

Young Americans are part of a recent rise in political engagement



People take part in a "March For Our Lives" rally on March 24, 2018, in Parkland, Florida, where a February 14 shooting killed 17 students and teachers at the high school. Photo by: Joe Skipper/AP Photo

By Associated Press, adapted by Newsela staff

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NEW YORK, New York — Don't tell 20-year-old Nestor Aguilera he can't make a difference in politics.

The Indiana University business major protested outside President Donald Trump's recent appearance in Aguilera's hometown of Elkhart, Indiana. While Aguilera admits he didn't vote in 2016, he's promising to show up for this fall's midterm elections for U.S. Congress.

In five months, Americans decide whether Trump's Republican Party will maintain control of Congress for another two years. The elections happen at the halfway point of a presidential term. Voters choose candidates for both the Senate and the House of Representatives. In the November 6, 2018 election, 35 out of 100 Senate seats and all 435 House seats are up for grabs.

"If young people decide to go out there and vote, we have the power to affect what the government does," Aguilera said. "We could have a big impact."

Aguilera is among a small but significant surge of young people who say they feel politically empowered in the latest Youth Political Pulse survey from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and MTV. The groups conducted the survey of people ages 15 to 34. The rise in the belief they can make a difference comes after a school shooting in Florida elevated the voices of high school students in American politics.

Making A Difference

A slim majority, 54 percent, of people in this age group, who are typically least likely to vote, believe they have little or no effect on government. Meanwhile, 46 percent of these young people now believe they can have at least a moderate effect, a significant increase from two months earlier, when 37 percent said the same.

In that time, a group of students from Florida's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, where a February shooting killed 17, has succeeded in keeping the debate about gun safety in the news. On Tuesday May 29, they joined with the New York-based organization HeadCount to hold voter registration drives at 90 percent of the nation's high schools before this year's senior class graduates. It's one of many efforts by organizations aligned with Democrats who want stricter gun control laws. They seek to capitalize on the increase in interest among young people in politics.

The recent rise in political engagement is particularly apparent among Americans ages 15 to 22, a group that includes teenagers who will be eligible to vote in a presidential election for the first time in 2020. The poll found 48 percent of them now think they can have at least some effect on the government. Only 33 percent felt that way in March.

There's also an uptick in the number of young people who say politicians care what they think: 34 percent of 15-to-34-year-olds report that elected officials care at least a moderate amount about what they think, while just 25 percent said so two months ago.

A Democratic Wave Is Building

At the same time, two-thirds say they think the government is not functioning well. More than half — 52 percent — say they rarely or never read or watch news about the midterm elections.

While many young people continue to feel powerless in the current political environment, the modest increases revealed in the poll could be further evidence of a Democratic wave building against Republicans this fall. Young people are traditionally more likely to side with Democrats than Republicans. The new poll finds they're also especially likely to have concerns about the Republican president.

Just 30 percent approve of Trump's job performance, the poll found. In April's AP-NORC survey of all American adults, 40 percent said they approved of the president's work at the White House.

On gun control, 4 in 10 teens and young adults give the government a grade of F on addressing the concerns. Still, gun laws have fallen on the list of concerns for young adults since the first Youth Political Pulse survey. That survey was conducted just after February's school shooting in Florida.

Just 6 percent now list gun laws as their single top concern facing the country, down from 21 percent in March.

Government Gets An "F"

At least 4 in 10 young people in the latest survey also give the government failing grades in other areas. They give failing marks for the government's handling of immigration, environmental issues, racism and higher education costs.

Samantha Bitzer is a 21-year-old political science major at Michigan State University. Bitzer participated in the survey and says she's determined to encourage her friends to engage more in politics.

"I don't think that enough young people care at the moment," said Bitzer, who calls herself a moderate Republican and voted for Trump. "People are super mad, but he's actually doing everything he said he would."

Despite the rise in engagement by young people, it's far from certain they will reshape the political landscape this fall. Young voters, with few exceptions, have struggled to maintain interest in politics over the last half century. Just 15 percent of eligible voters ages 18 to 20 cast ballots in the last midterm election, for example.

