



THE CENTER FOR INFORMATION & RESEARCH ON CIVIC LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT
www.civicyouth.org

2016 Election

Youth Electoral Significance Index

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What the YESI is For

CIRCLE conducts research on young Americans' civic engagement, defined very broadly. We find that many young people are highly engaged in issues and causes. However, most political campaigns, especially at the congressional level, have not yet tapped their energy and voting power. Through the YESI, CIRCLE is highlighting the states and congressional districts where youth are poised to have a disproportionately high electoral impact at the federal level in 2016.

For campaigns, parties, and political movements of all types, the YESI can inform the allocation of scarce resources and encourage them to invest in youth turnout, in their own interests. For journalists, it can suggest states and districts in which to cover the youth vote and can provide insights about youth in any district that will feature in a news article.

Some organizations and individuals are interested in enhancing youth engagement. They realize that the quality, vitality, and representativeness of American democracy depends on how young people engage in elections. Voting is known to be habitual, and exposure to information about issues and candidates, with opportunities to take action, encourages other forms of participation. For people who share these broad concerns about youth engagement, the YESI is a tool for identifying special opportunities and needs.

WHY IS YOUTH VOTING IMPORTANT?

- 1** Voting is habitual. Starting to vote earlier in life means more habitual voters over the long term.
- 2** Young people are a major subset of the electorate, their voices matter and they have important insight into issues.
- 3** Young people's participation can influence election results.
- 4** Involving young people in election-related learning, activities and discussion can have an impact on the young person's household.
- 5** Voting could be a gateway to more/ other civic engagement.

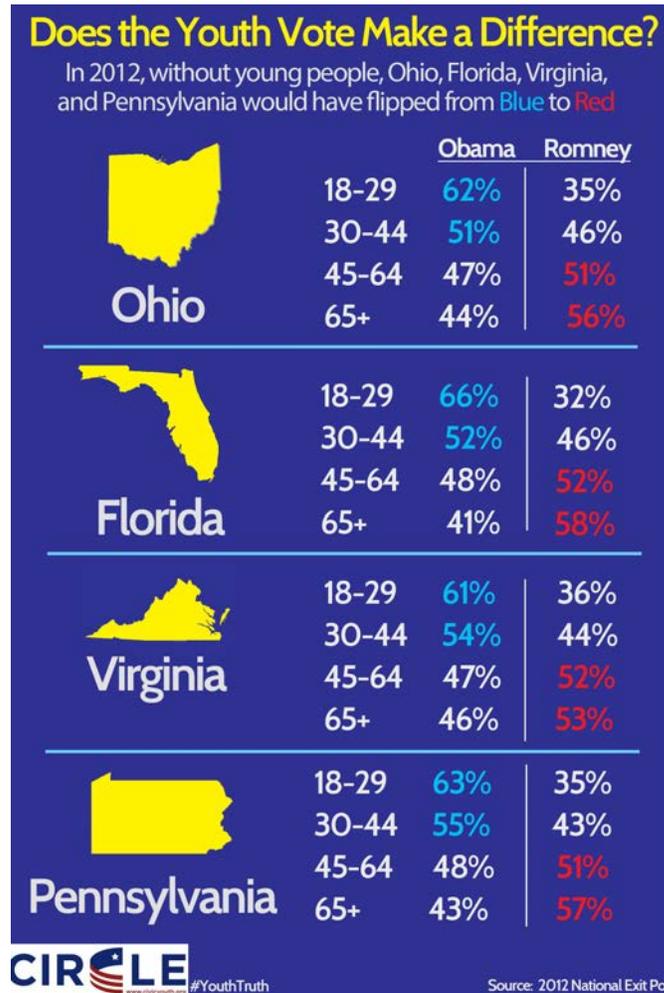
Tufts
UNIVERSITY

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CIRCLE

Influence of Youth Vote in Recent General Elections

The 2008 Iowa caucus saw an estimated youth turnout more than double that of 2004, and then-Senator Obama won the caucus with 57% of youth votes. In 2012, slightly more support from youth in key presidential battleground states would have turned the election for former governor Romney. As it happened, the extent to which youth supported President Obama in these key states was central to his reelection.



