

Our Vote is Our Future

As a country, we've come a long way in terms of voting. From the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which allowed primarily white women to vote, to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which federally enforced the right to vote, to all men and women, regardless of race, religion, or education. Now we face a new challenge: getting young people to vote and convincing them that their voices do matter and will be heard.

Some young people know that voting is important, but it's the *why* that escapes them. With our votes, we can elect candidates that reflect our wants and needs in higher-level government such as Congress. The laws that they pass impact our everyday lives. If we want to change laws we feel strongly about, we must vote. Also, we have so much information at our fingertips nowadays. Why not use it to get educated? Especially with candidates using popular platforms like Instagram and Twitter, we can get a fuller picture of who they are and what they stand for ([Best Colleges.org](#)).

A common reason young voters don't vote is because they feel that their votes don't matter or won't make a difference. But it's quite the opposite. In 2016, candidates campaigned hard for the 18-29 set, trying their best to target the electoral group. Why? Because they understand the necessity of winning approval from this powerful voting party ([Best Colleges.org](#)). In addition, our votes have swayed elections. The most notable example coming from Barack Obama's presidential election and re-election. One of the key elements that led to Obama's presidency in 2008 was his popularity with youth, giving him a large margin over competitors. Millennials have also been credited with Barack Obama's success in the 2012 presidential election. Obama won 67% of the national youth vote ([Best Colleges.org](#)). As you can see, our voice is more powerful than we realize.

Another reason young voters don't vote is because they don't have anyone pushing them to vote. We can encourage our peers to vote by merely talking about voting with our friends or even organizing a carpool to the polls together. Or, make a weekend plan to vote and have brunch! Voting doesn't have to be boring or tedious. "If you can convince one person in your proximity to vote that wasn't planning on voting, you can swing this election and obtain morally-just leaders," says 'March for our Rights' activist Matt Deitsch. Another approach is having pre-registration for 16 and 17-year-olds. It allows young people to enroll before they've left home for college or work opportunities, which substantially increases youth turn-out ([Forbes](#)).

In conclusion, young people can significantly influence elections and therefore can protect their stake in the world by voting. We can elect a president that is adequately qualified to be president, a president who reflects us as a diverse group of individuals. Invest in your future, young people. We have the power to make our voices heard, but to do that, we have to speak.