
Identity

16 Young People on How They Made a Political Impact Without Voting

In advance of the midterm elections, high schoolers around the country canvassed for campaigns, created custom voter guides, and, uh, organized events with Natalie Portman.

By [Sarah Burke](#)

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PHOTO BY NATALIE JEFFCOTT, VIA STOCKSY.

As we've seen time and time again in the US, every vote matters. And when the country is in a constant state of political upheaval, as has been the case since Trump was elected, the stakes are extremely high. But what do you do when you're too young to vote on the decisions that will inevitably affect your day-to-day life and ultimately shape your future?

For inspiration, we asked Americans under the age of 18 on Snapchat to tell us how, despite being too young to vote, they were still able to make a political impact during the 2018 midterm elections. It turns out that kids these days are extremely resourceful. Here's what they told us.

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Told adults to vote

“I told everyone that I knew who was over 18, including my parents, that they needed to vote whether they agreed with my views and ideas or not. Putting your opinion out there is what founded this country, and voter turnout needs to be a lot higher for the public to get what we want.”

“I told my family and 18+ friends to vote, and if they couldn’t, I told them to spread the word. I also helped my parents understand the props in California and the fight for the 25th district by Steve Knight and Katie Hill.”

Rallied peers to be more political

“My friends have started political clubs at our school, and I gladly attend meetings to stay education on important topics, and to debate my opinions as well as hear the other side.”

“I’ve been out as trans since I was literally 11, so I’ve been educating people on how to be respectful and realize that trans/LGBTQ people deserve basic human rights. My friend group and I started the LGBTQIA club at our middle school in 7th grade”

Contributed to campaigns they believed in

“I became an intern for a guy running for Congress in the district over from mine. My district is solid blue, so I wanted to help out a flippable one. I think I’ve called over hundreds of people and knocked on plenty of doors. I wish I was 18.”

“When a gubernatorial candidate was running for nomination in my state of Oklahoma, I attended multiple rallies, put signs up, placed and handed out flyers, stood on street corners, told my friends about him, marched with him in protest, and was all-around involved in the campaign and passionate about helping him win. I’m too young to vote, at 16 years old.”

Talked and wrote to politicians

“I wrote letters and emails to congresspeople who I know will be up for re-election when I turn 18 and told them I would vote them out if they didn’t start supporting stricter gun control policies. I threatened them basically lol”

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“I served as a student page not too long ago. I got to talk to a state rep and told her a lot of what I thought and what I’d like to see. She encouraged me

to speak out and said that the House of Representatives is always open. I've some ideas."

Hosted events

"I hosted a voter pre-registration drive at my high school (anyone over the age of 16 can preregister to automatically be registered on their 18th birthday). Got 221 kids preregistered to vote. BOOM."

"I am in We the People at Dobson High School and worked with Inspire to put together an assembly. We got Natalie Portman, America Ferrera, and Maria Theresa Lunar to come and speak. We also got 61 people registered to vote, and another 149 pledged to vote. To do this, we presented Mesa, Arizona candidates and their information, and prop information, to the senior class, so now they should know what's up."

Created their own voter guides

"My AP Government and Politics class created pamphlets on the North Carolina ballot, from the judges who were running [to become] a NC Supreme Court justice, to the NC General Assembly, to the local head sheriffs, and even [candidates for the] House of Representatives, too. Each group of two to three people printed out 15 of their own brochures and made videos pertaining to how to vote if unregistered or the breakdown of the six amendments being passed on the NC ballot. Then the groups gave out their brochures and videos to 15 different adults."

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Went to rallies and protests

“I read a slam poem I wrote (called “too young”) at my statehouse in Concord, New Hampshire in front of 4,000 people during the March for Our Lives Protest for gun control. One person protested us. He was wearing a *sunburn is my only white privilege* shirt.”

Posted on social media

“I have incessantly posted reminders to vote and posted things about the different issues going on the NC ballot on my Instagram and Twitter.”

“I’m too young to vote. But, luckily, I was able to meet one of Georgia’s Governor candidates. I took a picture with him and posted it. I’m not able to do much for only being 14, but I reposted it again today hoping to get the word out to go vote!”

Stood up for their beliefs, always

“As a feminist, and an ally to the LGBTQ community, I try to be brave and speak up when I hear homophobic/sexist/racist comments, even if it’s a ‘joke.’”

“I go to a private school where racism, homophobia, and sexism is common. I ALWAYS stand up for those who are the subjects of other’s carelessness, and make sure they feel loved and know they are awesome just the way they are.”

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