Youth also played an important role in the most recent midterm contests. Our [analysis of the 2014 Senate](#) races showed that, whether by turning out in high numbers, and/or by throwing a strong amount of support behind one candidate, young voters may have impacted the elections in Alaska, Colorado, Louisiana, and North Carolina. In Alaska, for example, more than 15,000 young people turned out in a race that Republican Mark Sullivan won by just 6,000 votes. And in Louisiana, youth propelled Democrat Mary Landrieu (42%) to a runoff against Republican Bill Cassidy (41%). Young people cast 11% of the votes in that election and supported Landrieu to the tune of 50%, which was by far her best performance among any age group.

These retrospective analyses show that the youth vote played a key role in various competitive races, both when young people participated in large numbers and when they favored a candidate more than older voters by a large margin.

Looking Ahead to the 2016 General Election

Given the sometimes pivotal role of young people's participation and vote choice in recent national elections, it is likely that the youth vote will again be important in the outcomes of 2016 races.

Improving upon the rigor and accuracy of our methodology, CIRCLE has constructed a statistical index to prospectively highlight the races in which youth are likely to have a disproportionately high impact in 2016.

This report describes states and congressional districts that ranked highest on our new Youth Electoral Significance Index, or YESI, and explains how we developed this index. The YESI does not predict youth turnout or election results, but instead identifies races in which the youth vote has the highest potential to influence the outcome. The computation of these indices is based on predictions made by experts about each 2016 race, data from past races, youth population, state and district population characteristics, and state election laws. Together, these indicators generate a rating for each 2016 congressional race and each state in the presidential contest. The result is a ranking of where youth are most likely to have electoral significance and to impact elections on the federal level.

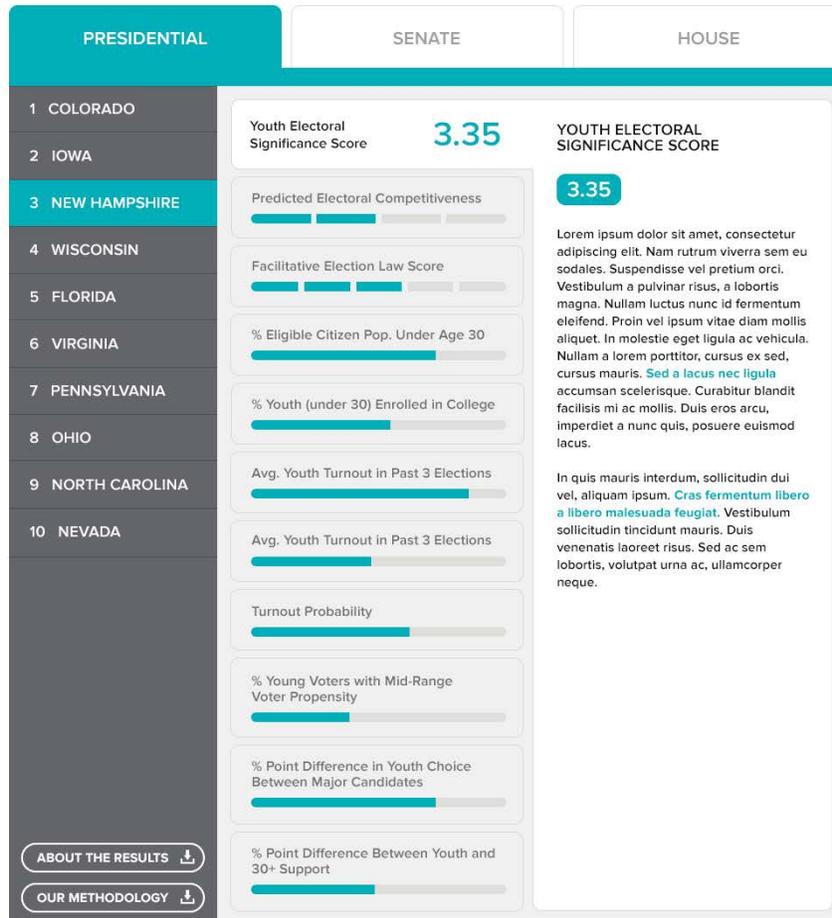
The Congressional districts rankings are primarily based on each district's history of youth turnout and demographic factors that correlate with turnout. Additional data and indicators were used for the Senate and Presidential analyses, including state voting laws and historical differences between the vote choice of youth and of voters over 30.. For a full description of the indicators and analyses done for the YESI, see the Methodology section.

