



# **VOTERS OF TOMORROW**

## 2022 Cycle Impact Report

# Executive Summary

2022 was a year to remember for Voters of Tomorrow. What began as a passion project for just a few people grew into an organization with hundreds of members with state and local chapters across the country. Throughout the course of 2022 and leading up to the midterm elections, the Voters of Tomorrow team worked around the clock, responding to attacks from the far-right on young people in real-time, educating young voters about the importance of the midterm elections, and mobilizing young voters to turn out in the midterm elections.

As the results of the 2022 election indicated, our strategy worked. That was, in large part, because Voters of Tomorrow understood that no one knows the issues facing young people and how to reach young people better than young people themselves. Our conversations and engagement with young voters made a substantial difference in the 2022 midterm elections. For instance, total youth turnout reached the second-highest level in history, which helped Democrats not only retain control of the Senate, but expand their Senate majority. Turnout among young people also helped defy political history and prevent a red wave from taking over Congress, as is usually the case for the President's opposing party during the midterms. Put simply: Young people showed the entire nation that they are a force to be reckoned with — and the work Voters of Tomorrow did played a central role.

Beyond our success in the midterm elections, Voters of Tomorrow also had a series of firsts in 2022. For the first time, Voters of Tomorrow organized a National Youth Summit featuring the most prominent Gen Z activists and elected officials — ranging from then-Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi to New York City Councillor and fellow Gen Z-er Chi Osse to other leaders and changemakers. Over the course of two days, we gathered hundreds of young people from across the country and provided a space where young people came together to talk about the issues important to them.

Voters of Tomorrow also continued to collect data in real-time about Gen Z's political attitudes, conducting multiple polls throughout the course of 2022. We set out to determine what issues are most important to Gen Z and what Gen Z is most concerned about when it comes to their future. With this data, along with our on-the-ground conversations, Voters of Tomorrow truly had our finger on the pulse of Gen Z. As a result, we crafted an effective strategy heading into 2022 and beyond — propelling us to success.

This report provides an in-depth look into the work of each department, offers a look ahead to our goals for 2023, and shows why Voters of Tomorrow is the leading organization to represent and engage Generation Z.



# Executive Summary

Leading up to it, headlines from major news sources suggested that youth turnout would be low in the 2022 midterm elections. Just days beforehand, Politico ran a story titled “Young Voters MIA as Dem base flocks to early voting.” Political pundits also remained skeptical about how much young people would turn out — despite the 2018 and 2020 elections showing a pattern of historic youth turnout.

But as election night rolled around and results came in, reality proved the doubters wrong. Election results confirmed that young people kept up with recent patterns from 2018 and 2020 and turned out to vote in numbers that exceeded expectations. An analysis by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University found that youth turnout reached the second-highest level in the past thirty years for a midterm election.

Examining key battleground states like Michigan, Arizona, Pennsylvania, and Georgia reveals that not only did young people turn out in high numbers, but young people overwhelmingly cast their ballots for pro-democracy candidates. Consider a state like Arizona: In the midterm elections, 76% of young people cast their ballots for the Senate candidate Mark Kelly, compared to only 20% of young people voting for his opponent. For its gubernatorial race, 71% of young people cast their ballots for Katie Hobbs, compared to 29% of

young people voting for her opponent. This trend of the majority of young people casting their ballots for pro-democracy candidates was consistent in other battleground states as well.

While pundits and the media may have been surprised by these results, we at Voters of Tomorrow were not. Following the fall of *Roe v. Wade* in June, we saw a considerable uptick in the number of young people who registered to vote and expressed willingness to take action.

