

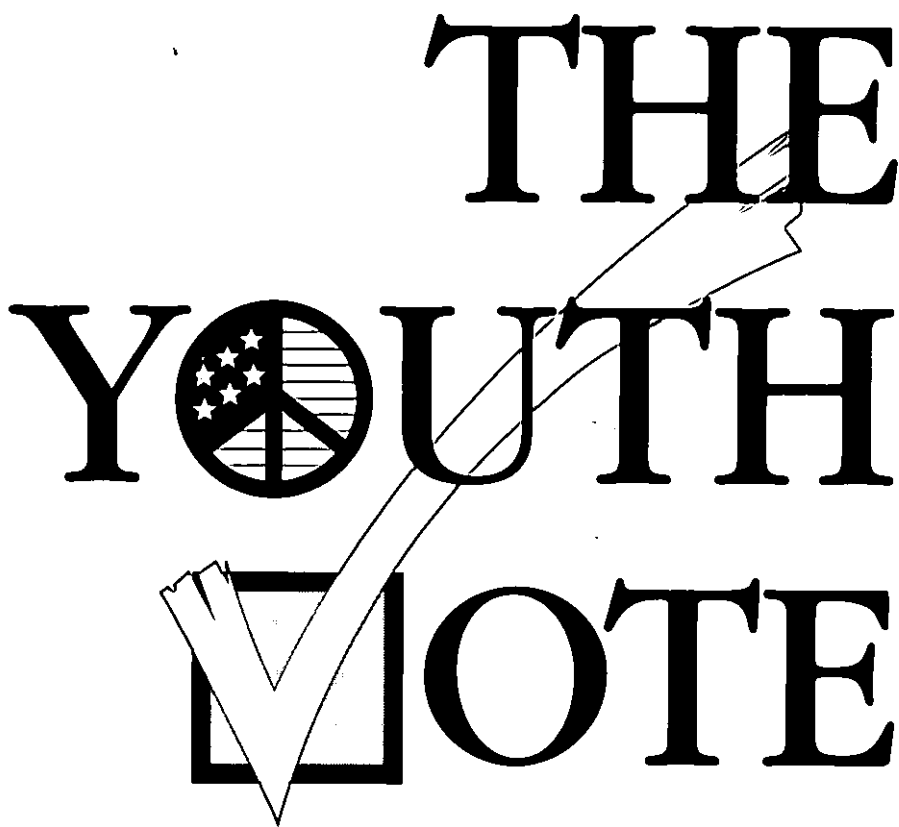
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THE YOUTH VOTE



The Registration and
Voting Patterns of Youth
Since the Passage of
the 26th Amendment
in 1971

**The Youth Vote:
The Registration and Voting Patterns of Youth
Since the Passage of the 26th Amendment in 1971**

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INTRODUCTION

In 1971, 18-to-20-year-olds were granted the right to vote with the ratification of the 26th Amendment to the United States Constitution, a right that emerged only after hard fought political and legal battles. The amendment reads:

The right of citizens of the United States, who are 18 years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of age.

The youth vote was potentially large enough to upset established voting patterns and influence the outcome of elections. The question was, would it?

Many claim that the ratification of the 26th Amendment was simply an action whose time had come. Others, however, attributed the promptness with which the measure was passed through Congress and later ratified by the various states to the political climate that prevailed; it was a time of intense activism and unrest.

Immediately after the 26th Amendment passed much was written about the youth vote, and the impact of youth's participation in the 1972 presidential election was carefully scrutinized. More recently, however, less attention has been paid to this matter, as youth have failed to prove themselves an important voting bloc.

The Youth Vote

The Youth Vote: The Registration and Voting Patterns of Youth Since the Passage of the 26th Amendment in 1971 was written in response to numerous requests for authoritative information on the historical and legal background of youth's enfranchisement. Tracing the history of efforts to lower the voting age, this publication includes legal issues that arose and provides statistical voting data with an analysis of the registration and voting patterns of youth in over two decades of voting participation.

Please note: the statistical data in this book collected from the United States Bureau of the Census has a 5 to 15 percent margin of error, as it is gathered from individuals polled after elections.

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The Youth Vote: The Historical Passage of the 26th Amendment

So much is in your hands now. To those who believe the system could not be moved, I urge you to try it. To those who have thought the system impenetrable, I say there is no longer a need to penetrate—the door is open. You now have the opportunity and the obligation to mold the world you live in, and you cannot escape this obligation.¹

On Thursday, January 17, 1971, President Nixon spoke these words to faculty and students at the University of Nebraska, urging 18-to-20-year-olds to exercise a new right extended to them: the right to vote in *federal* elections granted under an extension of the Voting Rights Act. After several years of steadfast dedication, activists and politicians had finally won their long sought-after prize. With a little extra work, these individuals would soon guide passage of the 26th Amendment granting the United States' 11 and a half million 18-to-20-year-olds the right to vote in *all* elections, federal, state and local.

According to the United States Constitution, states are empowered to enfranchise or grant the right to vote to citizens for state and local elections. Qualifications for voting in federal elections are determined by federal law. Throughout American history, states have been mandated by the federal government to give the right to vote to particular groups in *all* elections. This has been done by means of amendments to the United

States Constitution as well as by statutes (federal law).

For example, the 15th Amendment, adopted in 1870, gave black men the right to vote. Similarly, the 19th Amendment, adopted in 1920, gave women the right to vote. In 1961, the 23rd Amendment was enacted, which declared that residents of the District of Columbia were eligible to vote in presidential elections. People unwilling or unable to pay a poll tax in federal elections were granted voting privileges by the 24th Amendment, which became law in 1964.

In addition to amendments, statutes have also affected voting rights. A prime example of a statute that broadened the voting franchise is the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The law's provisions included outlawing literacy tests in the Deep South where they were being used to discriminate against African-American voters. Section 10 of the act also instructed the attorney general to challenge the constitutionality of poll taxes as voting prerequisites in state and local elections. This provision did lead to the elimination of poll taxes throughout the United States.

The road to passage of the 26th Amendment was a rocky one, whose foundation was firmly grounded in youth's resentment that they were old enough to fight in Vietnam, but not old enough to vote. This frustration led to grassroots efforts to encourage senators and representatives to support the fight for the youth vote. The Youth Franchise Coalition, a lobbying group comprised of 33 organizations including the National Education Association, the Young Democrats and the YMCA, was one of the largest activist organizations in support of the issue.ⁱⁱ Through the coalition's Washington D.C. headquarters, member groups throughout the country received advice and materials as they worked towards a common goal. The coalition attempted to influence state legislators and initiate a constitutional amendment setting the minimum voting age at 18. By rallying state support, the organization felt ratifica-

tion of an amendment would be simplified, should the opportunity arise (ratification of amendments requires passage by three-fourths of the state legislatures).

The Youth Franchise Coalition was joined by efforts from other organizations including Let Us Vote (LUV) whose founder, Dennis Warren, a 21-year-old pre-law student from the University of the Pacific in California, based his efforts on the following philosophy: "Young adults are accepting adult responsibilities and are qualified and willing to become politically active. They believe in constructive dissent and active participation. American youth should be given a 'piece of the action.' They deserve and urgently desire to vote."ⁱⁱⁱ

By 1969, the lobbyists' persistency had paid off. On August 12 of that year, Jennings Randolph, a Democratic senator from West Virginia, introduced Senate Joint Resolution 147, a proposed constitutional amendment that extended the right to vote to 18-year-olds. The proposal was referred to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

At roughly the same time, President Richard Nixon proposed that the historical 1965 Voting Rights Act be extended another five years. Unlike the constitutional amendments that had extended the right to vote to African-Americans, women, residents of the District of Columbia and people unable to pay poll taxes, the Voting Rights Act is a *statute* which needs to be re-introduced every five years. President Nixon, however, did not want to merely extend the Voting Rights Act. He also asked that it be amended so changes in local voting rules would no longer be subject to federal approval. Civil Rights activists saw this as a strategy to weaken enforcement efforts in the South.^{iv}

The president was not the only party interested in amending the historical act. Although the House of Representatives went along with President Nixon's proposal, the Senate did not. While hearings on Senate Joint Resolution 147 were taking

place, Senator Mike Mansfield introduced Amendment 545 that would decrease the voting age to 18 in all elections. The proposed legislation would amend the Voting Rights Act, not the Constitution. Some members also wanted to broaden the act by limiting the residency requirement for presidential elections to 30 days and disallowing literacy tests in all states, not just the Deep South. These states included New York, California and Illinois and 17 others where the tests were being used but where there was no real claim that they were being administered discriminatorily. This action itself would enfranchise an additional 500,000 Americans.^v

Simply adding the youth vote onto the Voting Rights Act was cause for tremendous debate in the Senate, as many members felt that youth should be franchised only through a constitutional amendment, the way other major groups were enfranchised. Members who did not support adding the youth vote provision to the Voting Rights Act pointed to Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution, which authorizes states to determine voting procedures and qualifications for state and local elections. The proposed Voting Rights Amendment would allow 18-year-olds the right to vote in all elections, including those at the federal level. The only way to override what the Constitution states in Article I, Section 2 was to create a constitutional amendment, opponents of this approach said.

Opponents of amending the Voting Rights Act also argued that a constitutional amendment would let the people decide, as it required three-fourths state approval to pass. They criticized proponents of the statutory approach, stating that they were using it merely to get instant action and to avoid the lengthy constitutional process.^{vi}

Proponents, on the other hand, saw nothing wrong with amending the Voting Rights Act. They argued that although the Constitution gives the states the general authority to set voting qualifications, they must not violate any specific indi-

vidual safeguard such as the 14th Amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the law. A section of this amendment gives Congress the power to protect rights by developing appropriate legislation. The proponents cited the 1966 decision of *Katzenbach vs. Morgan*, in which the Supreme Court upheld federal legislation outlawing literacy tests for Puerto Ricans in New York. The case held that if Congress acts to enforce the 14th Amendment through legislation declaring that a state law discriminates against a group of people, the Supreme Court will let the law stand if the justices can perceive a basis for it.^{vii}

After much debate, the Senate adopted the Voting Rights Act amendment on Thursday, March 12, 1970. Ultimately, the House debated the legislation for only an hour, with passage being assured. During the debate, one Republican Congressman even went so far as to proclaim that: "A 'no' vote would mean the most effective civil rights law in our nation's history would be emasculated." After similar arguments, it passed in the House as well. The challenge now was to win the president's support.

President Nixon acknowledged that *Katzenbach v. Morgan* provided a legal basis for Congress to outlaw literacy tests throughout the country. He noted this was only the case because denying Spanish-speaking individuals or poor persons the right to vote is a discriminatory act. In his opinion, setting the voting age at 21 discriminates against nobody; it merely recognizes a limitation must be made. Thus, the president questioned the proponents of the Voting Rights Act amendment and their reasoning. He felt that *Katzenbach v. Morgan* was not applicable to granting 18-to-20-year-olds the right to vote.^{viii}

Nixon felt instead that a constitutional amendment allowing 18-to-20-year-olds the right to vote in only national elections was the best solution. States would respond by decreasing the

voting age for state and local elections as well, in an attempt to eliminate the bookkeeping nightmare that would prevail, should youth be permitted to vote in national elections only.

Despite his misgivings, Nixon signed the Voting Rights Act into law on Monday, June 22, 1970, complete with its amendment giving 18-year-olds the right to vote. After the historic moment, he said, "If I were to veto, I would have to veto the entire bill, voting rights and all. Because the basic provisions of this act are of great importance, therefore, I am giving it my approval and leaving the decision to the courts."^{ix}

While signing the bill, Nixon also directed his attorney general to seek a swift court test of the law's constitutionality. At the same time, he urged Congress to proceed with legislation to decrease the voting age via a constitutional amendment.