Explore our interactive YESI display by clicking on the image below



TOP 10 STATES / DISTRICTS BY YOUTH ELECTORAL SIGNIFICANCE

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CIRCLE, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, focuses 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. It is based at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Services at Tufts University.

2016 Youth Electoral Significance Rankings

U.S. House of Representatives

1	Iowa 1st 	(Cedar Rapids) - Iowa's 1st district has 31 colleges (national median is 9) and a high rate of 18 to 29-year-olds enrolled in college. The district population is predominantly white and turned out at moderately high rates in 2014 and 2012.
2	Iowa 2nd 	(Davenport, Iowa City) - In Iowa's 2nd congressional district, youth make up 22.5% of the population. With 22 institutions of higher education in the district, we see a very high rate of 18 to 29-year-olds enrolled in college. In addition, there is relatively low unemployment.
3	Colorado 6th 	(Aurora) - In 2014 and 2012, youth turned out at a very high rate in Colorado's 6th congressional district. The district also has a high rate of education, with 40% of the population having a college degree or higher. Additionally, 20% of the population in the district is Latino, and 9% Black.
4	Iowa 3rd 	(Des Moines and Southwest Iowa) - High turnout among youth in 2014 and 2012 characterizes Iowa's 3rd congressional district. The population of the district is 86% white and 30% has a college degree or higher. There are 21 institutions of higher education in the district.
5	Maine 2nd 	(Northern part of the state) - Youth are 18.2% of the population in Maine's 2nd congressional district, where the majority of the population is white. Youth in this district turned out at very high rates in 2014 and 2012, and there are 21 higher education institutions within the boundaries of this district.
6	Minnesota 2nd 	(South Twin Cities) - Minnesota's 2nd district saw moderately high youth turnout in 2014 and 2012. There is a relatively low level of poverty in the district, in which a majority of the population is white. Fifteen institutions of higher education are located in the district and 36% of the district population has a college degree or higher. This district is considered a highly competitive district since Congressman John Kline (R) announced his retirement.
7	Illinois 13th 	(Champaign-Urbana-Springfield) - Illinois' 13th district has a moderately high rate of poverty and youth make up a very large portion (28.5%) of the population, partly because of the flagship state university located in the district (in addition to other higher education institutions). The district also includes parts of Springfield, the state capital. Eleven percent of the district population is Black.
8	Minnesota 1st 	(Rochester-Mankato-Winona) - Twenty-two percent of the population in this Minnesota district is young, and recent youth turnout has been moderate. There are 19 institutions of higher education in the district. The district is largely rural, covering the southern border of the state. The district's overall population has characteristics that are associated with high turnout.

9 New Hampshire 2nd



(Concord, Keene, Lebanon) - Young voters are expected to have an impact in New Hampshire's 2nd district, which includes the state capital of Concord, as well as Nashua and several college towns like Keene and Lebanon. The population characteristics of the district suggest that young people will vote at an above-average rate in 2016. The district is currently represented by Congresswoman Ann Kuster (D-Hopkinton).

