

# Why Your Vote Matters

Voting is one of the most direct ways to participate in our democracy. For young voters, **showing up at the polls isn't just a box to check, it's a powerful exercise of collective power.** By casting your vote, you're expressing your values on the issues that matter most to you. As Gen Z continues to grow as a massive share of the electorate, their turnout sends a signal that cannot be easily ignored. When young people turn out to vote in large numbers, they influence who wins elections and help shift the conversation towards issues their generation cares about.

Voting plays an important role in protecting the integrity of American democracy. High turnout helps ensure that election results reflect the will of the people, and strengthens confidence that our elections remain fair, transparent, and legitimate. When you and your peers vote, you're strengthening the very framework that makes young voices heard.

“ Systems don't change on their own — they change when people show up and demand it. Voting is a direct way to challenge what isn't working and shape what comes next. Your vote is power.

ALEXIS NWATU, PROTECT DEMOCRACY

## Young Voters Are A Powerful Voting Bloc

Young people represent a large and growing share of eligible voters in the United States, and when young voters decide to participate, their votes carry real weight.

Research from the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University estimates that approximately 47% of Americans ages 18-29 cast a ballot in the 2024 presidential election — that's millions of voices nationwide making themselves heard.

Youth voter participation has increased in recent election cycles, showing that more young people are taking part in the democratic process. Whether the race is for a local council seat or a national office, when young people turn out, their collective participation can influence the outcome — shaping which leaders are elected and whose voices are represented. Even if they don't swing an election's result, by simply showing up to vote, young people help ensure that the priorities and perspectives of younger generations are more likely to be reflected in decision-making.

A DEMOCRACY FOR ALL GENERATIONS

### **Election administrators make every vote count**

Election administrators are the public officials responsible for running our election systems, from Secretaries of State to local officials such as county clerks, boards of elections, and poll workers. They manage voter registration, ensure elections are conducted fairly, accurately count votes, and certify results in accordance with the law.

Since 2020, these officials have been on the frontlines of defending our democracy, often facing harassment, threats, and political pressure. Supporting and protecting these officials is critical to maintaining public trust and making sure every eligible voter's ballot is counted and reflected in the final outcome.

## **Close Elections Show How Every Vote Counts**

While national elections tend to receive the most attention, many local races — such as school boards, city councils, and ballot initiatives — are decided by very small margins. Because turnout in local elections is often lower, even a relatively small group of young voters can tip competitive races in one direction or another.


Local elections are particularly important because they shape policies that affect everyday life. City councils, school boards, and county governments make decisions about issues like school funding, affordable housing, transportation, and public services. Although local elections receive less attention, the decisions made at the

local level directly influence the communities where students live, study, and work. The data backs this up:

Research analyzing U.S. election results show that hundreds of state-level races have been decided by fewer than 500 votes, and dozens have come down to fewer than 100 votes.

**Real-world examples:**

- In 2026, the mayoral race in Boca Raton, Florida was decided by just 5 votes following a recount.
- In 2018, the Democratic primary for Baltimore County Executive was decided by just 17 votes.
- In 2016, a Vermont state House race was decided by a single vote out of more than 7,400 cast.

 **Think about that for a second:** 17 people is smaller than the average college seminar. *A single floor in a dorm or a handful of students on one campus can literally be the margin that decides an election.* When we say your vote matters, we mean it.