"Do I feel like I could actually make a difference or influence things? Probably not," said 23-year-old Charly Hyden, who works in Lexington, Kentucky. "I feel exhausted. I go out on protests and try to do things, but I feel like it doesn't matter."

"Maybe I'd feel differently if I were still in high school," she said.

PART 2: QUIZ

Anchor 2: Central Idea. Read the article and analyze how the MAIN idea was introduced.

The main idea of the article was introduced by highlighting one young person's belief that young people have the power to change the election; if they go out and vote.

How was the MAIN idea developed further?

1. A- The author gave a few more examples of young people's personal opinions about the upcoming midterm elections.
2. B - The author included information from a variety of polls that explained why young people are divided on many issues.
3. C --The author developed a counterargument by providing historical data about the likelihood of young people going out to vote.
4. D -- The author provided background information about why young people are most likely to vote for Democratic candidates.

Anchor 2: Central Idea Which of the following sentences from the section "Government Gets An F" BEST develops a CENTRAL idea of the article?

1. **A** -At least 4 in 10 young people in the latest survey also give the government failing grades in other areas.
2. **B** -They give failing marks for the government's handling of immigration, environmental issues, racism and higher education costs.
3. **C** -"I don't think that enough young people care at the moment," said Bitzer, who calls herself a moderate Republican and voted for Trump.
4. **D** -Despite the rise in engagement by young people, it's far from certain they will reshape the political landscape this fall.

Anchor 8: Arguments & Claims. Which aspect of the author's argument is MOST important to the article as a whole?

1. A - the statistics about the traditional voting habits of young people
2. B - the quotes from young people about their political opinions
3. C -the anecdote about young people's response to February's school shooting
4. D - the poll results that suggest that young people disapprove of Trump

Anchor 8: Arguments & Claims. Read the following claim from the section "Making A Difference."

The poll found 48 percent of them now think they can have at least some effect on the government.

Adding which of the following pieces of evidence to the article would BEST support the above claim?

1. A -statistics that prove that young people are concerned about a variety of issues
2. B.- information that shows how young people are becoming more involved in politics
3. C. -explanations that outline the diverse political opinions of young people
4. D. -surveys that compare young people with other voting groups

PART-3 - ESSAY WRITING: PROMPT – Explain in a 2 paragraph essay at least 4 ways that you believe young people can make a difference in voting and getting into politics.

American Government
Day 4-5

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| Standard(s) | <p>USG-4.1 Evaluate the role of the citizen in the American political process, including civic responsibilities and the interaction between the citizen and government.</p> <p>USG-4.2 Analyze the process of political socialization and its relation to political participation.</p> |
| Learning Targets/I Can Statements | |
| Essential Question(s) | How to analyze a primary and secondary source document about Political Parties? |
| Resources | See EDMODO |
| Learning Activities or Experiences | <p>Activate Learning- see EDMODO- 1A code: 8h8xnf 4A code: 4Afqsp</p> <p>Read the article "The Creation of the U.S. two Political system"- - 20 minutes</p> <p>Answer the writing Prompt: PART 1. Writing Prompt</p> <hr/> <p>Write a short 7 sentence paragraph that explains the central idea of the article. Use at least 4 details from the article to support your response. 20 minutes</p> <p>Answer the 4 questions:</p> <p>PART 2. QUIZ</p> <p>1. Which option would Federalists MOST LIKELY agree with? Which line from the article supports your answer?</p> <hr/> <p>A. The primary goal of government is to control the economy: "He favored a strong central government and focused on building a strong economy based on commerce and manufacturing."</p> |

B. The central government should give maximum power to the states: "He favored a strong central government and focused on building a strong economy based on commerce and manufacturing."

C. Voting should be open to all people: "It was opposed to widespread suffrage, which means the right to vote, and was considered by its opponents to be elitist, meaning it catered to people who saw themselves as superior to others."