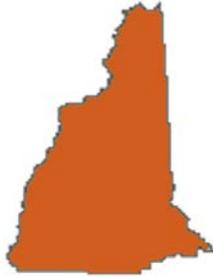
10 Florida 7th



(Marion and Putnam counties) - Florida's 7th congressional district, which was newly drawn in December 2015, has a very high proportion of young people and college students. There are more colleges in this district than in any other in Florida, while the district also has a relatively high proportion of demographic groups that usually turn out at higher rate. Fourteen percent of the district population is Black. (While we have used data for the new congressional district lines in Florida, all indicator data, such as past turnout, is not yet available for these new boundaries.)

YESI - U.S. Senate

1 New Hampshire



New Hampshire is ranked 1st in the Senate YESI and 2nd in the Presidential YESI. Four factors contribute: same-day registration (which is known to raise turnout), regularly high youth turnout, a high percentage of youth with college experience, and a low poverty rate. Young people who are contacted by campaigns vote at a higher rate. Since New Hampshire holds the nation's first primary and receives frequent visits from candidates, the state's youth are expected to influence the election. In 2008, the Senate race overlapped with a presidential election year and the margin of victory was 44,000 votes. 2016 finds Senator Ayotte in her first reelection race. While it does permit college IDs, [New Hampshire's new photo ID requirement](#) may still potentially discourage some young voters from turning out. Outreach and education can mitigate this challenge.

2 Pennsylvania



This regularly key election state has seen strong youth support for Democratic candidates in comparison to that of older voters. The youth population in the state is large at 1.96 million young citizens, 15% of whom are Black, the highest-turnout group among youth. The state has 404 institutions of higher education in which 413,000 students are enrolled. Online registration will be available for the first time during the Presidential election in 2016, potentially increasing voter registration. In 2016, Senator Toomey is facing his first Senate reelection battle. During the 2012 Senate race in PA, the margin of victory ended up being over 500,000 votes.

3 Ohio



There are 1.7 million young citizens in Ohio and 440,000 students under age 30 enrolled at one of the 385 institutions of higher education in the state. Ohio has a high rate of poverty and a diverse youth population including 12% Black youth, 24% married, and 26% who have children, and has maintained above-average turnout rates. Ohio has the highest ratio of young people with children among the top ten YESI states, suggesting that many Ohio youth may be more likely to prioritize issues that are relevant for young families, such as health care, early education, and minimum wage. Senator Portman was first elected to the Senate in 2010. In 2012, the margin of victory in the Ohio Senate race was about 327,000 votes.

4 Illinois



The Senate race is expected to be competitive, as Senator Kirk faces his first Senate reelection contest. In 2008, when then-Senator Obama was on the presidential ballot, the Senate margin of victory was over 2 million votes. Since then, both Senate elections occurred in midterm years and the margins were 59,000 and 391,000 votes, respectively. Illinois did well with respect to facilitative election law, and has had large gaps in presidential-year candidate support between youth and older voters. There are close to 2 million young citizens in the state, making up 22.5% of the population. Illinois has 322 institutions of higher education and a high ratio of youth with college experience (28%). Seventeen percent of youth in the state are Black, 15% Latino, and 24% have a parent who was born in another country.

5 Colorado



Colorado has put in effect same-day registration, pre-registration, and online registration in recent years, and presidential year youth turnout has been growing over the last several cycles. There are 786,000 young citizens (19% of them are Latino, 18% are married, and 17% have children) in the state and, according to the state's demography office, youth are the fastest-growing group in Colorado, which is projected to gain of a net 74,000 people aged 19 to 29 in this decade alone. Youth population growth represents almost one-third of the total net migration, according to CIRCLE's tabulation of population data from [here](#). In the 2008 election, the Senate margin of victory in Colorado was 240,000 votes, while significantly lower in midterm years since. Senator Bennet was appointed in 2009 and then went on to win the Senate seat in 2010.

6 Wisconsin



Youth voter turnout in Wisconsin during presidential years has consistently been well above the national average, and Wisconsin youth can take advantage of same-day registration. There are 893,000 young citizens in the state and their backgrounds and experiences vary, as 11% of youth are Black, 8% Latino, 20% married, and 21% have children. The Wisconsin population has been aging and the youth population is [more racially and ethnically diverse](#) than the older population. In the 2012 Senate race in Wisconsin, the margin of victory ended up at about 167,000 votes. This 2016 race sees Senator Johnson running for reelection for the first time.