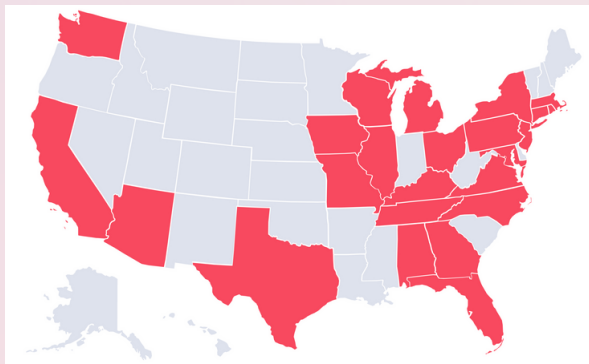
Additionally, the contrast between both parties became more apparent as Election Day neared. Republicans in the U.S. Congress proved through their vote record that they care little about the issues that matter to Gen Z, with most — if not all — Republicans voting against bills that would address issues like climate change and gun violence. At the state and local levels, Republicans made it a priority to target LGBTQ+ expression and the type of books young people can read in the classroom. On the other hand, Democrats and President Biden consistently brought young voters to the table and made significant strides on issues like climate change, gun violence, student loan debt, and more.

Young people saw this. They paid attention. They were frustrated. They were angry. And that is why they defied political expectations by voting in large numbers in the midterm election.

# Mobilization

In 2022, our mobilization team had an impressive showing with a total of **8,401,167 contacts made to young voters throughout the election cycle.** Those contacts included everything from phone calls to text messages to relational outreach to door-knocking to tabling. At Voters of Tomorrow, we realized that we needed to meet young voters where they were — whether it's at their homes or on their phones — in order to get them to turn out, and our mobilization team did just that.

As important as contacting young voters was for the success of the 2022 midterm elections, we also harnessed our network of state and local chapters across the country. We knew that just as important as making contacts, the messenger also matters. In this case, it is high schoolers and college students who can better understand and empathize with the struggles the young people face in getting registered to vote and casting their ballots. **In 2022, the mobilization team expanded the number of state and local chapters from 3 active chapters at the beginning of the year to 40 active chapters by the end of the year. Those chapters can be found in 25 states, in addition to Washington, DC.**



At the end of the year, the national mobilization team asked state and local chapters to reflect on the successes of the year and their work. Their responses can be found [here](#).

2022 was an incredible year for the mobilization team, but the team has much more in store for 2023. For example, the mobilization team plans on growing and developing its chapter network to every state by the end of the year — with each one equipped with the tools needed to take action on issues affecting Gen Z given the new composition of Congress. With legislative sessions beginning in many state legislatures, we aim to ensure that each state and local chapter is also empowered to advocate for youth priorities at the local level. Whether it be on issues like reproductive rights, climate change, or gun reform, the national mobilization team will make sure state and local chapters are equipped to take action in their respective communities.

Additionally, while 2023 isn't a midterm or presidential election cycle, there are still many important state and local races. The national mobilization team will be closely monitoring and taking action for pro-democracy and pro-Gen Z candidates. In the same vein, the team will be conducting youth voter outreach through calls and texts for Wisconsin's Supreme Court elections in April and Virginia and Kentucky's statewide elections in November. Further, Louisiana and Mississippi also have statewide elections in 2023, and the mobilization team will continue to build youth power to take on-the-ground action in those states.

# Policy & Advocacy

The advocacy and policy teams are focused on researching, creating, and advocating for policies that reflect the concerns and lives of young people. In 2022, the advocacy and policy teams had a substantive and productive year.

**One of the major accomplishments of the policy team from this last year was developing and publishing the Gen Z Agenda.** This agenda is a comprehensive, youth-oriented policy platform that covers many of the key issues facing Gen Z ranging from 21st-century economic justice to government and democracy reform to education access and reform. In partnership with the advocacy team, the policy team transformed this comprehensive policy platform into various one-pagers for the two advocacy trips to Washington, DC that the Voters of Tomorrow team made in 2022.



In addition to creating a policy platform for Gen Z, the policy and advocacy teams also coordinated meetings with legislative offices in Washington, DC. **Over the course of two trips to DC, the Voters of Tomorrow team met with the White House and 92 Congressional offices of both Democratic**

and Republican members. During those meetings, members of Voters of Tomorrow made clear why elected officials and the Biden Administration must listen to Gen Z and inform them about the issues most important to Gen Z.



With 2022 being a successful year of advocacy and policy, both teams want 2023 to be even more successful. By the end of 2023, the policy and advocacy teams hope to author 10 original Voters of Tomorrow bills and introduce them either at the federal or state level. They also aim to have over 100 congressional meetings by the end of the year and continue outreach with the White House and other key policy leaders.