Heeding the president's orders, then-U.S. Attorney General, John N. Mitchell announced that by August 3, 1970, states had to prove that they were complying with the new law's provisions, or face court action. Idaho and Arizona refused to cooperate and were, therefore, named defendants in suits filed by the Justice Department. Oregon and Texas, contesting the 18-year-old provision, filed individual suits, naming Mitchell the defendant. All four suits were combined in a single test case of the law's validity.

The Supreme Court ultimately handed down a 5 to 4 decision, maintaining that Congress does have the power to set voting ages for federal elections. Then, in another 5 to 4 vote, the Justices decided that Congress does not have the power to set voting ages for state and local elections.

Four Justices voted that Congress could set voter qualifications for any election. Four Justices took just the opposite stand, claiming these matters are best left up to the states. Justice Hugo Black was the swing vote, maintaining that Congress could set regulations for federal elections only, with

state and local voting remaining outside their realm.

Justice Black stated that:

Congress has ultimate supervisory power over congressional elections. Similarly it is the prerogative of Congress to oversee the conduct of presidential and vice-presidential elections and to set the qualifications for voters for electors for these offices. On the other hand, the Constitution was also intended to preserve to the states the power that even the Colonies had to establish and maintain their separate and independent governments, except insofar as the Constitution itself commands otherwise . . .

He continued by stating that:

It is a plain fact of history that the framers never imagined that the National Congress would set the qualifications for voters in every election from president to local constable or village alderman. It is obvious that the whole Constitution reserves to the states the power to set voter qualifications in state and local elections, except to the limited extent that the people through constitutional amendments have specifically narrowed the power of the states.^x

Justice William Brennan speaking for those who felt that Congress could lower the voting age for any election proclaimed:

In sum, Congress had ample evidence upon which it could have based the conclusion that exclusion of citizens 18 to 20 years of age from franchise is wholly unnecessary to promote any legitimate interest the states may have in assuring intelligent and responsible voting.^{xi}

Taking the opposite stand, Justice John M. Harlan criticized the court for having tampered too much with the Constitution by taking away the states' power to determine voter qualifica-

tions. As he put it:

I am of the opinion that the 14th Amendment was never intended to restrict the authority of the states to allocate their political power as they see fit, and, therefore, that it does not authorize Congress to set voter qualifications, in either state or federal elections.^{xii}

After the Supreme Court handed down its “split” decision in December, 1970, a constitutional amendment giving 18-year-olds the right to vote in all elections was introduced into the Senate, as Joint Resolution No. 7. Senator Jennings Randolph (D-WV) sponsored the bill with 85 supporters who hoped that passage of this measure would resolve the issue of teen voting with finality and eliminate the clerical problems associated with dual voting ages in some states.

The proposed amendment read: “The right of citizens of the United States, who are 18 years of age or older, to vote shall not be abridged by the United States or by any state on account of age (Section One). The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation (Section Two).

The measure met with little meaningful opposition. It first sailed through the Senate without one dissenting vote. Then on March 23, 1971, the House passed it by a margin of 400 to 19.

The next move was up to the states, with the measure becoming law when approved by 38 state legislatures. Five states—Minnesota, Delaware, Tennessee, Connecticut and Washington—ratified the amendment the day it was approved by the House. Within the ensuing week, Massachusetts and Hawaii passed the measure, and it was being processed in several other states.^{xiii}

More than idealistic zeal may have been responsible for the speed with which this was all being accomplished. Practical

concerns were also involved. Many election officials were concerned that if 18-year-olds were allowed to vote in federal but not in local or state elections an administrative nightmare might result. Towns that utilized paper ballots would have to prepare two separate sets: one for those 21 and over and another for those 18 to 20. If a town employed voting machines, they would have to adjust the mechanism so that certain portions would lock when those under 21 entered the booth.

The states were anxious to avoid such costly "dual elections." Therefore, state legislators worked diligently towards passage of an amendment that would make it possible for young voters to participate in all elections.

Whatever the motivation involved, the momentum did not slow down as the ratification process continued. On April 19, 1971 less than a month after Congress approved the measure it was passed by the California Legislature, the 20th state to take such action. This marked the halfway point in the ratification process.

The Ohio Senate approved the measure by a margin of 30 to 2 on June 29th and sent it to the House. The next morning, House Clerk Thomas Bateman announced the action the Senate had taken. Then, acting on the motion of Representative Keith McNamara, Speaker of the House Charles Kurfess sent the matter to the Committee on State Government.^{xiv}

Passage of the matter was anticipated, and all involved realized this was an important event: the amendment would become law as Ohio, being the 38th state to take this step, approved it. The Speaker had planned to permit a number of members, both Republican and Democrat, to speak on the amendment. However, this never came to pass.^{xv}

After only three short speeches, the Republican floor leader interrupted to announce, "I have just been informed the legislature of Oklahoma has gone into special session tonight.

The time for discussion is over. The time for action is here.” Anxious not to lose its place in history by permitting Oklahoma to approve the measure before it could take this step, the legislature acted quickly. Over the shouted protests of several back-benchers, Speaker of the House, Charles Kurfess pushed through a motion that cut off debate. Then, he ordered an immediate roll call, which ended at 8:05 p.m. The final tally was 81 in favor and 9 against. On June 30, 1971, after just three months, Ohio became the 38th state to ratify the amendment.

Despite the “near panic” which occurred, the Ohio legislators had nothing to worry about. The Oklahoma legislature was not scheduled to go into session until the next day.^{xvi}

The 26th Amendment experienced the fastest ratification in history, only 100 days after passage by Congress and broke the record set by the 12th Amendment, which clarified the electoral college procedure, ratified in six months and six days.^{xvii}

i Nixon, Richard M., U.S. President. Speech: University of Nebraska, 17 January 1971.

ii “History in an Hour,” *Time*, 29 June 1970, 13.

iii Wendell Cultice, *Youth's Battle For The Ballot* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 97–98.

iv “History in an Hour,” 13.

v “Vote-at-18 Campaigns Grow,” *Senior Scholastic*, 16 March 1970, 13.

vi Cultice, 121–122.

vii *Ibid*, 128.

viii “Vote for 18-Year-Olds: What Justices Said on Both Sides,” *U.S. News and World Report*, 25 January 1971, 88.

ix Cultice, 139.

- x "Vote for 18-Year-Old: What Justices Said on Both Sides," 89.
- xi Ibid.
- xii Ibid.
- xiii "Lower Voting Age: One More Hurdle To Go," *U.S. News and World Report*, 5 April 1971, 64.
- xiv *Journal of the House of Representatives of the One Hundred and Ninth General Assembly of the State of Ohio Regular Session*, 647.
- xv Ibid., 663.
- xvi R.W. Apple, Jr., "The States Ratify Full Vote at 18," *The New York Times*, 1 July 1971, sec 1, p. 1.
- xvii Cultice, 215.

A Shout at the Ballot Box or an Inaudible Whisper: The Registration and Voting Patterns of Youth

With the youth vote firmly in place, student groups, political parties and nonprofit organizations began the mammoth task of registering the nation's 11 million 18-to-20-year-olds that had just earned the right to vote. The Movement for the Student Vote, Inc. was particularly active in this effort, having the support of prominent politicians from both political parties. The group ran a sophisticated advertising campaign urging registration, explaining local voting rules and requesting federal laws easing rules regulating absentee voting.ⁱ

Some programs aimed at registering youth proved phenomenally successful. The Washington D.C. based Student Vote claimed to have signed up 500,000 youth in a scant eight months. In Pennsylvania, a joint effort by the Pennsylvania State Education Association, both major political parties and several unions put 183,000 new voters on the rolls. The Impact Program, administered by the Alliance for Labor Action and sponsored largely through the United Auto Workers, managed to sign up 90 percent of the eligible high school students it approached in California, New Mexico and Wisconsin.ⁱⁱ Organizers even utilized gimmicks to register students; music was a popular drawing card. Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary sang at many registration rallies. Even the Beach Boys had special registration booths at their concerts.ⁱⁱⁱ

Voter registration drives gained momentum as the 1972 presidential election loomed ever closer. A *Chicago Tribune* Unidex survey showed that by September of 1971, only 60.5 percent of eligible students were registered. This figure, however, increased to 87 percent by August, 1972. Even if this statistic was inflated, the percentage of students who registered compared favorably with the 70 percent figure of the general population.^{iv}

Representing the largest influx of voters since women were enfranchised in 1920, the youth vote had the potential to strongly impact the system. Some skeptics, however, doubted young people would vote in large enough numbers to make much difference, pointing to their past performances in state elections.

Four states, Kentucky, Alaska, Hawaii and Georgia, had long permitted those under 21 to vote in state and local elections. Georgia set the precedent when it gave 18-year-olds the franchise in 1943. Kentucky took this step in 1955. When Alaska became a state in 1959, it enfranchised 19-year-olds; the voting age was later lowered to 18. Hawaii permitted 20-year-olds to vote when it entered the union in 1959.^v Judging from voter turnout in these states, it is no wonder many questioned youth's ability to prove the skeptics wrong.

There are two ways that voting is reported in census data. Percentage of voting age population (VAP) refers to the number of people who voted as a percentage of all United States citizens in a given age group. Percentage of registered voters refers to the number of people who voted as a percentage of all the people registered to vote. In the four states in 1970, only 26 percent of the VAP under the age of 21 participated in the election. This compared with 55 percent of the VAP over the age of 21. In a Maryland congressional race held during the spring of 1971, an estimated 47,000 youth had their first chance to vote, yet only two percent of them cast their ballots.^{vi}

The Nixon-McGovern election of 1972 finally gave millions of youth a chance for their voices to be heard. Forty-eight percent of all 18-to-20-year-olds participated in the election.

Despite many activists' hopes for the contrary, voter turnout for 18-to-20-year-olds hit its peak in 1972 and has experienced a slow descent ever since. The low participation rates in the 1972 election turned many groups and politicians away from youth registration efforts. Political parties followed suit. Democrats, guided by the memory of 1972 when a massive youth registration and get-out-the-vote effort produced disappointing results, had no special youth division in 1976. Instead, they targeted more general voter registration efforts.^{vii}

Perhaps it was this loss of interest in targeting and registering youth, or perhaps it was the same circumstances that drew mediocre results in the 1972 election. Whatever the reason, 18-to-20-year-olds as a group showed even less interest in the Ford-Carter presidential election of 1976 when only 38 percent of them came to the polls.

The 1980s brought further decline in youth voter participation. In 1980, 35.7 percent of youth voted in the Carter-Reagan election. In the Reagan-Mondale election of 1984, this number was slightly higher at 36.7 percent and reached a 33 percent low in the Bush-Dukakis election of 1988.

In 1992, however, a gentle upswing occurred. The highly energized Clinton-Bush-Perot presidential election saw 38.5 percent of 18-to-20-year-olds at the polls, up more than five percentage points from 1988's 33 percent. Although not monumental, this increase in numbers excited many activists and initiated a new-found sense of hope in those working to bring respect to the young generation considered politically disengaged.

Registration and education efforts had dropped off after disappointing youth turnout in the 1972 presidential election. In the early 1990s, however, emphasis was placed, once again, on

rallying the youth vote. Studies unveiled reasons why youth did not participate in the electoral process. New organizations developed programs that targeted these reasons with the hopes of turning youth into a driving political force.

According to the Center for Youth Voting, there are four primary reasons why youth do not vote. To begin with, they are transient, often living in three or five different places after high school before settling down, requiring several changes in voting registration. Youth also have little experience with the electoral process and political issues and often lack the information needed to make informed choices. Likewise, youth turn away from voting when elected leaders and candidates fail to reach out to them and fail to touch on issues that affect their lives.