7 Arizona



Arizona ranks 7th in the Senate YESI because the Senate race there is expected to be competitive, and 26th in the Presidential YESI. Young people make up 22.4% of Arizona's eligible population with 990,000 young citizens. Young voters now have access to online registration. The state has a high rate of poverty and almost half of youth are Latino (45%). Additionally, 18% of youth are married, 20% have children, and 33% have a parent who was born in another country. Senator McCain has represented Arizona in the Senate since 1986. When Senator McCain won reelection in 2010, the margin of victory was over 400,000 votes. However, in 2012, the margin of victory in the AZ Senate race was about 68,000 votes.

8 Florida



Florida ranked in the top 10 because of a moderately high score for facilitative election laws and the fact that young voters in Florida have voted very differently in the past from those over 30 years of age by overwhelmingly supporting Democratic candidates. Florida has 2.7 million young citizens and is home to 412 institutions of higher education. The youth population in Florida is diverse: 25% of youth are Black and 23% Latino. Although, nationwide, Latino youth as a whole lag behind other groups in voter turnout, this is not the case in Florida. In 2012, Latino youth in Florida voted at a comparable (if not higher) rate with White non-Hispanic youth. Florida now has online registration in effect, making it easier to register to vote. In both 2010 and 2012 the margins of victory in the Senate races were over 1 million votes. This 2016 race is for the Senate seat currently occupied by Senator Rubio, who is running for president.

9

North Carolina



North Carolina rolled back some of the laws that could facilitate young voters' access to voting (such as same-day registration and pre-registration), resulting in a low score for facilitative election law. The state also has a relatively high poverty rate. North Carolina still makes the top 10 because the state's youth have historically voted very differently from older voters and have shown that they can turn out, making their votes more influential. In addition, there are 1.4 million young citizens in the state, including 308,000 enrolled college students and a relatively large proportion (23%) who are African American, the group with highest turnout among youth. The margin of victory in Senate races was about 362,000 in 2008 and about 313,000 in 2010, but only about 46,000 in 2014. Senator Burr is running for a third term in the Senate.

10

Nevada



Pre-registration and online registration laws push Nevada into the top 10. Nevada is another diverse state with 377,000 young citizens, 12% of whom are Black, 31% Latino, and 5% Native American. Compared to other states, Nevada has a low percentage of youth enrolled in college, and 20% have children. [CIRCLE's recent analysis](#) found that young voters are increasingly more likely to register as "unaffiliated," meaning that fewer young Nevadans may participate in the state's caucuses, and that candidates have much to do to win their support. Recent Senate races in Nevada have seen very low margins of victory: in 2010, it was just over 41,000 votes, but in 2012 it was about 12,000 votes. The 2016 race is for the seat of retiring Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid.

YESI - President of the United States

1

Iowa



Iowa ranked highest in Presidential YESI. Three of Iowa's four congressional districts also had high YESI scores. Iowa's youth will also be influential in the outcome of the Presidential caucuses because they vote at higher rates than their peers in most other states, and because a high proportion of these youth are from high-turnout demographic groups (Whites, mid-to-high income). A new online registration law, a relatively large proportion of college students (35% of 18 to 29-year-olds), and a more even split between Democrats and Republicans among youth than in some of the other top YESI states create mobilization opportunities. A disproportionate number of [Iowan Latinos are young](#) and poised for mobilization.

2

New Hampshire



New Hampshire is ranked a close second in the Presidential YESI. Four factors contribute: the existence of same-day registration (which is known to raise turnout), historically high youth turnout, a high percentage of youth with college experience, and a low poverty rate. Young people who are reached out to by candidates and campaigns vote at a higher rate. Since New Hampshire holds the nation's first primary and receives frequent visits from presidential candidates, New Hampshire's youth are expected to turn out and influence the election in 2016. At the same time, while it does permit college IDs, [New Hampshire's new photo ID requirement](#) may still potentially discourage some young voters from turning out. Outreach and education can mitigate this challenge.

