

## Exclusive polling: Young voters energized for midterms

New poll shows high interest in midterms among youngest voters, mirroring engagement in 2016; vote choice favors Democrats

MEDFORD/SOMERVILLE, Mass. (Oct. 9, 2018)—Young voters are engaged in the 2018 midterm elections and plan to vote in higher numbers, according to [new findings from an exclusive pre-election poll of young people](#), ages 18-24, from the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE)—the preeminent, non-partisan research center on youth engagement at Tufts University's [Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life](#).

The new polling found that likelihood to vote, attention to congressional races and campaign outreach to young people closely mirror engagement in the run-up to the 2016 presidential election. These results are unusual for a midterm cycle, when youth participation is lower than in a presidential election year. These findings could signal a response to youth-driven organizing, increased outreach by campaigns and other groups and young people's potential to influence the outcome of [key races](#).

“We know that young people can move elections and shape our future, but too often their participation is discounted, discouraged or suppressed. This poll shows that- in a crucial midterm election year - young people are paying close attention and are planning to have their voices heard at the ballot box,” said Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, director of CIRCLE. “Candidates and their campaign teams should continue to reach out to young people and seek their views, and family members, peers, schools and community organizations should support their participation in our shared democracy.”

Key findings of this exclusive analysis include:

- **Young people plan to vote in high numbers for a midterm.** 34 percent of young people (ages 18-24) say they are “extremely likely” to vote in the midterm elections in 2018, and that rate holds for 18 to 21-year-olds, many of whom were not eligible to vote in 2016. In 2016, this number was generally predictive of turnout. If that holds true, it points to a substantial increase in youth turnout, up from about one in five in the 2014 midterm election.
- **Vote choice favors Democrats, but varies by race and gender.** Overall, almost half of youth (45 percent) want to vote for a Democratic candidate in 2018, including higher numbers of young people of color - 65 percent of Black youth and 52 percent of Latino youth - and more women than men. Approximately 26 percent of young people overall intend to vote for a Republican candidate, with the strongest level of support coming from young white men, 36 percent of whom say they plan to support a Republican. Almost one-fourth (23 percent) of all young people are interested in supporting independent candidates, though that interest is divided among progressive, conservative and libertarian ideologies.
- **Campaign contact is up, along with youth interest in the elections.** Young people are reporting higher levels of interest in Senate, House and local races in 2018 than they did in 2016, with 46 percent saying they are paying attention to congressional races. This could be attributed in part to higher levels of campaign contact and outreach to young people. Our polling shows that one-third of young people report having been contacted by any campaign before the end of September, which mirrors the level in the 2016 presidential year. However, this differs considerably by party. Over 40 percent of youth who are registered

Democrats have been contacted, while only around 25 percent of their Republican-registered peers say they have been contacted.

- **Family matters.** Our polling finds that young people are hearing about this year's elections from a range of sources. Yet even in a digital age, we find that family members are the most likely way youth are learning about the midterms. This remains the case among youth who are extremely likely to vote and consider themselves qualified to participate in politics.

### [READ FULL ANALYSIS HERE](#)

This is the first in a series of analyses about an exclusive new CIRCLE 2018 pre-election poll of youth aged 18-24. Over the course of the next two weeks, CIRCLE will release additional data and analyses from the [2018 Civic Youth Poll](#) on topics including: youth organizing and activism, political parties, local news, and how young people are engaging politically in their communities.

The survey was developed by CIRCLE, and the polling firm GfK collected the data from their nationally representative panel of respondents between Sept. 5 and Sept. 26, 2018. The study surveyed a total of 2,087 people aged 18 to 24 in the United States, with representative over-samples of Black and Latino youth, and of 18 to 21-year-olds. The margin of error is +/- 2.1 percentage points. Unless mentioned otherwise, data are for all the 18 to 24-year-olds in our sample.

[CIRCLE](#) is a nonpartisan, independent, academic research center that studies young people in politics and presents detailed data on young voters in all 50 states. CIRCLE is part of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life. CIRCLE is a co-lead on the [22x20 campaign](#), which is a network of education, media literacy and media partners working to mesh media literacy with voter engagement before the 2020 election.

**Throughout the 2018 election cycle, including on and after Election Day, CIRCLE youth vote experts are available for interviews and/or analysis.**

**Media outlets should contact Jen McAndrew at [jennifer.mcandrew@tufts.edu](mailto:jennifer.mcandrew@tufts.edu) or 617-627-2029.**

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About Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life

The only university-wide college of its kind, the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life offers transformational student learning and service opportunities, conducts groundbreaking research on young people's civic and political participation and forges innovative community partnerships. Its work is guided by two core beliefs: that communities, nations and the world are stronger, more prosperous and more just when citizens actively participate in civic and democratic life; and that higher education has a responsibility to develop the next generation of active citizens. Learn more at <http://tischcollege.tufts.edu> and on Twitter at [@TischCollege](#).

About Tufts University

Tufts University, located on campuses in Boston, Medford/Somerville and Grafton, Massachusetts, and in Talloires, France, is recognized among 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.