

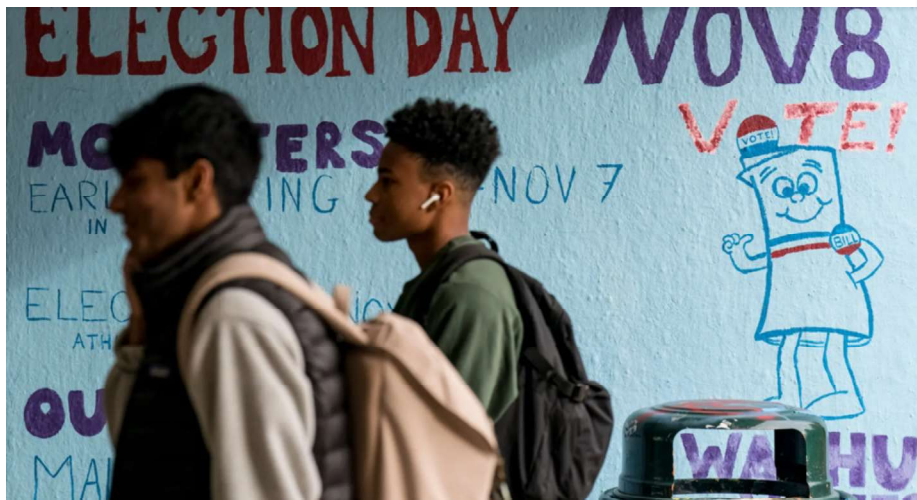
MY POST ELECTION TAKEAWAYS

I feel I can say with a certain degree of optimism, “Democracy did prevail in the midterms.” I say that because, young people were more engaged, voters galvanized around the protection of personal freedoms, and civility proved to be more popular than toxicity.



Credit: Harvard Gazette

Before every election there are many thousands of people who become newly qualified to vote. One of the goals of the League of Women Voters is to register new voters. The question is, “Will they actually exercise that right at election time?” Historically in most elections, young people (ages 18-29) do not represent a dependable voting demographic. Voting percentages of eligible young people has always proven disappointingly low. Recent elections have begun to alter that paradigm, and in the 2022 midterms young people made their voices heard in elections all around the country.



Not only did these young people vote in larger numbers, they are, in some cases, responsible for changing the expected outcomes. Going forward, candidates will need to pay more attention to the issues of this “up

Credit: Whitney Curtis, New York Times

and coming new voting bloc” of more engaged and informed young people. Millennials and Generation Z combined are becoming the largest voting bloc in the U.S. Young people are issue-oriented voters, and in this election they responded to important concerns about their future. **YOUNG PEOPLE MATTERED!**

Compared to presidential elections, midterm elections often don't motivate even the traditionally dependable voters to come out. However, this election cycle found voters much more highly concerned by the loss of freedoms brought about by recent Supreme Court decisions. Women's Reproductive Rights was one issue front and center in this midterm election. Abortion rights resonated with women as well as men around the country. Many understood that the reversal of Roe v. Wade would have serious repercussions. Women and their families would be denied the right to their own family planning. Without any commensurate provisions for increased health costs or childcare costs, these families could also suffer significant financial difficulties. With the Dobbs Decision, the Supreme Court ended 50 years of women's reproductive freedom, placing any future changes to these rights in the hands of the states. Protection of voting outcomes and concerns over women's reproductive rights helped fuel a certain urgency in choosing state office holders. Midterm elections are in large part state elections. **STATE ELECTIONS MATTER!**

Individual states have been taking up the challenge and voters responded to reinstate women's reproductive rights by passing a number of different ballot proposals:

- In Michigan, people voted to enshrine abortion rights in the state's constitution. This amends the constitution to establish an "individual right to reproductive freedom, including the right to make and carry out all decisions about pregnancy."
- In California, voters passed a ballot initiative to enshrine abortion rights in the state constitution, ensuring that no matter what the future legislature looks like, people in California will maintain their right to reproductive freedom.
- In Vermont, voters approved an amendment to the state's constitution to protect every person's right to make their own reproductive decisions, inclusive of decisions regarding pregnancy, abortion and birth control.
- In Kansas, voters rejected a ballot measure that would have removed protections for abortion rights from the state's constitution. This was a decisive statewide vote.
- In Kentucky, voters rejected a proposal that would have further restricted abortion rights, and in Montana, voters rejected an abortion measure that would allow criminal penalties to be imposed on health care providers.

Finally, **CHARACTER MATTERS!** In this election voters responded to the candidates who spent more time responding to the issues than they did vilifying each other.

Voters were asking candidates for their positions, and many rejected those who chose to merely sabotage their opponents through misinformation and fear mongering. A clear message was sent by a majority of the voters of every age, gender and race, rewarding candidates for their civility. Positive notice was given to the number of candidates who lost, but conceded to the winners in this election with dignity and courtesy. We teach our children good sportsmanship, and we expect that our leaders will set a good example for them when they themselves have to accept defeat after a hard fought campaign.

Candidates have learned other lessons as well. The Gen Z population is a growing audience whose trust they must win. A rising field of young candidates with fresh messages will go a long way to gaining the attention of this growing demographic. Our youth will be demanding that concerns over healthcare, gun violence, debt and the impending climate crisis are given serious consideration by aspiring candidates. Those currently holding office will be judged on their records.

YOUNG VOTERS ARE
BECOMING MORE INFORMED

HIGH-INFORMATION VOTERS
ARE CIVICALLY ENGAGED

IN A CIVICALLY ENGAGED
SOCIETY **WE ALL VOTE!**



Credit: Getty Images