3

Pennsylvania



This regularly key election state has seen large gaps in presidential candidate support in the past between youth and those 30 and older. The youth population in the state is large at 1.96 million young citizens, 15% of whom are Black, a group that has the highest turnout group among youth. The state has 404 institutions of higher education, in which 413,000 students are enrolled. Online registration will be available for the first time during the Presidential election in 2016, potentially increasing voter registration.

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Ohio



There are 1.7 million young citizens in Ohio, and 440,000 students under age 30 enrolled at one of the 385 institutions of higher education in the state. Ohio has above-average turnout rates, has a higher rate of poverty than other states, and has a diverse youth population, including 12% Black youth, 24% married, and 26% who have children. That is the highest ratio of young people with children among the top ten YESI states, suggesting that many Ohio youth may be more likely to prioritize issues that are relevant for young families, such as health care, early education, and minimum wage.

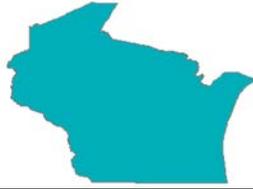
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Wisconsin

Youth voter turnout in Wisconsin during presidential years has consistently been well above the national average, and Wisconsin youth can take advantage of same-day registration. There are 893,000 young citizens in the state, and their backgrounds and experiences vary: 11% of youth are Black, 8% Latino, 20% married, and 21% have children. Overall, Wisconsin is aging, and the youth population is [more racially and ethnically diverse](#) than the older population.

7

Virginia

Virginia has 1.2 million young citizens, making up 21.3% of the population, many of whom now have the opportunity to register to vote online. Young voters turned out at a higher rate than the national youth average in 2008 and 2012. Twenty-five percent of youth in the state are Black, 6% Asian, and 8% Latino. Nineteen percent have a parent who was born in another country.

8

Florida

Florida ranked in the top 10 because of a moderately high score on facilitative election law, and because young voters in Florida have voted very differently in the past from those over 30 years of age by overwhelmingly supporting Democratic candidates. Florida has 2.7 million young citizens and is home to 412 institutions of higher education. The youth population in Florida is extremely diverse: 25% of youth are Black and 23% Latino. Although, nationwide, Latino youth as a whole lag behind other groups in voter turnout, this is not the case in Florida. In 2012, Latino youth in Florida voted at a comparable (if not higher) rate with White non-Hispanic youth. Florida now has online registration in effect, making it easier to register to vote.

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North Carolina rolled back some of the laws that could facilitate young voters' access to the polls (such as same-day registration and pre-registration), resulting in a low score for facilitative election law. The state also has a relatively high poverty rate. North Carolina still makes the top 10 because the state's youth have historically voted very differently than older voters and have shown that they can turn out, making their votes more influential. In addition, there are 1.4 million young citizens in the state, including 308,000 enrolled college students and a relatively large proportion (23%) who are African American, the group with highest turnout among youth.

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About Us



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The Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service (<http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/>) is a national leader whose model and research are setting the standard for higher education's role in civic engagement education. Serving every school of Tufts University, Tisch College creates an enduring culture that prepares students to be lifelong active citizens.

Tufts University (<http://www.tufts.edu/>), located on three Massachusetts campuses in Boston, Medford/Somerville and Grafton, and in Talloires, France, is recognized as one of the premier research universities in the United States. Tufts enjoys a global reputation for academic excellence and for the preparation of students as leaders in a wide range of professions. A growing number of innovative teaching and research initiatives span all Tufts campuses, and collaboration among the faculty and students in the undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs across the university's schools is widely encouraged.

Methodology

The Youth Electoral Significance Index (YESI) is designed to represent the potential of youth voters to affect the outcomes of the 2016 Presidential, Senate, and House races. We calculated this index for each type of race and profiled the top 10 states and districts in this report. The ranking and the demographic profiles can serve as useful tool for understanding youth demographics more deeply and developing outreach and mobilization strategies.