This final reason for lack of political participation presents an additional problem. As political leaders and candidates make little effort to reach out to young voters, young voters make little effort to vote. This lack of participation, in turn, discourages candidates from targeting youth, which discourages them from voting, thus starting the cycle all over again.^{viii}

Other studies cite a distrust in government as a driving force that sends youth away from the polls. Furthermore, youth see politicians and political parties as constantly bickering and looking for differences instead of trying to find a common ground. More than ever, young people do not see government as a solution to their problems. They see no connection between issues they care about and the political process.^{ix}

In response to the outpouring of information on nonvoting 18-to-20-year-olds, many organizations were born in the early 1990s aimed specifically at rallying the youth vote. No longer a means of merely registering youth, these groups worked to educate them on politics and the issues that affected their lives.

Founded in 1990 by Patrick Lippert, Rock The Vote is one such organization. Using music and the "hip hop" culture,

Rock The Vote works to target the causes it feels young voters need to learn about, including freedom of speech and censorship. In 1992, the organization utilized the "Your Vote is Your Voice" slogan to show youth their voices did count and were important. Using the music industry and MTV's Choose or Lose program for support, the organization was able to register more than 750,000 young voters in 1992.^x

MTV, a cable music television station aimed at youth, launched Choose or Lose in 1992 to promote youth voter participation. Along with publishing nonpartisan guides to issues and elections, the program traveled, via bus, to college campuses, music concerts and festivals throughout the country educating youth and registering them for the upcoming election. The program even invited presidential candidate Bill Clinton to speak to a studio audience of voting-age youth.

Evident from Clinton's acceptance of MTV's invitation, 1992 political candidates likewise took notice of nonvoting youth studies. While on MTV, Clinton played his saxophone, answered audience members' questions and even admitted to wearing boxer shorts. He came across as being a hip candidate who was in touch with the concerns of the young generation. According to George Stephanopoulos, Deputy Campaign Manager for Clinton in 1992, "Our campaign strategy was to grab people who hadn't voted before and convince them that their future was at stake."^{xi}

With the advent of the World Wide Web, organizations rushed to develop websites to rally the "cyber generation." Youth Voices worked to identify the common dreams and concerns of 18-to-24-year-olds so they could mobilize and more actively participate in the political life of the country. Through a survey process, the organization targeted 1,200 American youth and uncovered their top concerns, including healthcare, welfare and having a job that pays well and provides decent benefits. This research was then put in the hands of youth organizers

and political and business leaders to emphasize the issues concerning youth.^{xii} Other websites such as Youth Link and Election Watch, a page designed by a high school government class, provided educational materials, color coded election maps, student editorials and vocabulary and discussion questions, all aimed at educating an entire generation of voters.

Such boundless determination was destined to see results, and results there were. Many observers of the issue agreed that youth's rush for the polls in the 1992 election was a direct result of the onslaught of youth vote organizations during the presidential campaign.

Riding the wave of the '92 election with renewed energy, enthusiasm and momentum, the same groups that worked to rally the youth vote in 1992 worked even more diligently to increase voter turnout in 1996. Joined by new coalitions such as Youth Vote '96 and the Youth Education Alliance, organizers felt they were "on a roll" and even touted reports that nine out of ten youth surveyed said they would vote in the '96 election.^{xiii}

1996, however, was not the banner year people were expecting. In fact, the Clinton-Dole election only saw 68.4 percent of registered 18-to-20-year-olds at the polls, down over 11 percentage points from 1992. Likewise, the percentage of all 18-to-20-year-olds in the voting age population who voted fell from 38.5 percent in 1992 to 31.2 percent in 1996.

Why such a downturn in young voter participation? To begin with, fewer voters of *every* age turned out for the 1996 election; only 49 percent of all Americans of voting age cast ballots, the lowest number for any presidential election since 1924.^{xiv}

Many argue, however, that there are concrete reasons for the low turnout among young people in 1996. Although groups emerged en masse to rally the youth vote in 1996 as they had in 1992, another major factor that yielded high turnout in

1992 was not present in 1996: Bill Clinton's grassroots courting of the younger generation. Unlike 1992 when Clinton made frequent campaign stops at colleges and appearances on MTV, 1996 saw him targeting middle America, leaving youth without a favorite contender. Bob Dole alienated youth in much the same manner. Likewise, in 1992 young Americans felt connected to the system and voted on issues of particular relevance to them: national service, the environment, reproductive rights and others. In 1996, the topics—budget, Medicare and the flat tax—left them cold.^{xv} Studies on reasons for low voter turnout among youth proved correct; young people fail to vote when elected leaders and candidates do not reach out to them and touch on issues that affect their lives.

The following chart summarizes Census Bureau data for youth vote turnout in the presidential elections of 1972, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1992 and 1996.

Registration and Voting Patterns of 18-to-20-Year-Old Citizens

	<i>Number of 18-20-year-olds eligible to register to vote</i>	<i>Number of 18-20-year-olds who registered to vote</i>	<i>Percentage of 18-20-year-olds who registered to vote</i>	<i>Number of registered 18-20-year-olds who voted</i>	<i>Percentage of registered 18-20-year-olds who voted</i>	<i>Percentage of 18-20-year-olds eligible to register to vote who voted</i>
1972 Nixon-McGovern	11,002,000	6,404,000	58.0%	5,318,000	83.0%	48.0%
1976 Ford-Carter	12,105,000	5,700,000	47.0%	4,600,000	81.0%	38.0%
1980 Carter-Reagan	12,274,000	5,485,000	45.0%	4,387,000	80.0%	35.7%
1984 Reagan-Mondale	11,249,000	5,285,000	47.0%	4,131,000	78.0%	36.7%
1988 Bush-Dukakis	10,742,000	4,822,000	44.9%	3,570,000	74.0%	33.0%
1992 Bush-Clinton-Perot	9,727,000	4,696,000	48.3%	3,749,000	79.8%	38.5%
1996 Clinton-Dole	10,785,000	4,919,000	45.6%	3,366,000	68.4%	31.2%

The following chart compares the registration and voting patterns of whites, blacks and Hispanics aged 18 to 20 who voted in the 1972, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1992 and 1996 presidential elections. In each instance, the percentage of whites who voted was greater than the percentage of blacks or Hispanics, and the percentage of blacks who voted was greater than the percentage of Hispanics.

Comparison of Registration and Voting Patterns of Whites, Blacks and Hispanics Aged 18 to 20

	<i>Number of 18-20-year-olds eligible to register to vote</i>	<i>Number of 18-20-year-olds who registered to vote</i>	<i>Percentage of 18-20-year-olds who registered to vote</i>	<i>Number of registered 18-20-year-olds who voted</i>	<i>Percentage of registered 18-20-year-olds who voted</i>	<i>Percentage of 18-20-year-olds eligible to register to vote who voted</i>
White						
1972	9,519,000	5,750,000	60.4%	4,856,000	84.5%	51.0%
1976	10,346,000	5,120,000	49.4%	4,200,000	82.0%	40.6%
1980	10,423,000	4,850,000	46.5%	3,928,000	81.0%	37.7%
1984	9,263,000	4,427,000	47.8%	3,472,000	78.4%	37.5%
1988	8,824,000	4,047,000	45.9%	3,045,000	75.2%	34.5%
1992	7,743,000	3,938,000	50.8%	3,187,000	80.9%	41.2%
1996	8,641,000	4,078,000	47.2%	2,808,000	68.9%	32.5%
Black						
1972	1,384,000	596,000	43.1%	425,000	71.3%	30.7%
1976	1,571,000	530,000	33.7%	358,000	67.5%	22.8%
1980	1,594,000	566,000	35.5%	404,000	71.4%	25.3%
1984	1,655,000	782,000	47.3%	593,000	75.8%	35.8%
1988	1,543,000	662,000	42.9%	429,000	64.8%	27.8%
1992	1,501,000	638,000	42.5%	474,000	74.3%	31.6%
1996	1,621,000	689,000	42.5%	461,000	66.9%	28.4%
Hispanic						
1972	591,000	223,000	37.7%	177,000	79.4%	29.9%
1976	766,000	221,000	28.9%	169,000	76.5%	22.1%
1980	929,000	184,000	19.8%	121,000	65.8%	13.0%
1984	849,000	215,000	25.3%	149,000	69.3%	17.6%
1988	1,104,000	270,000	24.5%	171,000	63.3%	15.5%
1992	1,159,000	267,000	23.0%	183,000	68.5%	15.8%
1996	1,421,000	386,000	27.1%	228,000	59.1%	16.1%

The Youth Vote

Education is also a major factor in determining voter registration and voter turnout. The following chart details the relationship between the level of education that a voter attained and their pattern of registering and voting. In all instances, voting turnout increases with education level.

The Relationship Between Education and Voting

Highest level of education	Year and age group	Number in this group	Number who registered to vote	Percentage who registered to vote	Number of registered who voted	Percentage who were eligible to register to vote who voted	
8th grade	1980: 18-19	167,000	20,000	12.0%	12,000	7.2%	
	20-21	127,000	24,000	18.9%	16,000	12.6%	
	1984: 18-19	179,000	24,000	13.6%	12,000	6.7%	
	20-21	148,000	18,000	12.5%	8,000	5.4%	
	1992: 18-19	147,000	8,000	5.6%	6,000	4.1%	
	20-21	163,000	13,000	8.2%	10,000	6.1%	
	1996: 18-19	156,000	15,000	9.7%	13,000	8.6%	
	20-21	132,000	9,000	6.8%	7,000	5.0%	
	1-3 years of high school	1980: 18-19	2,031,000	506,000	24.9%	397,000	19.5%
		20-21	1,118,000	269,000	24.1%	184,000	16.4%
1984: 18-19		1,886,000	543,000	28.8%	408,000	21.6%	
20-21		1,001,000	274,000	27.4%	168,000	16.8%	
1992: 18-19		1,912,000	606,000	31.7%	477,000	24.9%	
20-21		876,000	195,000	22.3%	118,000	13.5%	
1996: 18-19		2,275,000	698,000	30.7%	489,000	21.5%	
20-21		899,000	251,000	27.9%	105,000	11.7%	
4 years of high school		1980: 18-19	4,450,000	2,109,000	47.4%	1,668,000	37.5%
		20-21	3,606,000	1,584,000	43.9%	1,241,000	34.4%
	1984: 18-19	4,039,000	1,941,000	48.1%	1,510,000	37.4%	
	20-21	3,485,000	1,642,000	47.1%	1,242,000	35.6%	
	1992: 18-19	2,367,000	1,180,000	49.9%	930,000	39.3%	
	20-21	2,222,000	1,000,000	45.0%	751,000	33.8%	
	1996: 18-19	2,810,000	1,259,000	44.8%	826,000	29.4%	
	20-21	2,132,000	925,000	43.3%	548,000	25.7%	

Sources: Current Population Reports Population Characteristics, United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census

Not only did expectations for a large youth vote not materialize upon ratification of the 26th Amendment, but also hopes about young voters being a windfall for Democratic candidates proved ill founded. Activists argued that young people would play a major role in George McGovern, the 1972 Democratic candidate, unseating Richard Nixon for the presidency of the United States. In support of this scenario, Gallop pollster Louis Harris noted during July 1972 that although the electorate as a whole gave Nixon an 18-point lead, those under 30 favored Senator McGovern by a nine-point margin. This "support" for Senator McGovern was thought to be a reflection of youth's liberal Democratic leanings.^{xvi}

In the 1972 presidential election held shortly after passage of the 26th Amendment, Senator George McGovern, Democratic presidential candidate, narrowly edged out President Nixon, Republican presidential candidate, among those 18 to 20 years old. Senator McGovern, however, won fewer votes among those in the 22-to-28-year-old category than among those 21 and under.

