Millennials in the Electorate

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Key Points – By The Numbers

- **Millenials are often the key to winning progressive for coalitions when it comes to elections.**
  - In 2014, there are 57.1 million Americans age 18-32 in the Vote Eligible Population (VEP) or 26.0%.
  - By 2016, their population is expected to grow to 70.0 million.

- **Millenials are regularly underrepresented on Election Day.**
  - Turnout among Millennials in 2014 was 21.8%. Their turnout level did not reach the same height (45.8%) that we saw in the 2012 presidential election, and was down from 23.5% in 2010.
  - Less than half (49.0%) of Millennials were registered to vote in 2014. While making up 26.0% of the VEP, they were just 13.5% of the electorate.

- **Young people are exceptionally mobile.**
  - Leading up to the 2014 election, half of millennials (49.9%) reported having moved in the last two years. African American Millennials were the most mobile at 50.9%, compared to 45.5% of Latinos Millennials and 47.5% of unmarried women of the same age.

- **Millenials are the most diverse generation ever and they seek out diversity.**
  - Additionally, they are the most marketed to generation ever, and they know it. Millennials are savvy consumers of targeted marketing and will dismiss things they do not see as sincere.
  - Social media is their language and a clear avenue to connect.
Key Points – Voting in Elections

• Millennials have almost no information about the candidates and issues in local elections, even when they have been born and raised in the area. Equally as important, Millennials don’t seek out the information in traditional ways.

• Millennials are connected to their community through friends, family (for those who have local family members), work, school, social activities, and volunteering. Each of these types of connection offers opportunities to engage young adults in local issues and elections but are not often targeted.

• Millennials can be encouraged to vote by engaging them in a way that values their existing concerns about their communities. They believe in opportunity, choices, and having a voice, yet often do not see local elections as related to these values.

• The problem is not the voting process for most Millennial voters. While these younger voters had recommendations for how to make the process simpler, most don’t report any issues with registering to vote, knowing where their precinct location is, or obtaining a ballot.

• Millennials care, any notion otherwise is wrong. They participate in other ways that are more meaningful to them. Our challenge is to make voting and elections more meaningful to them and connected to their concerns.
Millennials By The Numbers
There are nearly 125 million members of the Rising American Electorate – unmarried women and Millennials are far and away the largest segments, but there is much overlap between them.
Millennials made up over a quarter of the vote eligible population in 2014.

Source: CPS November 2014
* Percentages denote share of that group within the Vote Eligible Population (VEP) i.e. unmarried women millennials are 25.8% of the VEP.
Snapshot of Millennials

Millennials are more diverse than older generations, are more unmarried, and their median household income is $35K.

**Millennials: Vote Eligible Population**

- **Race:**
  - White: 61.3%
  - African American: 15.1%
  - Latino: 17.0%
  - Asian American: 4.2%

- **Median Income:** $34,585

**Total: Vote Eligible Population**

- **Race:**
  - White: 69.9%
  - African American: 12.7%
  - Latino: 11.4%

Source: CPS November/March 2014 Supplements
Millennials are expected to continue to grow their share of the electorate by 2016.

CPS Estimates of the Vote Eligible Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2016*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RAE**</td>
<td>116,839,304</td>
<td>133,154,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+16.3 million, 14% increase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried Women</td>
<td>55,151,532</td>
<td>58,904,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+3.8 million, 6.8% increase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>26,914,854</td>
<td>28,975,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+2.1 million, 7.7% increase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>23,328,876</td>
<td>27,395,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+4.1 million, 17.4% increase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials**</td>
<td>63,008,477</td>
<td>66,063,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+3.0 million, 4.8% increase</td>
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</tbody>
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* Projected: Uses a rolling average of monthly CPS data to estimate the linear trend in population growth and use that to extrapolate from the current population size. This is intended to be an approximation of likely population growth.

** These RAE/age projections use the RAE definition of 18-34 year olds rather than Millennials, which change year on year. They assume a standard age group of 18-34 year olds for each year.
How Millennials Vote
In 2012, Younger Americans voted to reelect President Obama by a large margin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unmarried Women</th>
<th>18-29 Year Olds</th>
<th>African Americans</th>
<th>Latinos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romney</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CNN 2012 Exit Polls
Younger Americans were more split in the 2014 election that in 2012, where they widely supported President Obama. Connecting and turning out Millennials will be an important push for any Presidential candidate.

