

Winning Young People in the Age of AI

Young voters aren't asking you to stop the future. They're asking someone to stop Big Tech from rigging it against them.

39% → 47%

Increase in youth turnout from 2016 to 2024, a higher increase than any other voting bloc in the country.¹

46%

Percentage of young people who weren't contacted by a campaign, candidate, or party last election cycle.²

89%

Percentage of young people who said they would be willing to vote for a candidate who reflects their values.³

WHY YOUNG VOTERS

Young voters are the fastest-moving bloc in American politics, and one of the only ones still up for grabs. They swung 21 points right in 2024⁴, and 60% view both parties unfavorably.⁵

They also decide late, with 35% picking a candidate in October or later, compared with 19% of voters over 60.⁶ Young voters who are contacted by a campaign are 29 points more likely to turn out⁷, making investments in youth contact worthwhile. A campaign that isn't reaching young voters is ignoring the **most persuadable voting bloc** in the electorate.

WHY WE WROTE THIS

This guide shows candidates which issues move young voters, and how to champion solutions **built for a generation, not a party**. Adopt it and you won't just win the youth vote. You'll build a durable brand with it, and help rebuild Gen Z's faith in the political process.

YPA is bipartisan and youth-run with over **4,000 members and 90 chapters in 15 states**. We held listening sessions on college campuses across the nation and have hosted over 400 youth-centered events and activations since our founding. We are young people, and we know young people: what issues worry them and what strategies move them to political engagement. Now, it's time to build the bridge between young voters and elected leaders.

That bridge is three issues that shape young people's lives: **affordability, opportunity, and community**. We know these solutions win because we've already won with them. We have helped pass federal legislation like the Kids Online Safety Act (through the Senate with a 91-3 vote) and the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act (became law), as well as numerous state AI bills that protect kids from AI companions.

Affordability

91%

Percentage of Gen Z adults who said housing affordability was top of mind when voting in the 2024 elections.⁸

THE PROBLEM

Young people are being hit hardest by rising costs. AI now lets corporations quietly coordinate prices on rent, groceries, hotels, and healthcare, while overregulation and restrictive zoning block new housing production. Young people are squeezed from both sides: **prices rigged upward, supply locked down.**

29%

Percentage of Gen Z who name cost of living as their #1 concern; democracy (18%), immigration (10%) and civil rights (3%) trail far behind.⁹

QUANTIFIED

40 yrs

is the median age of a first-time homebuyer, an all-time high. First-time buyers are now just 21% of the market, a record low.¹⁰

\$70/mo

increase in rent attributed to algorithmic rent coordination in 2023¹¹

14%

of college students have experienced some kind of homelessness in the past year¹²

MICHIGAN YPA MEMBER

"It's hard to imagine owning a home. It's become a joke among my generation that it'll always be too expensive."

POLICY THAT DELIVERS

- 01 Build more housing, faster** through zoning reform, streamlined approvals, and expanded multifamily construction.
Models: Montana [SB 323](#) · Texas [SB 840](#) · Kansas [SB 418](#)
- 02 Legalize housing near college campuses** by funding student housing and letting developers convert underutilized malls and offices into homes.
Models: California [AB 893](#) · Texas [SB 1567](#) · Utah [SB 129](#)
- 03 Make AI price-fixing illegal economy-wide** by banning rent-setting algorithms and requiring disclosure whenever an algorithm sets your price.
Models: California [AB 325](#) · New York [S.7882](#) · Illinois [HB 4248](#)

SAY IT LIKE IT IS

"The rent isn't just too high, it's too coordinated. When 70% of the apartments in a city run the same pricing software, that's not a market. That's a cartel with a login page."

"Invest in housing, not just data centers. If we can permit a server farm in twelve months, we can permit new housing for students and young families in twelve months."

"Every 'no' at a zoning board is a rent increase for a young person or a new family who wasn't in the room."