A CBS-*New York Times* survey taken on election day 1976 showed a switch in this pattern. Young people, aged 18 to 20, favored the Republican candidate, Gerald Ford, over the Democratic candidate, Jimmy Carter, by 51 percent to 49 percent. Voters who were slightly older (22 to 29) showed more support for Carter than did those in any other age group.^{xvii}

By 1984 youth completely negated the prediction that a majority of them would vote left of center. In fact, youth voted more strongly for Reagan than the population as a whole, 67 to 28 as compared to 61 to 32.^{xviii} Republicans continued to earn youth support in 1988. According to a Gallup poll, 63 percent of young people, aged 18 to 30 voted for Bush, while only 37 percent voted for Dukakis. This compared to a more even split in the population as a whole: 54 percent supported Bush and 46 percent supported Dukakis.^{xix}

Although a much closer race in 1992, Bill Clinton earned the most support from 18-to-30-year-olds. Closer to the 43.2 percent national average, 40 percent of youth voted for the Democratic candidate. Thirty-seven percent supported Bush, directly in-line with the 37.8 percent who supported him nationally. Independent candidate Ross Perot landed 23 percent of the youth's vote, up four percentage points from what he earned nationally. Democrats continued to receive youth's support in the 1996 election. Fifty-four percent of young people aged 18 to 30 voted for Clinton, while Dole received only 30 percent of their votes. The remaining 16 percent went to Ross Perot.^{xx}

As indicated from the above-mentioned statistics, youth's political party preference appears to jump back and forth from Democrat to Republican. Scholars argue that polls will show more and more of this behavior as young people and adults alike abandon allegiance to both the Democratic and Republican parties. Research indicates that Americans, citing distrust for politicians, no longer organize their political thinking in accordance with party membership. Instead, they are increasingly inclined to describe themselves as independent. One-fifth of the electorate would even bolt to a third party given the opportunity.^{xxi}

Youth, more than any other voting bloc, identify themselves as independent. Swayed by issues, not ideology, they scatter their support, "emerging as an amorphous mass whose internal differences renounce any generational solidarity."^{xxii}

A study by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago demonstrates this unfolding trend. In the 1984 election, 37 percent of all those surveyed claimed to be independent, while 46 percent of those aged 18 to 29 claimed the title. Again in 1994, more youth than the general electorate claimed to be independent. While 39 percent of youth considered themselves independent, only 33 percent of

the general electorate did so. In both elections, the youth bloc had the highest percentage of respondents claiming to be independent.^{xxiii}

The following chart lists the results from the National Opinion Research Center survey.

Political Party Identification, 1974 to 1994

"Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat or independent?"

	Aged 18-29	Aged 30-39	Aged 40-49	Aged 50-59	Aged 60-69	Aged 70 and older
Democrat						
1994	29%	35%	34%	36%	43%	43%
1984	30%	37%	36%	45%	42%	39%
1974	35%	41%	46%	45%	45%	45%
Independent						
1994	39%	34%	38%	30%	30%	23%
1984	46%	39%	41%	30%	27%	23%
1974	44%	34%	30%	26%	22%	13%
Republican						
1994	28%	29%	25%	30%	27%	31%
1984	22%	21%	22%	24%	30%	36%
1974	15%	19%	19%	27%	27%	36%

Note: Percents may not add to 100 because "other" and "no answer" are not included.

Source: General Social Survey, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago

The same organization conducted a poll asking respondents if they considered themselves to be a Republican, Democrat or independent. If Republican or Democrat, respondents were asked if they considered themselves strong, or not very strong. If independent, they were asked if they lean

Republican or Democrat. The results are as follows:

Strength of Party Identification, 1994

"Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat or Independent? If Republican or Democrat: Would you call yourself a strong Republican/Democrat or not a very strong Republican/Democrat? If independent, do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?"

	Aged 18-29	Aged 30-39	Aged 40-49	Aged 50-59	Aged 60-69	Aged 70 and older
Democrat						
strong	8%	12%	13%	16%	20%	22%
not very strong	21%	23%	21%	21%	22%	21%
Independent						
lean Democrat	13%	12%	13%	11%	11%	7%
neither	15%	13%	14%	9%	10%	10%
lean Republican	11%	9%	10%	10%	9%	6%
Republican						
strong	8%	11%	9%	14%	10%	13%
not very strong	20%	17%	16%	16%	17%	17%

Note: Percents may not add to 100 because "other" and "no answer" are not included.

Source: General Social Survey, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago

Of those polled, youth aged 18–29 are the least likely to exhibit strong Democratic or Republican views. Similarly, youth are the second largest group, next to non-high school graduates to consider themselves neither Republican nor Democrat.

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- i "What Will the 135 Million Do?" *Saturday Review*, 9 October 1971, 28.
 - ii "A Quiet Revolution," *Newsweek*, 14 June 1971, 35.
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 - v "Age of Aquarius," *Newsweek*, 23 March 1970, 30.
 - vi "Now That the Voting Age is Lower . . .," *U.S. News and World Report*, 12 July 1971, 58.
 - vii Rhodes Cook, "What Ever Happened to the Youth Vote?" *Congressional Quarterly*, 15 July 1978, 1792–1975.
 - viii *Understanding the Youth Vote: Patterns and Possibilities* (Washington D.C.: Center for Youth Voting, n.d.).
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 - x Rock The Vote, World Wide Web, 21 May 1998. Available: <http://www.rockthevote.org/>.
 - xi Reitman, 122–124.
 - xii "Youth Voices: Generation Xpection Issues a Wakeup Call," CPN Youth & Education, World Wide Web, 29 May 1998. Available: http://www.cpn.org/sections/topics/youth/stories-studies/youth_voices.html.
 - xiii "New Poll Shows Young People as a Major Swing Vote in '96 Election," Youth Vote '96, World Wide Web, 21 May 1998. Available: <http://www.cgv.org/pressconf.html>.
 - xiv "Youth and Politics Page," Close Up Foundation, World Wide Web, 6 July 1998. Available: <http://www.closeup.org/youth.htm>.
 - xv Reitman, 124.
 - xvi O'Brien, 14.
 - xvii Cook, 1793.
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- xix "Vote By Groups, 1984–1988," The Gallup Organization, World Wide Web, 4 May 1998. Available:
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http://www.gallup.com/Gallup_Poll_Data/elecpoll/voteby-grps/grp9296.htm.
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<http://www.civiced.org/attitudes.html>.
- xxii Cook, 1792–1795.
- xxiii Susan Mitchell, *The Official Guide to American Attitudes*, (Ithaca: New Strategist Publications, 1996), 22.

Overcoming Obstacles: The Youth Vote and the Law

Despite winning the right to vote, many young people argued that being away from home on election day made it difficult for them to cast their ballots.

Skeptics, however, claimed that college students were simply making excuses for their lack of participation on election day. In 1963, the President's Commission on Registration and Voter Participation decided to investigate the matter further. The released study concluded that 21-to-25-year-olds were, in fact, experiencing barriers to voting. The report noted that "the restrictive legal and administrative procedures for registration and voting, including exclusionary residence qualifications and cumbersome absentee voting laws, appear to be the major cause for low voter turnout participation in this age group."

According to a study compiled by national youth registration groups, 24 states did not allow any absentee voting at the time the 26th Amendment was passed in 1971. This meant that it was fruitless for 18-to-20-year-olds away at college to register to vote in their hometowns, since they would not be home to vote during the election, and the law did not permit them to vote absentee. Several states permitted people to vote by absentee ballot in general elections but not in primaries, which worked to disenfranchise students.¹

The problem youth faced revolved around their "dual residency." Along with maintaining a permanent residence at their par-

ents' home, many also resided for most of the year in their college town. Traditionally, the law viewed students as residing *permanently* at their parents' residence, while living only *temporarily* at college. There was an assumption that they would return to their parents' residence after completing their studies. Recognizing this, many authorities thought youth should vote using their parents' address, thus voting in their hometown.

Since absentee voting was not an option for most students, many made ill-fated attempts to register and vote in their college towns. Concerned about students' influence on small town elections, local registrars placed barriers in the way of young people who were hoping to register. A witness who spoke during Congressional debate on the 26th Amendment expressed these concerns:

My principal concern with this particular measure is one that has to do with permitting 18-year-olds to vote, for instance, in local and municipal elections in college towns. For example what would happen in a community like Urbana, Illinois, with an influx of 20,000 to 25,000 students from outside the state coming into that community and being given the opportunity to vote at 18 years of age? For goodness sake, we would have transients actually controlling the elections, city councils and mayors in or out of office in a town in which they have a dominant voice. Personally, I feel this is bad. We have seen in Madison, Wisconsin, where in one local election the students of the University of Wisconsin were able to band together and elect several officials who could care less how the city was run and have no responsibility whatsoever about taxes which have to be raised to fund municipal functions in the city.ⁱⁱ

Students who were discouraged from voting in their college towns did not remain silent. Refusing to let local authorities stand in their way, they filed numerous lawsuits claiming

officials were violating their right to vote. The courts did not reach a clear-cut decision that would prove applicable in all cases, but young voters did win many victories.

When the courts finally permitted college students to vote in their college towns, they were recognizing the emerging transient nature of youth and a changing society with citizens "on the move." Denying students the right to vote in their college towns was not youth's only complaint. They also argued that young people should not be subjected to more vigorous questioning than other members of the electorate. That is, they should not be deprived of their 14th Amendment right, which promises equal protection under the law.

Complaints about unfair questioning eventually reached the courts as well. In *Bright v. Baesler*, the court prohibited officials in Lexington, Kentucky from obliging students to complete a form to prove their permanent address was their parents' home. The court stated:

There is no dispute in this case that Kentucky has the right to require every applicant for voter registration to be domiciliary of the precinct in which he offers to vote. But may the state require, and is there any compelling reason why it should require students to go to greater lengths to prove domicile? This court thinks not.ⁱⁱⁱ

Middlebury, Vermont authorities refused to register students who did not indicate they planned to remain in the town indefinitely. The courts ruled this practice unconstitutional in *Shivelhood v. Davis*. In a discussion worded like others evolving from similar cases, the court stated:

Thus, the Board of Civil Authority must not require students to fill out a supplemental questionnaire involving questions concerning their domicile unless all applicants are required to complete the same questionnaire. Moreover, the Board of Civil

Authority must use its best efforts to ensure any questionnaire is equally relevant to all applicants and not designed only to apply to student applicants.”^{iv}

The Pacific 2nd District Court in *Jolicoeur v. Milhaly*, ruled students must be viewed as emancipated even if they are not completely self-supporting, as doing otherwise would represent a violation of the 26th Amendment. This invalidated a California law that forced young people to vote by absentee ballot from their parents' home.

The court stated:

We hold today that both the 26th Amendment to the United States constitution and California law require respondent registrars to treat all citizens 18 years of age or older alike for all purposes related to voting. We do not imply that registrars may not question a citizen of any age as to his true domicile. However, the middle-aged person who obtains a job and moves to San Francisco from San Diego, and the youth who moves from his family in Grass Valley to Turlock to attend college must be treated equally.^v

The 5th District Federal Court determined in *Whatley v. Clark* that allowing students to vote in their college town should not remain contingent upon their promising they will remain there indefinitely. In reaching this conclusion, the court stated: “A state has power to restrict franchise to bona fide residents, but if residence requirements are to withstand continued scrutiny, they must be appropriately defined and uniformly applied.”^{vi}

In yet another victory for young voters, *Anderson v. Brown* found the court striking down an Ohio law requiring students to obtain a permanent residence in their college town before being permitted voting privileges there. This regulation was

ruled a violation of students' 14th Amendment rights; that is, they were being subjected to closer scrutiny than were others who attempted to register.