YESI's methodology consists of four steps, as described below:

1. Build a conceptual model of youth electoral significance based on research about youth voting patterns and trends, and our retrospective analysis of the youth vote's influence on the 2012 and 2014 statewide races. This model suggested that three types of indicators likely influence youth electoral significance; 1) the size and characteristics of youth and overall eligible population demographics, along with the context of voting in the state (such as electoral laws); 2) youth voter turnout in past presidential elections; 3) potential leverage of young voters, such as historical differences in the vote choice of youth and of voters over 30; and the expected competitiveness of the race in 2016.
2. Gather available data about the demographic composition of each community (states or Congressional districts), including those specifically about youth population, past voter turnout, youth vote choice, share of votes cast by youth, and predicted competitiveness of the upcoming race. For state YESIs, we collected information about statewide electoral laws. Components of YESI data, data sources, and calculation methods are described in detail below.
3. Create composite indices (i.e., a score made up of multiple, related indicators) for the demographic makeup of each district or state, and determine how the conceptual pieces of YESI fit together. We also decided, not only to credit states for having one or more laws that could ease voter registration, but also to give an extra point if that law is available for the first time in a presidential election cycle, because these laws are especially helpful for young people who may not participate in midterm elections.
4. Compute YESI by averaging standardized scores from each component of YESI data. This makes the "unweighted" YESI, which does not incorporate the competitiveness of the upcoming race. Because the possibility of youth influence on the outcome is highly dependent on the competitiveness or tightness of the race, we weighted that factor heavily. We computed the weighted YESI by adding a "competitiveness" score to the unweighted YESI. This step creates a cluster of top-ranking geographical locations that are all considered to have competitive races.

Data Elements of YESI

1. Demographic data and Context

With the youth demographics, we focus on the relative share of youth population in the eligible electorate and on the number of colleges and universities in the state or district. As part of the context of youth voting, we also include the extent to which each state has implemented laws that are designed to increase to registration and voting, especially for youth.

Indicator	Operational Definition	Source	Units of data availability
Size of youth population relative to the overall population	% of adult citizen population who are under 30	American Community Survey	State CD
Presence of sizable college student population	% of 18-29 citizen population who are enrolled in colleges and universities in the same geographic location	IPEDS (The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System)	State CD
Newcomer Index	The extent to which the population is made up of naturalized citizens and predominantly Spanish-speaking individuals. (Inverse score is used in the index, as a low % of newcomers predicts higher turnout)	American Community Survey	State CD
Economic Challenge Index	The degree to which the community faces economic challenges such as high unemployment rate and low income. (Inverse score is used in the index, as a low % of population with these characteristics predicts higher turnout.)	American Community Survey	State CD
High Turnout Demographic Index	The degree to which the community has a high proportion of individuals who share the backgrounds of high-turnout propensity individuals (higher level of educational attainment, % white in the community, % married)	American Community Survey	State CD
State election laws that can facilitate youth vote	We count pre-registration, online registration, and same-day-registration. We add one point if a state will have implemented the law in 2016 and add one more point (for each law) if the law is new since 2012.	National Conference of State Legislatures	State
% of youth who have a mid-range vote propensity score	% of 18-29s who fall into the "middle propensity score" category (propensity scores are calculated using demographic factors and voting history, and are highly correlated to voter turnout).	Catalist	State

2. Past Youth Voter Engagement

Indicator	Operational Definition	Source	Units of data availability
Baseline for youth voter engagement	State and congressional youth turnout in past few presidential election years	State: CPS 2004, 2008, 2012 (averaged) CD: Catalist (2012)	State CD