2014 Generic Congressional Ballot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Unmarried Women</th>
<th>18-29 Year Olds</th>
<th>African Americans</th>
<th>Latinos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CNN 2014 Exit Polls
In 2014, Millennials were particularly underrepresented in their share of voters as compared to their numbers in the vote eligible population. This means that Millennials are also largely in networks of people who did not vote in 2014.

**Share of VEP vs. Share of Voters in 2014**

- **Non-Millennials**
  - Share of VEP: 74.0%
  - Share of Voters: 86.5%

- **Millennials**
  - Share of VEP: 26.0%
  - Share of Voters: 13.5%
All RAE subgroups were underrepresented in their share of voters as compared to their numbers in the vote eligible population.

Share of VEP vs. Share of Voters in 2014

- Unmarried Women: Share of VEP = 25.8%, Share of Voters = 21.9%
- Millennials: Share of VEP = 13.5%, Share of Voters = 26.0%
- African Americans: Share of VEP = 12.7%, Share of Voters = 12.0%
- Latinos: Share of VEP = 11.4%, Share of Voters = 7.3%
In 2014, turnout across the RAE was down from levels in 2010. Millennials had the lowest turnout of their RAE cohort.
In 2014, half of Millennials remained unregistered. For every ONE Millennial that is registered and did not turn out there were TWO that were not registered. The biggest opportunity for organizations lies in registering new votes, not turning out someone registered who did not vote.

### Registration and Voting Rates in 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Millennials</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Registered</td>
<td>79,805,598</td>
<td>29,140,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered but Didn’t Vote</td>
<td>34388475</td>
<td>15,525,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voted</td>
<td>48634707</td>
<td>12,445,846</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Percentage Distribution:**

- **Not Registered (Non-Millennials):** 49.0%
- **Registered but Didn’t Vote (Non-Millennials):** 21.1%
- **Registered and Voted (Non-Millennials):** 29.9%
- **Not Registered (Millennials):** 51.0%
- **Registered but Didn’t Vote (Millennials):** 27.2%
- **Registered and Voted (Millennials):** 21.8%
Millennials were the most likely to cite a conflicting schedule as their reason for not voting. To turn out these populations, voting has to win that conflict and that happens only when it is more directly tied to their every day lives.

**Reason for Not Voting in 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>non-RAE</th>
<th>Unmarried Women</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Latinos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too busy, conflicting work or school schedule</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interested, felt my vote wouldn’t count</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness or disability (own or family's)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgot to vote (or send in absentee ballot)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All data rounded to the nearest digit.

Millennials are an exceptionally mobile group, with White and African Americans of this age the most mobile when looking back to the two years prior to the 2014 election.

Moved In the Last Two Years (Since 2012)

- Non-Millenials: 19.2%
- Millennials: 49.9%
- Unmarried millennials: 47.5%
- White Millennials: 51.6%
- African Americans: 50.9%
- Latino Millennials: 45.5%
Voting in elections among Millennials
Millennials and Voting in Elections

• When it comes to voting in local elections, the problem is fairly obvious, but the solutions are all the more difficult to pinpoint.

• To better understand this drop-off among Millennial voters, Lake Research Partners recently finished conducting six focus groups on behalf of the Knight Foundation.

• The groups explored Millennials’ sense of ownership and loyalty to their communities, the extent to which they’re actively engaged already, and if they consider voting an important part of that engagement.
Methodology

Lake Research Partners designed, conducted, and moderated six focus groups on behalf of the Knight Foundation. The groups were conducted between February 9th – 23rd among registered voters aged 20-34 who vote in presidential elections but that do not vote in local elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mixed gender African Americans</td>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed race men</td>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed race women</td>
<td>Miami, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed gender Latinos</td>
<td>Miami, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed race women</td>
<td>Akron, OH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed race men</td>
<td>Akron, OH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Millennial voters are notably mixed in their assessment of the way things are going in their city’s today, with some alluding to concern and frustration, while others feel a sense of change and excitement.