D. Voting should be restricted to a select group of people: "It was opposed to widespread suffrage, which means the right to vote, and was considered by its opponents to be elitist, meaning it catered to people who saw themselves as superior to others."

2. Read the list of sentences from the article.

- 1. By 1792, opposition to federalism was increasing and resulted in the birth of the country's second political party: the Democratic-Republicans, which favored individualism over government rule-making.**
- 2. It was opposed to widespread suffrage, which means the right to vote, and was considered by its opponents to be elitist, meaning it catered to people who saw themselves as superior to others.**
- 3. Their values reflected those of farmers and tradesmen: less government intervention and fewer economic rules, the power of the common man to participate in politics and the right for all white men of any background to vote.**
- 4. Republicans dominated American politics from 1860 to 1932, during which time they almost always controlled Congress with the majority of representatives in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, and won 14 of 18 presidential elections.**

Which two sentences taken together provide the BEST evidence to support the idea that political parties often appealed to specific groups of people?

A. 1 and 2

B. 2 and 3

C. 3 and 4

D. 1 and 4

3. How was the Republican Party different from the Whig Party?

A. The Republican Party opposed having a powerful Congress.

B. The Republican Party favored individualism over anything else.

C. The Republican Party appealed to wealthy families primarily.

D. The Republican Party had a goal of stopping the spread of slavery.

4. How does the author distinguish between the Democratic-Republican Party and the Democratic Party?

A. by explaining the conflicting ideas of the two parties

B. by explaining how the Democratic Party broke away from the Democratic-Republicans

C. by highlighting how the Democratic Party supported the Whigs and the Democratic-Republicans did not

D. by highlighting the importance of agriculture in the Democratic Party

Email assignment: to Cynthia.knotts@richlandone.org

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**American Government
Day 12**

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| Standard(s) | <p>USG-4.1 Evaluate the role of the citizen in the American political process, including civic responsibilities and the interaction between the citizen and government.</p> <p>USG-4.2 Analyze the process of political socialization and its relation to political participation.</p> |
| Learning Targets/I Can Statements | I can participate in a voters simulation. |
| Essential Question(s) | CSPAN classroom-ELECTIONS SIMULATIONS -Why are there non-VOTERS in America? |
| Resources | See assignments in TEAM |
| Learning Activities or Experiences | <p>https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?10502</p> <p>https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?8824</p> <p>DAY 12- Video Clip 1: Primaries and Caucuses</p> <p>Additional Resources:</p> <p>Bell Ringer: Open Primary Elections</p> <p>Bell Ringer: History and Significance of the New Hampshire Primary</p> <p>Bell Ringer: History of the Presidential Primary System</p> <p>Lesson Plan: Primaries and Caucuses</p> <hr/> <p>Email assignment: to Cynthia.knotts@richlandone.org</p> <p>If you need clarity or need to contact me YOU CAN EMAIL ME BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 9:00 – 11:00 or 1:00 to 2:30</p> |

American Government
Day 13

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| Standard(s) | <p>USG-4.1 Evaluate the role of the citizen in the American political process, including civic responsibilities and the interaction between the citizen and government.</p> <p>USG-4.2 Analyze the process of political socialization and its relation to political participation.</p> |
| Learning Targets/I Can Statements | <p>I can create a campaign ad to support my platform.</p> |
| Essential Question(s) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which platforms will you use to reach voters? 2. Which geographical areas will you focus on? 3. What issues will you be addressing in your ads? |
| Resources | <p>See assignments in TEAM</p> |
| Learning Activities or Experiences | <p>https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?10502</p> <p>https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?8824</p> <p>https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?8838</p> <p>Task 1: Campaign Advertisements Each student is required to create a campaign ad to support their own platform. As they approach this task, students should research examples of party platforms on the RNC and DNC websites, and consider the following items: Students can produce print media, social media, or a video clip. One item is required but multiple advertisements using different forms of communication is encouraged.</p> <p>Video clips 2 and 3 provide historical examples of campaign ads.</p> <p>In this task, it is important that students identify their voting base so they can consider peoples' needs and values in order to conduct an effective campaign.</p> <p>Video Clip 2: 1984 Ronald Reagan Campaign Ad</p> |