As the 2022 election results showed clearly, youth investment can't just happen weeks before an election; it must be year-round and constant. And that is what the policy and advocacy team plans to do with elected officials, the administration, and other leaders.



# Communications

2022 was a year of immense growth for Voters of Tomorrow's communications team.

**Our social media following increased significantly, from just over 21,000 combined followers at the beginning of 2022 to over 70,000 by the end of the year.** Twitter remains our largest audience, with over 68,000 followers, but we also experienced growth on Instagram and TikTok, two platforms that we plan to develop more in 2023. We posted a variety of content, from breaking news and endorsements to educational content and press hits.

The communications team also built out a robust in-house press shop that pitched media and built relationships with reporters, resulting in over **210 unique media mentions throughout the year.** We secured coverage in top-tier media outlets such as MSNBC, the Associated Press, BBC, Rolling Stone, BuzzFeed, POLITICO, and Teen Vogue. Some of our top hits of the year include...



**Students protest book bans by distributing 'Maus,' 'Beloved'**

The Washington Post  
*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

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**Shaped by gun violence and climate change, Gen Z weighs whether to vote**



**As Gen Z, we're told we will 'fix everything.' Voting in the midterms is the first step.**

Marianna Pecora, Samantha Bernstein and Raghav Joshi Opinion contributors  
Published 4:00 a.m. ET Oct. 25, 2022 | Updated 4:54 p.m. ET Oct. 25, 2022



POLITICS

**Young voters turned out for the first time for the 2022 Midterm elections**

November 9, 2022 · 8:28 AM ET  
Heard on Morning Edition



INSIDER

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**Young voters propelled Raphael Warnock to victory in the Georgia Senate runoff, but the work to boost their political engagement continues: 'We're not stopping here'**

In 2023, we plan to keep using the communications team to uplift the incredible work being done by other departments in Voters of Tomorrow. We want to post more often and continue to grow our audiences, particularly on the platforms that Gen Z uses the most frequently: TikTok and Instagram. We would also like to post more educational content, especially as we gear up for the 2024 election. On the press side, we plan to continue engaging with our existing media contacts in order to keep securing top-tier coverage.



# Political

The political team at Voters of Tomorrow is committed to building a pro-democracy, pro-youth coalition at the federal and statewide levels, as well as empowering Gen Z voters at the ballot box. It is our job to ensure that Voters of Tomorrow stands up in support of candidates who will stand up for us when elected, as well as forge relationships with organizations and decision-makers.

**In total, Voters of Tomorrow endorsed 70 candidates in the midterm cycle, with 41 ultimately being elected to a range of different offices, from U.S. Senator to Governor to state Attorney General. Leading up to the 2022 midterm elections, we identified 29 Congressional districts where the youth vote would be most critical to determining whether or not a pro-democracy coalition would control the House of Representatives. In total, we won 17 of those Congressional races by an average of 6.6 points. A particular standout amongst our midterm endorsements was Gen Z candidate Maxwell Alejandro Frost in Florida's 10th Congressional district, as we were amongst the first national organizations to endorse his candidacy in November of 2021.**

In addition to endorsements, the political team worked to connect Voters of Tomorrow with like-minded organizations to accomplish both political and non-political goals. We have lobbied the White House with coalition partners in pursuit of our mission to expand youth representation in the federal government. We assembled coalitions to execute direct actions in response to events, such as a youth-led protest after the leaked Supreme Court

decision regarding *Dobbs v. Jackson* in May of 2022. We partnered with organizations to drive voters to the ballot box, such as our efforts with +1Vote, which provided over 2,500 Uber vouchers to Gen Zers headed to vote during the Senate runoff election in Georgia. On Election Day itself, we coordinated efforts on university campuses across the country to push as many young voters to the polls as possible, whether that be getting ponchos to voters in rain-soaked southern California or pizza to hungry students standing in line in Wisconsin.