Jonathan Reiff, however, was concerned that local officials' efforts to obey this agreement were making them overly lenient; they were not adhering to regulations stipulating voters must have a "domicile" in the district. In order to qualify as a "domicile," a place of residence must accommodate the important activities of a self-sustaining life.^{vii}

In Texas, similar problems emerged. Leroy Symm, a Texas official, had been asking students to fill out a questionnaire that inquired about property ownership and intentions of staying in the county. This practice was ruled unconstitutional in *Texas v. the United States*. The Supreme Court later refused to hear the case on appeal.

Although many cases went in the students' favor, the local authorities did prevail in some instances, especially with issues involving voter eligibility. In *Ramey v. Rockefeller*, for example, the court ruled it is not a violation of 14th Amendment rights "to select for individual inquiry categories of citizens presenting the most obvious problems, as long as the ultimate standard is the same for all."

The court specified that while questions which ask the students' future intentions may not be acceptable, those seeking to determine "the place which is the center of the individual's life now, the locus of his primary concern," are permissible; the "determination must be based on all relevant factors."^{viii}

Although much of the debate surrounding youth registration emerged shortly after passage of the 26th Amendment, small confrontations still erupted years later. In 1989, four students at the University of Maryland went to court on behalf of more than 300 students who claimed they were stripped of their

right to vote in the city election that year. The students filed their lawsuit after learning that, over several months, the College Park City Council had adopted a series of registration policies that purged their names from the city's voting lists. The city also instituted a 90-day deadline, which closed registration several weeks before students returned to campus, making re-registration difficult.^{ix}

Court intervention was not solely responsible for easing voter registration problems encountered by youth. The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 was intended to alleviate the "hassles" of voter registration by expanding the number of locations and opportunities whereby eligible citizens can register. These locations include the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, public assistance agencies and via mail. The "Motor Voter," as it has been termed, also requires updating voter registration files by identifying and removing names of people who cannot vote. Finally, the act provides "fail-safe" voting procedures to ensure an individual's right to vote prevails over current bureaucratic or legal technicalities.^x In the law's first two years of implementation, an estimated 28 million people took advantage of its provisions to register to vote or update their registration.^{xi} Although intended to reach all facets of the American electorate, the National Voter Registration Act does ease some of the barriers associated with youth voter registration by providing convenient registration locations. However, its exact impact on the youth vote has not yet been measured.

i Kenneth Guido, "Student Voting and Residency Requirement Qualifications: The Aftermath of the 26th Amendment," *The New York University Law Review*, April 1972, 45.

ii "Students Voting and Apportionment: The 'Rotten Boroughs' of Academia," *The Yale Law Journal*, 1971, 37.

iii "United States v. State of Texas," 445F, Supp, 1255.

- iv Ibid, 1256.
- v "Whatley v. Clark, 482 *Federal Reporter*, 2nd Series, 1230.
- vi "Jolicoeur v. Milhaly," 96 *California Reporter*, 708.
- vii Jonathan D. Reiff, "Ohio Residency Law for Student Voters—Its Implications and a Proposal for More Effective Implementation of Residency Status," *Cleveland State Law Review*, 1979, 466.
- viii Burt Neuborne and Arthur Eisenberg, *The Rights of Candidates and Voters* (New York: Avon Press, 1976), 30.
- ix "Students Charge Rights Violation in Suit on Voting," *The New York Times*, 17 September 1989, A59.
- x The National Clearinghouse on Election Administration, Federal Election Commission, *Implementing the National Voter Registration Act of 1993: Requirements, Issues, Approaches and Examples* (Washington D.C.: GOP, 1 January 1994), 11.
- xi Meg S. Duskin, "Motor Voter's Road Test," *The National Voter*, June/July 1997, 6.

Why Youth Don't Vote: Theories of Non-voter Participation

As indicated in Chapter 2, it is evident that youth have a relatively low voter turnout, with their voter participation percentages falling year after year (with the exception of the 1992 presidential election). This lack of fulfillment of political responsibility has left theorists scurrying for concrete reasons why youth do not vote.

Relatively few studies concentrate solely on youth's participation in the political process. More importantly, studies examine the electorate as a whole to uncover trends, especially since voter turnout *as a whole* has been significantly decreasing since the 1960s. These studies have unveiled a plethora of reasons as to why people do not vote, almost all of which can be subdivided into two categories: 1) social circumstances/demographics and 2) overall societal changes affecting people's political philosophies and sense of duty to the political system.

Analyzing basic data referring to age, sex and voting participation presents a notable trend. As indicated in the information from the United States Bureau of the Census on page 39, it is obvious that as a person ages, he/she is more likely to vote, with the exception of those over the age of 75.

Why this trend prevails has perplexed analysts. Many, however, have found answers. According to Stanley Verba, political participation has been shown to fluctuate in accordance with

Voting Participation by Age Group in the 1992 Election

	All	Male	Female
18-20 years	36.4%	36.3%	36.6%
21-24 years	38.8%	37.4%	40.2%
25-34 years	49.9%	46.9%	53.0%
35-44 years	60.0%	57.0%	63.1%
45-54 years	66.9%	66.2%	67.5%
55-64 years	70.5%	69.5%	71.4%
65-74 years	76.3%	79.6%	73.5%
75 years and over	66.1%	70.3%	63.4%

Source: *Current Population Reports, Series P-20, Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1992*, United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

one's position in the life cycle, greatly determined by their age. People who are younger have different demographic and social circumstances than those who are older. This participation pattern is attributed to the impact of "start-up" and "slow-down." In the early years, people are unsettled and do not have a stake in the system that would oblige their participation. The legal barriers that accompany mobility are always present. For example, registration in Ohio closes 30 days prior to an election. Older people, Verba claims, experience psychological withdrawal as well as physical infirmities which make it difficult for them to reach the polling places.ⁱ

A study by Margaret Conway takes the life cycle theory even further. She argues that citizens between the ages of 30 and 65 vote at higher rates than do those that are older or

younger because of the effects of other social characteristics; age groups differ in educational attainment and income, which impact voter turnout. Likewise, people living with a spouse are more likely to vote than those who are single, divorced or widowed.ⁱⁱ

Older (75 years and older) and younger citizens, notes Conway, have lower levels of educational attainment. Since individuals with more education are more likely to vote, it is no wonder participation levels for the old and young are so low. Younger citizens are also less likely to participate politically than are middle-aged citizens because of their marital status. Lower proportions of those who are under the age of 25 are married. People who are not married are less likely to vote. Interpersonal influences have a significant impact on voting, with the influence of one's spouse being especially important. Furthermore, youth's high rate of mobility creates feelings of disengagement; individuals who have lived in an area for a relatively short time are less likely to vote, and younger citizens move more frequently than do older citizens.ⁱⁱⁱ

Accompanying the life cycle theory of voter participation is a study by Peter Bachrach that measures voter participation with regard to types of employment. He found that blue-collar workers have little opportunity to express themselves within their work environment. Bacharach theorizes that workers would have more to draw upon when voting if they could participate more fully in decision-making at work. Supporting this statement, he finds that as people from working class backgrounds become more active in organizations they become more politically active.^{iv}

Conway develops this point even further. She notes that socioeconomic status (income, occupation and education) determines voting behavior. People with higher status possess higher levels of politically relevant resources, greater access to political information, higher levels of capacity to process that

information and a greater awareness of the impact of political decisions on their interests.^v

Other studies tout the importance of demographic and social circumstances when considering voter turnout as well. According to Jack Dennis, young adults do not vote because of the experiences, or lack thereof, they have encountered in their lives. He notes that youth do not have practice in collecting and processing decision-relevant political information, they have little experience with leadership, policies and government, and they lack a tangible stake in their community where they reside, or in society in general.^{vi} All of these characteristics have very real effects on voter turnout.

An ABC poll, conducted between June 29 and July 13, 1983, indicated that voting patterns stem, in part, from one's upbringing. Sixty percent of those labeled "most likely to vote" reported that their parents always voted in presidential elections. For those viewed as most unlikely to vote, the figure was 32 percent.

In *The People Choose a President: Information on Voter Decisions*, O'Keefe and Mendelsohn conclude that first-time voters come to their initial election with no particular 'youth' ideology but, rather, with an ideological thrust that has developed within the milieu of their families' socialization patterns. They support this contention by noting that those with more education (higher socio-economic status) tended to vote for Nixon, the Republican candidate for president in 1972, more frequently than did their less educated counterparts.^{vii}

Judging from the above-mentioned theories, it is evident that the young generation is not necessarily a disengaged group of idlers without any interest in politics. Instead, it is a group whose ingrained lifestyle characteristics do not fit the description of the earnest voter. The fact that young people typically are not married, are extremely transient and lack life experi-

ences and education is not the fault of one generation of young people. Rather these characteristics have exemplified young generations since America was founded. However, the number of young people voting in elections has been decreasing each year. This phenomenon can partly be explained using the previously mentioned theories. Unlike youth of the past, more and more of today's young people are waiting to marry, if they do so at all. Many more are traveling the world and moving from city to city in search of different jobs, making it difficult to set roots in one particular area.

All, however, cannot be blamed on social experiences. If mere demographics determine whether or not someone votes, why has voting decreased significantly since the 1960s for *all* age groups? The answer may lie in much deeper societal changes.

Robert A. Jackson has determined that something deeper is indeed at work. In his study entitled, "A Reassessment of Voter Mobilization," he argues that sociodemographic traits cannot be the sole determinants of turnout behavior, since so many people vote in one election but not the next. To further develop his point, Jackson studied voter registration status. He found that the major influences on registration are individuals' own abilities and characteristics, since the United States government does not promote registration like it promotes the actual act of voting. Thus, although people register to vote, something happens that causes them to vote or not to vote in an election—something other than demographic characteristics. Demographics do influence voter turnout, but, according to Jackson's analysis, this can actually be overridden by a high profile election campaign. Therefore, Jackson theorizes that highly energized voter mobilization campaigns determine high voter turnout.^{viii}

Although Jackson has determined that demographics cannot work alone, he does not explain precisely why voter turnout has been steadily decreasing. Changes in the excitement

levels of voter mobilization campaigns and elections cannot be the sole reason; since they vary from election to election, they would produce spikes in voter turnout instead of a steady decline.

In his article "Why Americans Refuse to Vote," Seymour Martin Lipset claims that the United States has undergone changes since the 1960s that have altered Americans' political attitudes. He notes that in the early 60s, President John F. Kennedy appointed a commission to investigate nonvoting. In response to the investigation, Kennedy initiated changes in the electoral system to facilitate the voting process and to increase the number of ways to register to vote. Despite these changes, however, the proportion of the electorate that voted fell from greater than three-fifths in 1968 to about half in 1988.

Lipset argues that this downward swing is due to the large drop in confidence Americans today have in institutions, particularly political ones. Beginning in the 1960s, Americans grew increasingly uneasy about the efficacy of their leaders. They lost confidence that changes brought by elections would improve situations. Presidents were a disappointment and did not deliver. This, along with scandals and constant gridlock between Congress and the president led to a disdain for all politicians, low voter turnout and rejection of politics evident in a lack of party identification. According to Lipset:

We can tinker with the electoral system, make voting easier and raise the number of voters a bit. But fundamentally, what makes a difference in voter turnout over time are macroscopic factors that influence the degree of conformism or deviance.^x

The 1992 Brookings Institution book, *The Disappearing American Voter* written by Ruy A. Teixeira sheds further light on macroscopic factors. Teixeira argues that costs and benefits determine voting behavior. The lower the costs and greater

the benefits, the more likely it is that someone will vote. Voting costs include registering, finding out where the polling booth is, taking the time and effort to travel to it on election day and accessing and understanding the facts necessary to distinguish between candidates. These activities cost the potential voter time, energy and mind power. The benefits derived from voting are harder to measure. Although the outcome of an election may strongly affect a person's life, the individual citizen does not have to participate in the election to obtain these benefits. Teixeira notes that changes in the electoral system such as bilingual registration materials and registration by mail have decreased the cost of voting. Thus, he argues, recent low voter turnout must be attributed to the changing *benefits* of voting.^x

These benefits, notes Teixeira, can be attributed to changes in Americans' attitudinal characteristics, including social and political connectedness and political involvement. Social connectedness, the social ties found in marriage and religion that provide a substantial proportion of an individual's motivation to vote, has decreased since the 1960s. Political connectedness has also decreased since the 1960s. The weakening relationship between political parties and the electoral process has led to a decrease in party identification and knowledge of parties and candidates.