Opportunity

81%

Percentage of Gen Z who expect AI to shrink the job market.¹³

21 pts

Gap between young Americans (43%) and over-55s on whether it's a good time to find a job.¹⁴

30→48%

Increase in Gen Z financial insecurity in a single year; 40% feel stressed or anxious.¹⁵

THE PROBLEM

AI is accelerating the disappearance of entry-level jobs, and with them the first rung of the career ladder. Young people did everything they were told. They got the grades and the degree, yet the door to a stable career is closing in front of them. **Big Tech is using innovation to crush opportunity, not create it.**

QUANTIFIED

44%

reduction in the volume of recent graduate hiring compared to 2022 baseline levels¹⁶

1st

time in 45 years of data that recent grads are unemployed at a higher rate than the average worker.¹⁷

9.2%

of young people are unemployed, more than double the national rate¹⁸

VIRGINIA YPA MEMBER

"We're afraid AI could replace entry-level roles and don't know how to prepare. We know people who've applied to 100+ jobs and landed nothing."

POLICY THAT DELIVERS

- 01 Subsidize apprenticeships** by offering state funds to employers who create paid apprenticeships for students and recent college graduates.

Models: Georgia [SB 497](#) · New York [S.37](#) · Massachusetts [H.4994](#)

- 02 Cut occupational licensing barriers** by removing unnecessary requirements and red tape that lock young people out of careers.

Models: California [SB 803](#) · Ohio [HB 238](#) · Arizona [SB 1159](#)

- 03 Create a state youth service program** that offers every young person a paid service year that builds their skills and networks.

Models: Maryland [SB 551](#) · Utah [SB 206](#)

SAY IT LIKE IT IS

"Young people did everything they were told. They took the loans and earned the degree, but the job that was supposed to be waiting got automated before they arrived."

"Generation Z isn't afraid of AI. They mastered it faster than their bosses did, and got locked out of the building anyway."

"Our tax code charges a company extra for hiring your kid, and nothing for replacing them with AI. We don't need to punish the algorithm. We need to stop punishing the paycheck."

Community

70%

Gen Z disapproval of Zuckerberg, making him the most unpopular public figure polled with young people.¹⁹

68%

Percentage of voters who agree that Congress should not block states from enforcing kids' online safety laws.²⁰

\$28/mo

Dollar amount young people would pay to delete TikTok for everyone. They would pay \$10 more to take Instagram with it.²¹

THE PROBLEM

Big Tech built products designed to be impossible to put down. Young people are now asking for limits on the apps, and on the AI reaching into their relationships, their creativity, and their futures. **The same companies that took a generation's attention without asking are now spending big in politics to take their voice away.**

QUANTIFIED

83%

of young people do not feel a deep sense of social connection in their communities²²

58%

of adults under 30 say AI will make people worse at real-world relationships²³

72%

of teens have used an AI companion chatbot at least once²⁴

CALIFORNIA YPA MEMBER

"We do not want a culture that values a program over human interaction."

POLICY THAT DELIVERS

- 01 Mandate kids' accounts disable addictive features** like infinite scroll, autoplay, and algorithmic feeds, the designs get them hooked, without banning account access.

Models: Utah [SB 194](#) · California [SB 976](#) · New York [S.7694](#)

- 02 Bar AI chatbots from simulating emotional relationships** with minors, impersonating real people, or serving them harmful content.

Models: Washington [HB 2225](#) · Georgia [SB 540](#) · New York [S.9051](#)

SAY IT LIKE IT IS

"Big Tech engineered social media to be impossible to put down. Now they're building AI friends for lonely kids. We've seen this before, and this time we will protect our kids."

"A chatbot that fakes friendship with a lonely twelve-year-old isn't artificial intelligence. It's automated grooming for ad revenue, and it should be illegal in all fifty states."

"Our communities aren't asking the government to raise their kids. They're asking the government to stop letting a trillion-dollar industry raise them instead."

Next Steps

YPA offers candidates several ways to engage, from a quick sign-on to a full legislative partnership.

1

Sign the Declaration

Add your name to YPA's Declaration for the American Dream, a fast, public signal that you're committed to opportunity, affordability, and community for this generation. You can sign The Declaration by clicking [this link](#).

2

Co-host an event

Partner with our chapter network on town halls, roundtables, or campus events on these issues, and meet young voters in your district directly.

3

Carry the legislation

Champion bills next session on student housing, AI regulation, and Big Tech accountability. We provide model legislation, research, and a mobilized base of young supporters.

Young voters are waiting for someone like you who is ready to fight for them.

Reach the YPA policy team to sign on, schedule an event, or request model bill text.
