

Grace Houston
 Prof. Serafin
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Election Guide 2020

Why Gen Z Vote Matters

The 2020 general election is not only crucial and important, but also historical. This is because it is the first major election where a majority of Gen-Z can vote. With an entire generation now having the ability to elect the next President of the United States and other officials, there is a high chance that this election could be swayed by their vote. Gen Z, specifically those 18 and up, are incredibly active on social media and vocal about politics. A main reason for this push towards being open and vocal about politics is because a majority of that generation feel that issues they care about fail to be effectively addressed or taken care of by leaders on not just the national level, but also on the state and local levels. Things like climate change, gun violence, social justice issues, and more that have a direct effect on Gen Z are not being talked about or taken into consideration, so a lot of them feel that if those leaders won't do it, they will. There was a huge rise in activism in Gen Z this past summer. With the impending election and push in the Black Lives Matter movement, Gen Z took to social media and the streets to protest, educate, and call out leaders at all levels. Hundreds of Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook posts contained numbers to call local leaders, where to find factual information, and where protests were happening. Other posts speaking out against Trump continue to be shared especially with voting now happening, and videos regarding the election spread quickly across Tik Tok, Instagram, and Twitter. Overall, with Gen Z being so open, educated, and progressive, if they all turn out to vote and vote for the same people, that would have a huge impact on who might win and become the next President of the United States.

Gen Zers and Millennials cast a quarter of all votes in 2018 midterm election

	Votes (millions)	Share of votes (%)
Generation Z	4.5	4
Millennial	26.1	21
Generation X	31.6	26
Baby Boomer	44.1	36
Silent and prior	16.0	13

Note: Based on persons who reported voting.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2018 Current Population Survey November Supplement.

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Candidates and Issues

Nationally, every citizen of the U.S will be voting on who the next President will be. The two major party candidates for this election are Donald J. Trump for Republicans and Joe Biden for Democrats. President Trump is running for a second term along with Vice President Mike Pence and Joe Biden is running with Kamala Harris for his VP. Gen Z as a whole seems to be more democrat/liberal as opposed to republican or conservative and “a [Pew Research Center survey](#) conducted in January of this year found that about a quarter of registered voters ages 18 to 23 (22%) approved of how Donald Trump is handling his job as president, while about three-quarters disapproved (77%).” The top three issues that Gen Z feel should and need to be

addressed by both these candidates are climate change, gun violence, and social justice issues, like the Black Lives Matter movement and women's rights. You can read more on each candidate's stances on these issues and more by clicking their name.

[Joe Biden](#) on **Climate Change**:

- Ensure the U.S. achieves a 100% clean energy economy and reaches net-zero emissions no later than 2050
- Work with the rest of the world to combat climate change

[Donald Trump](#) on **Climate Change**:

- Proposed Affordable Clean Energy Rule which will reduce greenhouse gasses, empower states, etc.
- Withdrew from Paris Climate Agreement

[Joe Biden](#) on **Gun Violence**:

- Ban assault weapons and high capacity magazines
- Regulate possession of existing assault weapons under the National Firearms Act
- Require background checks for all gun sales

[Donald Trump](#) on **Gun Violence**:

- No information available on campaign website
- Explicitly stated his favor of the Second Amendment

[Joe Biden](#) on **Social Justice Issues and Black Lives Matter**:

- Stands for racial equality across America
- Criminal justice and police reform
- Women's rights, including passage of the ERA, reproductive rights, and more

[Donald Trump](#) on **Social Justice Issues and Black Lives Matter**:

- Supports Pro-life movement
- Combated peaceful BLM protests with violence
- Encouraged racist and sexist behavior
- Overturned an Obama midnight regulation that prohibited States from defunding abortion service providers and restricted Planned Parenthood funding

Biden and President Trump have extremely differential views on a majority, if not all, issues that Gen Z feel should be addressed by the President. With Gen Z's votes, they could turn the election and, as a result, have someone as the President who fights for what Gen Z believes in.

For this general election, state level elections are included. Races for the U.S Senate, U.S House, governors, state legislature, and more will show up on your ballot depending on what state you are voting for. You can read more about state elections on ballotpedia.org. On the state level for New York, 27 seats for the U.S House of Representatives will be on the November 3rd ballot. For this election, voters will elect 27 candidates to serve in the U.S. House from each of the state's 27 congressional districts. Who the candidates are for the U.S. House depends on what district you are registered to vote in.