Together with a sense of connectedness, political involvement has taken a nosedive. In 1960, more than half of all Americans followed political campaigns in the newspaper. In 1988, that number fell to less than one-fifth. The proportion of Americans claiming to be very much interested in a campaign fell from 38 percent to 28 percent, and the proportion that followed public affairs fell from 63 percent to 59 percent. In 1960, over 62 percent of the electorate had a strong sense of governmental responsiveness. By 1988, the number slipped to 30 percent. There is no longer a perceived link between

the government and the ordinary citizen.^{xi}

Curtis Gans, Director of the Committee on the Study of the American Electorate, notes that today's generation looks more at personal betterment than did previous generations. He argues that his parents' generation, shaped by the Depression, wanted to create a society where their children would have better lives. Their children translated that vision into making society better through public service. Today's young generation, on the other hand, concerns itself with personal betterment, rather than the betterment of society as a whole. This, coupled with the breakdown of political parties and a frustrated electorate who feels government does not listen to its desires, creates decreased political participation.^{xii}

As all Americans continue to turn their backs on the political system, nonvoter theory will continue to grow. Rather than focusing merely on demographic characteristics, theorists have begun to uncover deeply rooted attitudinal and societal changes that are impacting voter turnout. Understanding these changes provides the key to developing voter mobilization programs to politically motivate youth along with the American electorate as a whole.

ⁱ Sidney Verba, "Participation and the Life Cycle," in *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Society Equality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 138–139.

ⁱⁱ Margaret Conway, *Political Participation in the United States* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1991), 17.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 18–19.

^{iv} Peter Bachrach, "Interest, Participation and Democratic Theory," in *Participation in Politics*, ed. John W. Chapman (New York: Liever-Atherton, 1975), 48.

^v Conway, 21.

- vi Jack Dennis, "Theories of Turnout," in *Political Participation and American Democracy*, ed. William Crothy (Greenwood Press, 1991), 31.
- vii Harold Mendelsohn and Garrett O'Keefe, *The People Choose a President: Influences on Voter Decision Making* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976), 27.
- viii Robert A. Jackson, "A Reassessment of Voter Mobilization," *Political Research Quarterly*, June 1996, 344–345.
- ix Seymour Martin Lipset, "Why Americans Refuse to Vote," *Insight on the News*, 7 February 1994, 24–26.
- x Ruy A. Teixeira, *The Disappearing American Voter* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1992), 11–28.
- xi Ibid, 33–40.
- xii Curtis Gans, "Why Young People Don't Vote," *The Education Digest*, February 1989, 40–42.

"A Look at This Year's Voters." *U.S. News and World Report*, 17 April 1972, 27.

An estimated 25.7 million new voters will become eligible to vote in the 1972 presidential election due to the enfranchisement of 18-year-olds and erasure of literacy and residency requirements. Alabama, Utah, Hawaii and South Carolina have the highest proportion of young voters.

"A Quiet Revolution." *Newsweek*, 14 June 1971, 34-37 & 28.

Many high schools, spearheaded by labor unions or groups such as the League of Women Voters, have conducted voter registration drives. By substantial margins, young people have registered as Democrats. This pattern has held even in conservative Orange County, California, although it may simply reflect youth's desire to participate in primary elections.

"A Vote for Youth." *Time*, 12 July 1971, 5

The 26th Amendment, granting youth the vote, became law on June 30, 1971 when the Ohio legislature approved it. Approximately 11 million young people were enfranchised. Early registration showed Democrats enjoying a 3 to 1 margin among youth.

Abramson, Paul R. "Generation Changes and Decline of Party Identification." *American Political Science Review*, April 1976, 469-477.

Abramson refutes the contention that being an independent is strictly a function of age, with youth gaining party loyalties as they mature. He claims that independence is dependent upon other factors, including the temper of the times. In reaching this conclusion, he cites a study indicating that 65 percent of youth who labeled themselves as independent in 1973 were independent fully eight years later.

"All Eyes on New Young Voters." *Senior Scholastic*, 20 September 1971, 2-3.

A capsulized history of efforts to lower the voting age. In 1968 only 51.1 percent of those between 18 and 24 voted. With regards to party identification, studies by the Institute of Student Opinion indicate that 42 percent of those in the 18-to-20-year-old group consider themselves independent. The figures for Democrats and Republicans are 30 percent and 20 percent respectively.

"The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 1997," prepared for the Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles.

An excerpt from a lengthier study, this article notes that incoming college freshmen in 1997 showed record levels of political disengagement—the lowest in the history of the survey. A record low of 26.7 percent of freshmen believed that "keeping up to date with political affairs" is a very important or essential life goal. Similarly, an all-time low 13.7 percent of freshmen said they frequently discuss politics.

Apple, R.W., Jr. "The States Ratify Full Vote at 18." *The New York Times*, 1 July 1971, A1 & A43.

The article relates the events leading up to Ohio's ratification of the 26th Amendment. Although the Speaker of the House had planned to permit many people to speak on the issue, a vote was quickly pushed through so Ohio would be the 38th state to approve the legislation, giving it the impact of law. It was feared that Oklahoma would beat Ohio out of these "honors" if the legislature did not act with haste.

Bachrach, Peter. "Interest, Participation and Democratic Theory." *Participation in Politics*. Ed. John W. Chapman. New York: Lieber-Atherton, 1975.

Bachrach argues that working class people are often ill prepared to participate in the electoral process, since their work environment provides them with little decision-making experience. He claims that this problem could be resolved if people had more opportunity to control their work environment. They would bring more to the political system, and everyone would benefit.

Baskin, D. "The Old Home Town: Question of Student Residency." *New Republic*, 6 November 1971, 11.

Baskin argues that politics in college towns would not be unduly influenced by young voters should they be permitted

to register there, as many other factors are involved. He also points out that many people other than students are highly mobile and are still allowed to vote in the town where they are presently residing. Likewise, Baskin mentions that students are gaining an education and should therefore be highly qualified voters.

"Big Vote to Come." *Time*, 4 January 1971, 24.

This article indicates that the youth vote was first pushed through Congress as a rider to legislation extending the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Young people will probably not vote as a bloc and, due to apathy, may not go to the polls at all.

Boyd, Richard. "Decline of U.S. Voter Turnout: Structural Explanation." *American Politics Quarterly*, II No.2, April 1981, 133-159.

Boyd argues that although voter turnout in presidential elections may be less than admirable, Americans do vote with regularity, because they participate in a wide variety of elections. Europeans do not have as many different contests, where voters elect people to posts on all levels of government.

Clymer, Adam. "Polls Show Problems Behind Low Voter Turnout." *The New York Times*, 25 September 1983, A21.

This article discusses factors influencing voting patterns and determines that a voter's attitude toward politicians is a significant factor.

"College Town Wary: 18-to-21 Voters Take Over?" *U.S. News and World Report*, 6 September 1971, 38-41.

After the 26th Amendment became law a debate developed about where students should vote. This question was particularly important in towns like Cambridge, Massachusetts where students comprised one-third of all voters. The residency question is also significant with regards to tuition; if students register to vote in a town, it is uncertain whether they can be charged out of state tuition or not.

"Congress: Age of Aquarius." *Newsweek*, 23 March 1970, 30-31.

The Constitution mentions, at least four times, that only states can set voting requirements. It would be possible, however, according to Harvard Professor Archibold Cox, for Congress to lower the voting age by statute. This could be accomplished by claiming that "due process of law" is violated when those under 18 cannot vote.

Conway, Margaret. *Political Participation in the United States*,

Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1991.

The author examines American political participation from the ballot box to the protest march. She analyzes the patterns of participation and offers five different explanations for those patterns based on current research findings. These explanations include: social characteristics of the electorate, psychological elements, the political environment, the legal structure and the rationality of political participation.

Cook, Rhodes. "Landslide or Lethargy the 1982 Turnout Question: Voter Angry or Depressed?" *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 30 October 1982, 2748-2751.

Raymond Wolfinger claims that the young are "champion movers" and often fail to register for elections where personal appeal is not involved. He finds this tendency responsible for their poor showing in midterm election.

Cook, Rhodes. "Whatever Happened to the Youth Vote?" *Congressional Quarterly Weekly*, 15 July 1978, 1792-1795.

This article expresses disappointment over the number of youth who have voted; the percentage is dwindling. In keeping with their low turnout at the polls, young people have lost any "power" they once held within the party hierarchy. The percentage of youth that have served as delegates at the Democratic National Convention has, for example, decreased.

Cowan, Jonathan J. "The War Against Apathy: Four Lessons from the Front Lines of Youth Advocacy." *National Civic Review*, Fall 1997, 193-202.

Authored by the co-founder of "Lead . . . or Leave," the first national nonpartisan "twenty-something" advocacy group, this article presents the four most important lessons the author learned from his years on the front lines of youth activism: the real problem is politics, not young people; service leads to politics, not to politics; don't agonize, organize; and a new politics begins in the home.

Cultice, Wendell. *Youth's Battle for the Ballot*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992.

This book depicts the battle for the youth vote, beginning in Athens, Greece, BC and ending in Washington D.C. The author shows that lowering the voting age was not a proposal unique to America. However, an in-depth discussion of the American adoption of the youth vote is the book's central theme. Tables, illustrations and a concise chronology of the ratification of the 26th Amendment provide added resources.

- "The Decline of the American Voter." United States Bureau of the Census, Statistical Brief, November 1991, SB/91-23.
This two-page statistical brief outlines trends in the American electorate with graphs showing the gradual decline in voter turnout.
- Duskin, Meg. "Motor Voter's Road Test." *The National Voter*, June/July 1997, 6-12.
An evaluation of the motor voter, this article polls election officials and voting advocates, asking them their opinion on the new law. The problems encountered with the motor voter are not problems with the law, but rather the result of poor election administration by some state and local governments.
- Duskin, Meg. "Who Voted and Why." *The National Voter*, December/January 1997, 4-7.
Written in response to the low voter turnout in the 1996 election, this article analyzes the reasons why people did not show up at the polls and efforts used by groups like the League of Women Voters to get out the vote. The author notes that more people had the opportunity to go to the polls during the '96 election, thanks to the National Voter Registration Act, or motor voter; however, few people exercised their right.
- "18-Year-Old Vote—a 50 State Survey." *U.S. News and World Report*, 8 March 1971, 58-60.
The Supreme Court ruled that an act of Congress could change the voting age from 21 to 18 for federal but not state or local elections. Many state legislatures will then move to lower the age in their state, avoiding the confusion of a "dual" election system. This article gives a listing of the legislatures that were acting on the issue at the point it was written.
- "Facts and Figures About the American Voter." *U.S. News and World Report*, 18 September 1978, 52.
Only 54.4 percent of eligible voters turned out for the 1976 presidential election; this is the lowest since 1948. The age, residence, occupation and education of potential voters is outlined. It is acknowledged that young people may not vote as they are not property owners and feel they have no real stake in the system.
- Flanigan, William H. and Nancy H. Zingale. *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1991.
Focusing on the major concepts and characteristics that shape Americans' responses to politics, this book addresses such

questions as: Who votes and why? How does partisanship affect political behavior? How and why does partisanship change? How do party loyalties, candidates' personalities and issues affect the political choices people make? And how do the mass media influence voter choice?

"Frazier v. Callicut." 383 F. Supp. 15.