A final important pillar of the Political Team's work was collecting and analyzing polling data to apply it to the organization's electoral strategies. Our polling partner, Generation Labs, provided key insights that have backed up all of our work, from which candidates we should support to which policies should make up our Gen Z Agenda. Upon reflecting on all the data collected in 2022, a few highlights stand out regarding Gen Z's outlook on the world:

# Political

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**37%**

of respondents ranked abortion as their top issue in a July survey, a 20-point increase from January

**71%**

of respondents are worried that they or someone they love could be a mass shooting victim

**77%**

of respondents have an unfavorable or very unfavorable view of the Republican Party

**40%**

of respondents would likely join a labor union If given the option, and 30% certainly would

**82%**

of respondents disapprove of banning books about race, gender, or sexual identity



# Strategy & Special Projects

The national strategy and special projects teams were focused on streamlining and coordinating strategy for turning out young people, as well as launching events around building youth political power.

In particular, the special projects team organized three major events in 2022. First was the **Leaders of Tomorrow Summit** in August. This event was the first-ever summit that brought together young elected officials, activists, and leaders from across the country and provided a space for young people to learn from and connect with each other. **Hosted in Philadelphia at the National Constitution Center, the event had 120 in-person attendees and 300 virtual attendees. This event also received coverage in major news outlets, including the Washington Post.**



The second major event was our “bus to the polls” operation at Texas A&M University. A few weeks before the election, Texas A&M announced that it would be restricting the number of polling locations on campus, which would have made it harder for students to vote early and on election day. Against that backdrop, the special projects team contacted bus companies and worked with student organizations on

campus to coordinate free travel to the polls for early voting. Not only did this reduce the barriers for young people to get to the ballot box, but it also translated into real results: Early youth turnout at Texas A&M sustained 2018 levels despite having no on-campus polling location.

The third event hosted by special projects in 2022 was an Election Day War Room in Washington, DC. This room served as our central command center for everything election-related leading up to and on Election Day. The entire national team traveled to Washington, DC in order to coordinate strategy and responses in real-time.



Looking ahead, the strategy and special projects teams hope to continue developing new ways to engage young voters. Like we did in 2022, the team plans to put together another youth summit for young leaders to gather in 2023. Additionally, the strategy and special projects departments hope to continue building the foundation for the 2024 elections by getting more young people registered to vote and coordinating strategy with the various departments, both nationally as well as at the state and local levels.

# Conclusion

There is much that 2022 taught the nation. It was a year filled with triumphs and setbacks. However, if there is one aspect of 2022 we should all be grateful for, it is that Gen Z turned out and staved off a red wave. And make no mistake: This would not have been possible without the tireless work put in by each team at Voters of Tomorrow. From the national team, down to our state and local chapters, every member of Voters Tomorrow did the work necessary to educate and engage Gen Z. Every team understood the stakes of the 2022 election. And every team proved to the entire nation that Gen Z must be taken seriously as a voting bloc.

## **And we are not stopping there.**

In 2023 and beyond, we will expand our presence to every state across the country. We will continue organizing on the ground. We will make phone calls and send text messages.

## **We will keep serving as the most trusted and reliable way for young people to get involved in the political process.**

Additionally, based on every indication from House Republicans, it appears that lawmakers will continue making it harder for young people to have basic rights. Not even one week into holding power in the House, Republicans introduced two bills that would make it

harder for young girls and women to access basic abortion care. And in state legislatures like Florida, Ohio, Georgia, and more, lawmakers are making it harder for young people to vote — perhaps no surprise considering our strong showing in 2022.

Against this backdrop, Voters of Tomorrow will serve as an essential voice and resource for Gen Z. We will push back against harmful narratives thrown at our generation — including calls that we are “stupid” or that the voting age should be raised to 21. We will fight back against legislators who try to strip away our rights. We will show lawmakers, yet again, that if you mess with Gen Z, not only will they find out, but we will turn out in even bigger numbers and vote them out of office in 2024.

Benjamin Franklin was once asked, “What do we have, a republic or a monarchy?” Franklin responded, “A Republic, if you can keep it.” Every person at Voters of Tomorrow understands our responsibility to keep America’s republic. We understand that Gen Z is the most diverse and educated generation in America. We are the most digitally-connected generation in America. And we aren’t afraid to use our voices — and our vote — to demand better.

## **This generation is worth fighting for — and we won’t stop.**