 percent vs. 24 percent).

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS HAVE REMAINED LARGELY STEADY SINCE MARCH, BUT IMMIGRATION EMERGES AS THE TOP ISSUE FOR JULY.

Overall, young people's support for Trump has remained stable since earlier this spring. As of July, 33 percent approve of the job the president is doing, compared with 30 percent in May and 33 percent in March. Sixty-seven percent disapprove of Trump's job performance in the latest poll.

Although views about American politics in general are stable, young people's perceptions of the most pressing issue in the country have changed in tandem with the news cycle and current events. In March 2018, 21 percent cited gun issues as the most important problem, which has decreased to just 2 percent in July. On the flip side, immigration issues have come to the forefront, mentioned by just 5 percent of young people in March but fully 25 percent in July.

Since March 2018, immigration has replaced gun laws as young people's top concern.

Question: Of all of the issues facing the country right now, what concerns you the most? [OPEN-ENDED QUESTION]

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted June 21-July 9, 2018, with 1,030 young people age 15-34 nationwide

Young people continue to feel disillusioned about the way American politics are functioning. Seven in 10 say that American politics have not been functioning very well or at all over the past month. And in the past month, 38 percent of teens and young adults have felt anxious, 44 percent have felt angry, 11 percent have felt positive, and 10 percent have felt excited, similar to March and May.

However, young Americans also continue to feel higher levels of efficacy after an increase in the wake of demonstrations after the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Belief that elected officials care at least a moderate amount about what people like them think (31 percent) and that people like them can affect the government at least a moderate amount (44 percent) are stable since the initial bump in May 2018.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and with funding from MTV and NORC at the University of Chicago. Staff from NORC at the University of Chicago, The Associated Press, and MTV collaborated on all aspects of the study.

Data were collected using AmeriSpeak®, NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97 percent of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings.

Interviews for this survey were conducted between June 21 and July 9, 2018, with young people age 15 to 34 representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference. Adult panel members age 18 to 34 were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 878 completed the survey—853 via the web and 25 via telephone. In addition, teen panel members age 15 to 17 were drawn from AmeriSpeak Teen, and 152 completed the survey—148 via the web and 4 via telephone.

To measure likelihood of voting in the 2018 midterm elections, all respondents who will be of age to vote before the midterm elections were asked to place themselves on a scale of zero to 10, where 10 means they're certain they will vote in the midterm and zero means there is no chance they will vote. Those who answered an 8, 9, or 10 on the scale are classified as likely voters. In total, 417 respondents are likely voters.

Among young people age 15 to 34, the final stage completion rate is 26.1 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 33.7 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 87.2 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 7.7 percent. The overall margin of sampling error among young people age 15 to 34 is +/- 4.3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. Among likely voters, the margin of sampling error is +/- 9.2 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for other subgroups.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, a poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any noncoverage or under and oversampling resulting from the study specific sample design. Poststratification variables included age, gender, census division, race/ethnicity, and education. Weighting variables were obtained from the 2017 Current Population Survey. The weighted data reflect the U.S. population of young people age 15 to 34.

A comprehensive listing of the questions, complete with tabulations of top-level results for each question, is available on The AP-NORC Center website: www.apnorc.org. For more information, email info@apnorc.org.

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