Video Clip 3: 1992 Bill Clinton Campaign Ad

Additional Resources:

Bell Ringer: Front Porch Campaigning

Bell Ringer: Political Polling

Bell Ringer: Focus Groups

Bell Ringer: Impact of Political Campaign Ads

Bell Ringer: Analyzing Political Advertisements

Bell Ringer: Big Data and Politics

Bell Ringer: Attack Ads in Presidential Campaigns

Bell Ringer: Presidential Campaign Fundraising Regulations

Lesson Plan: Evaluating Historical Presidential Campaign Ads

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American Government
Day 14

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| Standard(s) | <p>USG-4.1 Evaluate the role of the citizen in the American political process, including civic responsibilities and the interaction between the citizen and government.</p> <p>USG-4.2 Analyze the process of political socialization and its relation to political participation.</p> |
| Learning Targets/I Can Statements | <p>I will understand the role of the media during an election.</p> |
| Essential Question(s) | <p>The goal of the article is to report on the presidential candidate's stance on political issues</p> |
| Resources | <p>See assignments in TEAM</p> |
| Learning Activities or Experiences | <p>https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?10502</p> <p>https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?8824</p> <p>https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?8838</p> <p>https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?7237</p> <p>DAY 14- Task 4 - Role of the Media</p> <p>The presidential and vice-presidential candidates should work to campaign and prepare for the debate.</p> <p>The other students will become a journalist and each person will write an article for one of the candidates. The goal of the article is to report on the presidential candidate's stance on political issues. Video clip 6 features Arizona Republican Senator Jeff Flake, emphasizing the importance of the truth and the dangers of assaults on the press. The video clip helps explain the importance of the media.</p> <p>The students' campaign article can be written from a nonpartisan perspective, show bias towards a political party, or can be a form of yellow journalism. Students have the freedom to choose but should use their words to attack political ideology and not bully students.</p> <p>Video Clip 6: Freedom of the Press</p> |

Additional Resources:

[Bell Ringer: The History of Partisanship in the Press](#)

[Bell Ringer: How Journalists Respond to Accusations of Fake News](#)

[Bell Ringer: Adversarial Press](#)

[Bell Ringer: Standards of Journalism and Modern Press Coverage](#)

[Bell Ringer: The Press and the Presidency](#)

[Bell Ringer: Muckrakers](#)

[Lesson Plan: Landmark Supreme Court Case- New York Times v. United States \(1971\)](#)

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**Ms. Cynthia Knotts
American Government
Day 15**

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| Standard(s) | <p>USG-4.1 Evaluate the role of the citizen in the American political process, including civic responsibilities and the interaction between the citizen and government.</p> <p>USG-4.2 Analyze the process of political socialization and its relation to political participation.</p> |
| Learning Targets/I Can Statements | <p>I can Explain what third parties are and the issues around ballot access for third parties</p> |
| Essential Question(s) | <p>Objectives: Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define “political party” • Identify America’s two major political parties • Describe the roles of political parties • Identify ways that political parties influence public policy |
| Resources | <p>See assignments in TEAM</p> |
| Learning Activities or Experiences | <p>Read the Article “ONE BIG PARTY”</p> <p>Complete the assignments after reading the article</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Vocabulary B. Registered Voter! Read each registered voter’s statement. Then, decide how each voter is probably registered. Be careful—some have more than one correct possibility! Mark all that you think could apply. C. Five Roles of Political Parties. Read each example of political parties at work. Decide which of the five roles the example best illustrates. Write the underlined letter in the button next to the example. You may have more than one answer. D. A Two-Party System? The U.S. has lots of parties, but it is often considered a two-party system. Draw lines to match the characteristics of a two-party system to the statistics about U.S. voters. <p>Email assignment: to Cynthia.knotts@richlandone.org</p> <p>If you need clarity or need to contact me YOU CAN EMAIL ME BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 9:00 – 11:00 or 1:00 to 2:30</p> |