“I know there's a lot of job opportunities, there's a lot going on and there's really a focus to rebuild.”
   – Akron woman

“It’s too expensive. I mean it’s too expensive for how much I make...it’s not sustainable to live here.”
   – Miami woman

“Confusion on yeah where are the taxes, if it’s not going to the schools, then where is it going to?”
   – Philadelphia man
Top issues that concern urban Millennials include:

**TRANSPORTATION**

“They built this city like for cars. They didn’t build it for public transportation. You need to have a car in the city... but they need to fix it and they need to expand and have more buses.”

– Miami Latino

**COST OF LIVING & HOUSING**

“Expenses. It’s very expensive to live here. I mean I just feel like Miami’s such a high standard.”

– Miami woman

“...back and forth to wanting to stay in Akron forever because the housing cost is so awesome and I could afford to travel to other places...then on the other side of things I know our education system is not great, I have two young kids.”

– Akron woman

**EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

“It also influences the local economy. Taxes, barriers to entry for like new businesses who want to come to Philly may create jobs and give people a chance.”

– Philadelphia man

**JOBS & EMPLOYMENT**
Urban Millennials are not apathetic. They have concerns about the issues they care about, particularly access to transportation, the cost of living, economic opportunity, and education.

- There is a recognition that local government **SHOULD** be more connected to their daily lives. The reality, though, is that Millennials admit to paying much more attention to presidential elections. There is an unwavering sense that presidential elections matter more to the issues they care about.

- Some Millennials don’t even know who the mayor of their city is, much less the names of other local officials. This is true even among those who are otherwise fairly active in their communities and are aware of what is happening in politics nationally.

- The disconnect is that no one is showing these Millennials the connection between local government and the issues they care about.

“I mean even when we said you know the mayor, I didn’t know who it was. I’d love to be more aware...” – Miami woman
Millennials have almost no information when it comes to local elections. Equally as important, Millennials don’t seek out the information that does exist.

“Like because it's more like I, like I don't vote in them, but I feel like I should or you know like I don't quite always know what's going on with the issues and the candidates.”

– Akron woman

“I think the information...essentially the information is out there and if you associate yourself with a particular party you’re gonna follow maybe a writer or a political person that is in favor with your party. You’re gonna go to their articles, go to their writings and research that you’re more favorable to. So the information is out there, I just don’t think that clearly we utilize it.”

– Miami woman
Notably, the **voting process isn’t the problem** for most Millennials. Only a few mention problems of bureaucracy or red tape that are obstacles to voting. Most believe registration, finding voting locations, and the voting process are straightforward.

“*[Your polling precinct] It’s on your voter card. They mail them all the time. Is it because it’s being renewed? Because that’s how I thought about it. It’s fine. That’s how I thought it was; that it would be renewed.*”

– Miami Latina

“I was raised that way. **My grandmother took me into the booth and taught me how to do it.** My grandmother worked the polls so it’s like...it’s like when you say you have to come straight from school, the first thing you do...the polls used to be in the schools so it’s like......my mother’s school was a poll waiting so I had to go straight downstairs to it. So I'm just sitting there observing everybody. And I just used to want to know about it.”

– Philadelphia African American Man
Ways to Establish a Connection with Millennial Voters

Need to overcome a lack of information and lack of trusted source

1. Millennials are already connected to their local community through organizations (church, school, work, etc.) These could be leveraged as a means to inform younger voters.

2. They like the idea of a welcome packet that’s provided when you move to a new location. The packet could include who the local elected officials are and when local elections are held.

3. Millennials are involved in many social events. A major reason many of the individuals are living in the city is because they want to participate in the recreational and cultural opportunities that exist. These events could be utilized to inform and engage young voters.

4. This is an incredibly mobile and wired generation. They would love to have a local voting smart phone application that could connect them to the basics they would need to know, both on the candidates and on the issues.
Ways to Establish a Connection with Millennial Voters, cont.

5. Receiving a **voter guide** in the mail would also be a positive solution for many younger voters, who admit that a lack of information is their biggest inhibitor to participation.

6. **Millennials often don’t recognize elected leaders in their communities.** They do recognize celebrities with ties to their community though, who could potentially be visible as part of a voter registration and mobilization campaign.

7. Making voting faster and easy is important to younger voters. Registering to vote online, as well as opportunities to vote by mail, are popular.
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