A lot of Gen Z who are in New York typically live, work, or go to school in Manhattan. The 12th Congressional District includes most of the East Side of Manhattan and Roosevelt Island and extends across the East River into the Boroughs of Queens (including Astoria, Long Island City, and parts of Woodside) and Brooklyn (including Greenpoint). For this reason, the race for the U.S House for District 12 is important for Gen Z. This man or woman is responsible for listening to what the people are saying and finding a way to put those words into action to make life better for them. He or she will also have the ability to write or vote on bills. It is crucial that Gen Z know who is representing them and vote on who they believe will not only hear what they are saying but act on it and fight for them.

The candidates running for district 12 are:

- Carolyn B. Maloney (Incumbent)
 - Democratic Party
 - **On Climate Change:**
 - Need to combat climate change and revolutionize energy policy
 - **On Gun Violence:**
 - Supports gun safety reforms, making gun trafficking illegal, universal background checks, etc.
 - **On Social Justice, BLM:**
 - Supports Black Lives Matter movement, addresses concerns specifically for black women and girls, women's rights/passage of ERA, etc.
 - Read more about Maloney's stances on issues [here](#).
- Carlos Santiago-Cano
 - Republican Party
 - **On Climate Change:**
 - Stresses importance of recycling and and implement small changes to make a big difference
 - Santiago-Cano does not have his stances on gun violence and social justice or BLM, updated on his website.
 - Read more about Santiago-Cano's stances on issues [here](#).
- Steven Kolln
 - Libertarian Party

- Kolln's main focus for his campaign is fighting against COVID-19 and ending the lockdown.
- Read more about Kolln on his [website](#) or [here](#).

Local elections that get included on the ballot for the general election are also dependent on what state and county or district a person is registered to vote in. In New York County, the election of the Judge of the Civil Court for the Manhattan 6th Municipal Court District will be on the ballot. Seth Steed is the democratic candidate for this race and is the only candidate that will be on the ballot for this general election. While Steed is the only candidate it is still important to know about him. The judge of the civil court deals with small claims court, housing court, and handles other civil matters referred by the New York Supreme Court. The reason this is an important race is because whoever is elected will guide and decide civil or criminal cases with their terms lasting 10 years. Steed is currently Managing Attorney of the Criminal Defense Practice at Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem (NDS). NDS fights against a lot of the same things that Gen Z do, including racial discrimination, prison reform, and police brutality or police misconduct. Having someone who works for an organization with those stances and has practice fighting against them would be a great representation of what Gen Z stands for.

Conclusion

It is impossible to ignore the change in America over the past four years. The acceptance of violence, discrimination, rise of white supremacy, and fear has become the norm in our day-to-day lives. President Trump not only allows this harmful behavior but encourages and participates in it. Gen Z is constantly speaking out against these actions and are not only a diverse generation, but is also one that is well-educated and accepting of others no matter their gender, race, or sexual orientation. An overwhelming majority have said they support Biden and Harris and will vote for them, however, there needs to be action. Action that goes beyond posting a graphic to an Instagram story, retweeting information about why this election is so crucial, and overall, goes beyond the screen. Gen Z is so loud because they feel no one is listening or advocating for them and now is the time to change that.

While voting is the best way to make sure that change is happening, there are other ways that Gen Z can get involved too. For example, becoming a poll worker is a great way to participate in this election and more. With COVID-19 and states starting to see a rise in cases as the weather gets colder, older men and women who used to be poll workers are becoming hesitant to show up. While young people are still at risk for COVID-19, it is significantly less risky for them than older people, assuming there are no pre-existing conditions. In addition, some states allow 16 or 17 year olds to be poll workers, meaning that even if you can't vote, you can still participate.

Another great opportunity to participate in elections is to get involved in campaigns. This doesn't just mean getting involved in presidential campaigns since so many different elections are always happening. Getting involved not only is a great work or volunteer opportunity, but it's

a chance to learn more about politics and support candidates who have similar ideals. While Gen Z is plenty vocal about raising awareness and trying to spread factual information with protests and social media, however, a lot of that starts and stops with Gen Z. Joining a political campaign would be a great way to expand that outreach and reach other generations through phone calls or knocking on someone's door.

The Gen Z voice and vote are vital towards turning the government around, but only if they get involved and vote. Additionally, Gen Z should not get discouraged. It's incredibly easy to become distressed with the COVID-19 pandemic, worries about mail-in voting being counted correctly and being questioned by so many, including the President of the United States, and the fact that so many rights could be taken away from women, people of color, and the LGBTQ+ community if we do not do something. One vote could make all the difference. If you are voting by absentee or mail-in, make sure you write and check everything clearly and follow all directions. Double check all deadlines for when your ballot should be mailed or dropped off by. If you're voting in person, be aware of your surroundings and, if there aren't many polling places in your area, prepare for long lines.