3. Potential Leverage of Youth Vote

Indicator	Operational Definition	Source	Units of data availability
Predicted competitiveness of the race in 2016	Average competitiveness rating from various expert sources and reports	Cook Political Report (12/4/2015), Rothenberg & Gonzales (12/4/15), Sabato Crystal Ball (12/9/2015)	State CD
Decisiveness of youth support in most recent races for a party	% Voted for Democratic candidate vs. % Voted for Republican candidate (among youth)	Exit polls (for youth by state) Purchased aggregate data (for all 18+)	State (2004 AND 2012) CD (2012)
Contrast between youth party support and older adults	(% voting Democrat among 18-29 year olds) - (% voting Democrat among those 30+)	Exit polls	State (2004 and 2012)
<i>Indicators to consider once YESI is computed</i>			
Size of youth vote relative to margin of victory	Estimated youth vote count in 2004 and 2012 compared to margin of victory (2008 is excluded because it was an atypical year)	FEC and CPS	State and CD

Calculation of YESI

YESI is calculated so that a higher score means higher potential for youth electoral influence. We standardized the unit of measurement for this index by converting all continuous indicators (i.e., not categories or Yes/No) into Z-score. Z-score allowed us to compare states and congressional districts to one another on a relative scale, ranging from 1st percentile (lowest) to 100th percentile (highest), making it easier to understand where each state/CD is compared to average. On the microsite, we display the percentile rank for ease of interpretation. "50" is 50th percentile or median.

We chose to calculate YESI by averaging standardized scores of all indicators and demographic indices, and then adding 3 points if a state or district is considered a battleground by at least one expert.

Presidential YESI

YESI_P_W=mean (Z_difference in democratic support by age_2012, Z_difference in democratic support by age_2004, Average youth Turnout, Z_YouthPopShare_15, Z_% of 18-29 year olds in college, Z_Number of institute of higher ed per 10,000 youth, Election Law index, Z_Newcomerindex_inversed, Z_Unemployment_pov_inversed, Z_HighTurnOutDemographic, Z_% youth rated with mid-range vote propensity score) + Presidential Battleground (+3 if yes)

*for the Senate YESI, formulae are the same except we have different data point for the Senate race competitiveness and we have fewer states (34) to rank because some states will not have Senate races in 2016.

YESI – Congressional Districts

The methodology for calculating the Congressional District YESI (YESI-CD) is similar to that for the state YESI, except that there are fewer data points available for congressional districts than for states. As we did in the state index, we calculated Congressional YESI scores that account for the predicted competitiveness in 2016, past turnout data, and the number of higher education institutions in the district. For predicted competitiveness, we incorporated the latest information on the House races that are predicted to be competitive by three sources (Cook, Rothenberg and Sabato), and we added 3 points for the districts that are at least considered “leaning” by at least one source. We do not have specific direction and magnitude of youth support for a Democratic candidate or how that support differed from that of older voters. Thus, we omitted these elements from the index calculation. We did include youth turnout in 2012 and 2014 (data were available for the districts located in 44 out of 50 states), youth share of population, and the number of colleges as well as the number of students enrolled in colleges whose addresses are in each district. For the number of enrolled students, we did delete a data point for a district where the University of Phoenix is based because of an unusually large number of students, most of whom are off-site.

One exception to the Congressional YESI calculation applies to Florida’s newly redrawn districts. Most of its 27 district boundaries have changed, along with the population characteristics of each district. Florida’s redistricting recently became approved by the court but the geographical shape file was not available at the time of this publication for us to be able to estimate the vote counts from the past elections in those new districts. We calculated the population and demographic estimates, as well as college campus density and enrollment, using the new district boundaries. However, we are unable to estimate how the votes would have been split among presidential candidates in 2012 or how many youth voted in each of the new districts. As such, we calculated the Congressional YESI for Florida’s congressional districts using the information that is available so far. The most recent ratings of competitiveness by the experts were based on the new district boundaries, and we were able to incorporate this information. Although the YESI calculation for Florida’s districts is conceptually similar to that of the other districts, the YESI scores for Florida were calculated just for that state, and the FL YESI congressional scores cannot be directly compared to YESI scores from other states’ congressional districts.

2016 Youth Electoral Significance Index

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Learn more at www.civicyouth.org