A U.S. District Clerk ruled that a Mississippi registrar was acting in an unconstitutional manner when he arbitrarily rejected the application of students at two black colleges. It was determined that uniform standards were not being applied.

The Gallup Opinion Index. Report No. 177. Princeton: Gallup Poll, April/May 1980.

Surveys discussed in this report reveal the percentage of people in several different categories who view the Republican or Democratic parties in either positive or negative terms. They evaluated the parties on a scale of +5 to -5. The proportion of people who gave the parties positive ratings was much higher than the portion that rated them negatively.

The Gallup Opinion Index. Report No. 187. Princeton: Gallup Poll, April 1981.

This report contains a survey that asked people to place themselves along a political spectrum that ran from far left to far right. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents labeled themselves as right to varying degrees, while 31 percent placed themselves on the left side of the political spectrum. The remaining 12 percent considered themselves "middle of the road." This report also contains a survey that lists the political affiliations of people in various categories. Young people label themselves as independent more often than their older counterparts.

Gans, Curtis. "Why Young People Don't Vote." *The Education Digest*, February 1989, 40-43.

Authored by the Director of the Committee For the Study of the American Electorate, this article presents the authors views of nonvoting youth. Citing changes in values, advocacy and the weakening of political parties he relates youth's lack of participation to nonvoting in general.

"Gown v. Town." *Newsweek*, 30 August 1971, 29.

Great concern has been expressed that permitting students to vote where they attend college instead of at their parents' home would result in their pushing a bond issue and then moving on, allowing others to foot the bill. Almost 70 percent

of those responding to a poll indicated that students should not be allowed to vote in college towns. However, officials in 12 states ruled that students may cast their ballots where they live the majority of the year.

Graham, Emily. "Examining The Youth Vote." *Oklahoma Gazette*, World Wide Web, 21 May 1998. Available: <http://205.243.76.8/rc-reader/84cov.htm>. This article states that in 1992, 42.8 percent of voters between the ages of 18 and 24 voted, almost a 20 percent increase over the 1988 presidential election. They accounted for 9.2 percent of the total vote in 1992, the highest turnout since they were given the right to vote in 1972. The article also summarizes the surge of programs aimed at rallying the youth vote, including Rock the Vote, Choose or Lose and Youth Vote '96.

Guido, Kenneth J. Jr. "Student Voting and Residency Qualifications: The Aftermath of the 26th Amendment." *New York University Law Review*, Vol. 47, Part 1, 32-58.
Most state constitutions have words that say, in effect: "For the purposes of voting, no person shall be deemed to have gained or lost a residence by reason of higher learning." This has been interpreted to mean that a student's domicile is his parents' home and he should cast his ballot there. Putnam B. Johnson indicated that only those who were financially independent of their parents and have no intention of returning to their parents' homes could vote in their college towns. Rulings of this type are viewed, by the author, as discriminatory in that they make voting more difficult for students than for others.

Hadley, Arthur T. *The Empty Polling Booth*. Edgewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978.

This book outlines six categories of individuals who refrain from voting. They include positive apathetics, the bypassed, politically impotent, the physically disenfranchised, naysayers and the cross-pressured. The largest group is the positive apathetics, who are generally pleased with the way their life is proceeding and expect their satisfaction to continue no matter who is elected. Politically impotent is the next largest group of refrainers (22 percent). They contend that nothing they do will have much impact upon the political situation.

"How will the Young Vote?" *Time*, 23 August 1971, 9-10.

There are an estimated two million newly enfranchised voters who live away from home while attending college. The question of their residency, for voting purposes, is extremely important to college town officials. It is thought they can

simply get absentee ballots and vote from their parents' homes, but such ballots are not always readily available.

Implementing the National Voter Registration Act of 1993:

Requirements, Issues, Approaches and Examples. Washington D.C.: The National Clearinghouse on Election Administrations—Federal Election Commission, 1 January 1994.

This booklet contains the history, objectives and strategies surrounding the "Motor Voter," signed into law by President Bill Clinton on May 20, 1993.

Jackson, Robert A. "A Reassessment of Voter Mobilization."

Political Research Quarterly, June 1996, 331-349.

This study examines influences on individual turnout. Assessing the effects of the short-term campaign environment on turnout behavior, previous scholars have failed to account for the fact that voting in the United States is a two-stage process: the preliminary act of registration followed by the act of voting. This analysis suggests that this failure has tilted existing research away from discovering the effects of campaign influences.

"Jolicoeur v. Mihaly" 5 Cal. 3d 565.

The case invalidated a California law that forced students to vote by absentee ballot from their parents' home. It was claimed that students must be viewed as emancipated even if they are not completely self-supporting; doing otherwise, would be a violation of the 26th Amendment. Plaintiffs in the case were students who either had never lived in their parents' present domicile or worked full time.

Journal of The House of Representatives of the One Hundred and Ninth General Assembly of the State of Ohio Regular Session. 647, 662-664.

The journal contains entries listing the representatives who voted to ratify the 26th Amendment, as well as a short summary outlining the events surrounding the passage.

Keefe, William J. *Parties, Politics and Public Policy in America.*

New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980.

This book argues that making registration laws more permissive, particularly those that apply to absentee voting, could increase participation. The author contends that in 1972 the turnout would have been nine percent higher if these regulations had been more permissive. Late closing dates along with regulations pertaining to absentee voting are the most significant factors in determining participation.

- Killian, Johnny H., ed. *Constitution of the United States of America Analysis and Interpretation*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973.
This book explains that the franchise has been broadened through statutes as well as through constitutional amendments. At first, much of the power regarding selection of electors for federal elections was left up to the states. This power, however, has been seriously abridged.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. "Why Americans Refuse to Vote." *Insight on the News*, 7 February 1994, 24-26.
Voter turnout has been declining since World War II. Part of the problem has been attributed to the bureaucracy linked to voter registration. There is a larger problem, however, and it is found in voters' lack of confidence in their political leaders and institutions.
- "Lower the Voting Age?" *America*, 21 May 1970, 549.
Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield fears that controversy over the 18-year-old vote, which was tacked onto the 1970 Voting Rights Act as a rider, could result in a filibuster. This could, in turn, prevent the bill from passing and result in the 1965 Voting Rights Act not being extended.
- "Lower Voting Age: One More Hurdle To Go." *U.S. News and World Report*, 5 April 1971, 64-65.
The exact wording of the 26th Amendment, which passed the House on March 23, 1971, is given. Five legislatures ratified this amendment the same day the House approved it. The article also lists the number of new voters who will become eligible to cast ballots in various states.
- "Lowering the Voting Age." *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, 14 May 1970, 588-590.
President Richard Nixon claims that he favors the 18-year-old vote but does not think Congress can accomplish this by statute. He fears that two parts of the Constitution clearly leave such matters up to the states. Setting the voting age at 21 is, according to Nixon, not unduly arbitrary but merely acknowledges it must be set somewhere. He wants a constitutional amendment that would permit 18-year-olds to vote.
- Lubell, S. "18-Year-Old Vote Could Beat Nixon in '72." *Look*, 13 July 1971, 35.
Lubell argues that the youth vote could prove instrumental in defeating Nixon. As a substantiation of their "liberalism," he maintains that many young people come from Republican backgrounds but oppose Nixon's Vietnam policy.

Mendelsohn, Harold and Garrett O' Keefe. *The People Choose a President: Influences on Voter Decision-Making*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976.

The authors contend that first-time voters, rather than acting on their own initiative, tend to vote in line with their families' preferences. Education is, according to the authors, a major determining factor in voting patterns. In 1972, those who had not finished high school favored McGovern, the Democratic candidate, over Nixon, the Republican standard by a ration of two to one.

Mikva, Abner J. "Eighteen-Year-Old Vote," *The New Republic*, 6 June 1970, 28-29.

Mikva maintains that Congress has the right to grant 18-year-olds the vote by statute. He bases this contention upon the 14th Amendment, which grants Congress the power to ensure "due process of law." Enfranchising youth could, Mikva argues, be considered, assuring them due process.

Mitchell, Susan. *The Official Guide to American Attitudes*, Ithaca, NY: New Strategist Publications, Inc., 1996.

This book is a compilation of surveys gathered by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. Topics including "Strength of Party Identification, 1994" and "Political Party Identification, 1974 to 1994" shed light on Americans' changing political attitudes.

The National Coalition on Black Voter Participation, Inc. World Wide Web, 1 June 1998. Available: <http://www.bigvote.org/>.

The National Coalition on Black Voter Participation, Inc. is a leader in the nationwide effort to increase black voter registration and turnout. This website contains information about the National Coalition, the black electorate and links and facts important to both. The coalition has three broad and interrelated program areas, including Operation Big Vote, a nonpartisan, grassroots voter participation program operating nationwide, which conducts intensive voter education, registration and get-out-the-vote activities in black communities; The Black Women's Roundtable; and Black Youth Vote!, aimed at 14-to-29-year-old black youth.

Neuborne, Burt and Arthur Eisenberg. *The Rights of Candidates and Voters*. New York: Avon Books, 1976.

This book gives a summary of many cases contesting students' rights to vote in their college towns, including *Whatley v. Clard*, *Ramey v. Rockefeller*, *Jolicoeur v. Mihaly* and *Frazier v. Collicott*.

- "New Poll Shows Young People as a Major Swing Vote in 1996 Elections," *Youth Vote '96*. World Wide Web, 22 May 1998. Available: <http://www.cgv.org/cgv/pressconf.html>. A national survey of young people released by Youth Vote '96 showed voters under age 30 had the potential to be a major swing vote in the November '96 elections. The poll, conducted for Youth Vote '96 by Global Strategy Group, Inc., found that young voters do not represent a single voting bloc for either Republicans or Democrats and that their decisions are motivated more by candidates' positions on issues than any other factor.
- Newitt, Jane. "The Decade of the Young Voter." *American Demographics*, September 1984, 19-24. As the 1984 elections approached, 58 percent of potential voters were younger than age 45—the highest proportion since 1940. In 1970, only half were younger than 45. This article discusses the demographic changes in the population responsible for the increased youthfulness of the voting age population and includes useful numbers and percentages pertaining to youth participation in the early 1980s. Along with political participation, the article tackles political positions and the lowered average age of members of Congress.
- Nie, Norman, Sidney Verbe and John Petrocik. *The Changing American Voter*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976. Statistics indicate that between 1952 and 1974 the percentage of young people who labeled themselves independents increased from 25 percent to 53 percent. Interestingly, the increase did not follow a straight line; rather, it jumped dramatically from 33 percent in 1964 to 53 percent in 1968. Throughout the years, however, the number of young people (under 25) who call themselves independents is always higher than the percentage of older people who self-identify in this manner.
- O' Brien, Tim. "McGovern's Ace in the Hole: The Youth Vote." *New Republic*, 19 August 1972, 12-15. Richard Scammen and Ben Wattenburg have argued that the youth vote will not have all that much impact at the polls, as it will be diluted by other factors. The author, however, contends that the 1968 presidential election was decided by only 500,000 votes and this represents a small proportion of the youth that are eligible.
- Polsky, Newlson W. *Consequences of Party Reform*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983. This book discusses the fact that although people are becoming

increasingly more educated, political participation is constantly on the decline. It is contended that this may arise in part from the utilization of media, which pass along information but do not elicit much personal involvement. Also significant is the fact that in attempting to attract certain interest groups, politicians alienate other voters.

Pomper, Gerald M. *The Election of 1980: Reports and Interpretations*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publisher, Inc., 1980.

This book indicates that young voters, aged 18 to 21, are not necessarily "liberal" even though numerous predictions along that line had been made. It is shown that in 1976, 48 percent of the young voters supported Carter, while 50 percent voted for Ford. In 1980, 44 percent favored Carter and 43 percent cast their votes for Reagan.

Presidential Documents. Week ending 2 May 1970, 588–590.

Richard Nixon discusses the provisions that he maintains make it unconstitutional for Congress to enfranchise youth by statute. He claims that the youth vote should be enacted through a constitutional amendment rather than by an act of Congress.

"Ramey v. Rockefeller," 348 F. Supp. 780.

Students in Suffolk County, New York had attempted to register as voters in their college town. Of 83 people who took this step, however, only two married students were accepted. This evolved into a court case, with the ruling indicating that the states could point to certain groups as representing "specialized problems in determining residence." These people could be asked to substantiate that the area where they wanted to register is, in fact, their "locus of primary concern."

Reiff, Jonathan. "Ohio Residency Law for Student Voters—Its Implications and a Proposal for More Effective Implementation of Residency Statutes." *Cleveland State Law Review*, 1979, 449–479.

In *Anderson v. Brown*, rules requiring students to have a home in their college town before being permitted to register there were found unconstitutional. Others were not required to meet such stipulations, so they were viewed as discriminatory. Their efforts to obey this ruling may be leading registrars to avoid asking students questions that would establish their domicile, according to the author.

Reitman, Janet. "Exit the Voting Youth." *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1996, 120–124.

This article focuses on the 1996 presidential election and the

challenge of rallying the youth vote for it. Interviews with the directors of Choose or Lose and Rock the Vote provide insight on the approaches being used to target young people.

Roberts, Steven V. "Will the New Youth Vote Make Any Difference?" *Saturday Review*, 6 May 1972, 53–57.

Only 26 percent of those in the 18-20-year-old group attended college; efforts are being made by Frontlash to register those not in school. A Gallup Poll indicates that 48 percent of those who register are Democrats, while only 22 percent are Republicans. The Democratic candidate, George McGovern, is reputed to have strong student support. He is respected for his record.

Rock The Vote, World Wide Web, 29 May 1998. Available:

<http://www.rockthevote.org>.

Rock the Vote, founded in 1990, works to protect freedom of speech and educate youth about the issues affecting them while motivating them to vote. In 1996, the organization registered 500,000 new voters via telephone, through their website and while visiting colleges and special events. The Hip Hop Coalition, a special arm of Rock The Vote, works to register and engage young African-Americans. The organization's website contains resources about voting and state-by-state election information.

"Senior Voters." *Time*, 3 September 1979, 66.

Michigan Governor William Milliken pushed through legislation that permitted high school principals and others to register students. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) strongly supported such proposals, as proportionately few young blacks had registered. This legislation is similar to that forwarded by Jimmy Carter when he was Georgia's governor.

Singer, Richard. "Home is Where the Vote is." *Nation*, 13 September 1971, 202–205.

Singer argues that much good could be accomplished by permitting students to vote in their college town. They could gain experience in working through the system; some of their "radicalism" might be dispelled.

"The Sometime 18-Year-Old Vote." *New Republic*, 2 January 1971, 21–22.

In determining the constitutionality of Congress enfranchising 18-year-olds by statute, the Supreme Court examined the 14th Amendment, which provides for "due process of law."

The "arbitrariness" of denying youth the vote was at question. Unless "due process" was violated, the measure is not unconstitutional.

"Splitting the Difference." *Newsweek*, 4 January 1971, 18-19.

In enfranchising youth for federal elections, the Supreme Court justices argued that denying them the vote violates their 14th Amendment ("due process") rights. Justice Hugo Black voted that teens should be enfranchised for federal, but not for state or local races. He based his decision on a constitutional provision that stipulated Congress should set the time, place and manner of Congressional (but not state or local) elections.

"Student Voting and Apportionment: The Rotten Boroughs of Academia." *The Yale Law Journal*, 1971, 35-60.

The American Bar Association Committee on Election Law Reforms found that the vast majority of registrars were opposed to permitting registration by students in their college towns. This could be interpreted as a barrier to involvement. In *Carrington v. Rash*, the courts ruled that servicemen cannot be arbitrarily disqualified from voting; however, they must indicate that they plan to remain within the state. That is, they must show they are residents in a real sense.

"Student Voting and the Constitution; New York State Bona Fide Residency Requirement." *Columbia Law Review*, 1972, 162-181.

According to New York state law, one could not obtain an absentee ballot without indicating that one had intentions of remaining in the town from which one received it. In making such a statement, students could be perjuring themselves. Court cases aimed at striking down this regulation were thrown out of court. However, a similar law was found invalid in Michigan. Such laws seemingly violate students' 14th Amendment rights, forcing them to undergo more thorough scrutiny than other voters. Also, they violate First Amendment rights, as freedom of speech means little if one cannot vote.

"Student Voting Rights." *Valparaiso University Law Review*, November 1971, 49-71.

Article One, Section Two of the Constitution grants control over elections to the states. However, Section Five of the 14th Amendment gives Congress the right to ensure "due process of law." This "duality" results in a legal quandary as to who has ultimate control. In *Carrington v. Rash*, it is stipulated a state may disenfranchise a group of individuals when doing so represents an administrative convenience. This has been

interpreted as allowing authorities to prevent students from voting in their college towns.

Teixeira, Ruy A. *The Disappearing American Voter*, Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1992.

In an effort to provide policymakers and the general public with a clearer view of low voter turnout and possible solutions, this book addresses the fundamental questions surrounding the lack of political participation, including: Why is voter turnout generally so low? Why has it declined steadily over the past three decades? And does low and declining turnout significantly bias the nature of contemporary U.S. politics? The author includes an assessment of current registration reform legislation and shows why a combination of registration reform and political reform is necessary to fully reverse the nonvoting trend and move to higher turnout levels.

Teixeira, Ruy A. "Youth Turnout: Trends, Possible Explanations and Future Research Directions." Report prepared for the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, October 1992.

This study uses survey data to review the trends in youth turnout in the last several decades, offers some beginning explanations for these trends and indicates future directions for research that could help flesh out these beginning explanations. The author argues that the decline in youth turnout is due to changes in the voter registration system, and changes in the individual-level characteristics of young voters including political cynicism, socio-economic status and social connectedness. A lengthy bibliography provides sources for further information.

Tobin, R. L. "What Will the 135 Million Do?" *Saturday Review*, 9 October 1971, 28.

It is noted that the number of people who voted in 1920, after women were enfranchised was 45 percent higher than the number who cast ballots in the 1916 presidential election. Such a rise could occur in 1972, with young people having won the vote; however, it is acknowledged that they may not go to the polls in high proportions.

"The Turned-off Voter." *Newsweek*, 13 September 1976, 16-17.

A survey by Peter D. Hart indicates that only 46 percent of the eligible voters went to the polls in 1976, as compared to 55.4 percent in 1972. He contends that non-voters may still believe in the system, but do not become excited by the

candidates. He is concerned that in refraining, youth may be allowing special interests to gain increasingly more control.

"United States v. Texas," 445 F. Supp., 1245.

The courts had ruled in *Ramey v. Rockefeller* the "neutral" questions aimed merely at determining people's "primary locus of concern" were permissible. However, a questionnaire being used by Texas authorities was struck down in this case. It was determined to be a means of discriminating against (disenfranchising) young people.

Verba, Sidney. "Participation and Life Cycle." *Participation in American Political Democracy and Social Equality*, New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

The article notes that political involvement is low among youth, rises as one grows older and finally falls off with age. Low participation among youth is, according to the author, directly attributable to their being quite mobile and having low socioeconomic status at the point in their lives.

"Vote for 18-Year-Olds: What Justices Said on Both Sides." *U.S. News and World Report*, 25 January 1971, 88-89.

This piece gives excerpts from opinions the Supreme Court Justices presented in handing down their decisions about the constitutionality of Congress enfranchising 18-year-olds by statute. The justices who are quoted include Hugo Black, William Brennan, William O. Douglas, Potter Stewart and John M. Harlan. Their opinions present both sides of the issue.

"Vote by Groups, 1984-1988," The Gallup Organization, World Wide Web, 4 May 1998. Available: http://www.gallup.com/Gallup_Poll_Data/elecpoll/voteby-grps/grp8488.htm.

This poll demonstrates how people voted, based on their demographic characteristics. Sixty percent of those under 30 voted for Reagan in 1980, while 63 percent supported Bush in 1988.

"Vote by Groups, 1992-1996," The Gallup Organization, World Wide Web, 4 May 1998. Available: http://www.gallup.com/Gallup_Poll_Data/elecpoll/voteby-grps/grp9296.htm.

Using a breakdown of demographic characteristics, this poll shows that in 1992, 40 percent of those under the age of 30 supported Clinton, while 37 percent supported Bush, and 23 percent supported Perot. In 1996, 54 percent of those under

30 supported Clinton, while 30 percent supported Dole and 16 percent, Perot.

Weisberg, Herbert F. and Bernard Grofman. "Candidate Evaluation and Turnout." *American Politics Quarterly*, April 1981, 197-219. It is thought that "candidate-based abstention" may be depressing voter turnout. This phenomenon occurs when a person likes both candidates, a person favors neither candidate, a voter prefers the candidate of the other party to the candidate of his party, or the individual perceives no difference between the candidates. None of this was found to be a major factor. "Satisfaction" (liking both candidates) did, however, have some impact.

"Whatley v. Clark," 482 F. Supp. 15.

Before being permitted to vote in their college town, students were required to state they intended to remain in the town indefinitely. It was determined by the Fifth District Federal court that this violated students' 14th Amendment rights. This amendment promised "equal protection under the law."

YEA '96, World Wide Web, 1 June 1998.

Available: <http://www1.minn.net/~schubert/Ally.html>.

Youth Education Alliance is an internet effort that began as the Youth Election Alliance '96 to benefit the virtual educational community. Website sections examine the language of the campaign as well as the issues, e-mail links to political expert guests, writing assignments, election monitoring and debate. Also included are polls on current affairs, online student newspapers about current politics, essays on democracy and mock elections.

"The Young Voters." *New Republic*, 11 September 1971, 7-9.

Attorney General John Mitchell opposed permitting students to vote in their college town, claiming military personnel must vote by absentee ballot, and students could do the same. It is noted, however, that *Carrington v. Rash* gave servicemen the right to vote where they live. A Universal Voter Registration has been proposed; it would register voters and send the list to the appropriate city.

"Youth Voices: Generation Xpection Issues a Wakeup Call," *CPN Youth & Education*, World Wide Web, 29 May 1998.

Available: http://www.cpn.org/sections/topics/youth/stories-studies/youth_voices.html.

A project of the Center for Policy Alternatives, Youth Voices

identifies the common dreams and concerns of 18-to-24-year-olds so they can mobilize to more actively participate in the civic life of their nation. The organization discovered that young people between 18 and 24 are confident about the future and their ability to deal with changes and they see politicians as uninterested and unresponsive. Their top concerns include having a job that pays well, having a job that provides decent benefits, making ends meet, healthcare and welfare. They seek tougher sentences for criminals, more governmental grants and loans for education and an increase in the minimum wage.

“The Youth Vote: Big Scramble for an Unknown Quantity.”

U.S. News and World Report, 11 September 1972, 18–20.

The article indicates that the youth vote is not securely in McGovern’s pocket. Gallup polls estimate that McGovern will receive 57 percent of this vote, as compared to 41 percent for Nixon. Intensive efforts are being made by both candidates to gain the support of youth. The article gives demographics for the new voters.

Youthlink: The Voice and Solutions of Youth, World Wide Web, 29 May 1998. Available: <http://www.youthlink.org/>.

Youthlink provides an ongoing and effective forum to create financial support and recognition for the voice, ideas and solutions of youth. The organization created the Youth in Action campaigns to provide teachers and youth development coordinators with a way of empowering youth. This website contains the Youth Action Guide and a survey, which allow young people aged 12 to 18 to compare and contrast national youth ideas and solutions with their own.

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