

Millennials: Not in this Election

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mil·len·nial
mi'lenēəl/
adjective

a person reaching young adulthood around the year 2000; a Generation Year.
"the industry brims with theories on what makes millennials tick" (1)

Millennials. One of the most powerful forces behind Bernie Sanders' bid for the democratic nomination. Perhaps not powerful enough to propel him into the nomination, but certainly enough to bring the ever rising cost of a college tuition to the forefront of the Democratic platform.

So really, who are they? They carry over a trillion dollars in student debt. An overwhelming majority, 92%, believe the success of a business should be measured by more than just the profit it brings in. And 69% don't believe in regular office appearances (2).

All in all, the characterization of this emerging youth isn't so hard to put a finger on, and statistics don't really do much to contradict the outstanding stereotypes. Millennials: they have debt, a few beefs with capitalism, and don't really feel like showing up to work everyday. And here's the thing about them: they aren't going to make much of a difference.

Why, though? Millennials are youthful, energetic, and emerging leaders within tech bubbles in California. Why aren't they changing our world politically? The exact reasons you'd attribute to high voter turnout are the causes for millennials' low voter turnout. Whereas millennials may have certain commodities like time and energy, they find these commodities better spent on different aspects of their lives. The millennial voter turnout in 2012 of a mere 18% is considered high. Compared to the 55% national average in most elections of the 21st century so far, however, that's quite low (3). Election cycle after election cycle, it's not the young nor the middle aged, but senior citizens who consistently have the highest voter turnout.

But below the surface of these facts and numbers is a negative stigma around politics. Unlike their older counterparts, millennials are much less likely to watch CNN, FOX, or other traditional sources of political socialization. Rather, they turn to figures like John Oliver of "Last Week Tonight," or social media. In short, these circumstances lead to a millennial generation that is often cynical of its politicians and armed with bite-sized, often humorous, information about the political atmosphere.

So do millennial voters not matter? Well, there's a twist. In this election, they especially don't

matter. Yes, Clinton is beating Trump by a margin of 20%-50% (4) when it comes to millennials, but even with this historic margin millennials won't even make a dent in the election results. Not only will they show up in petty numbers, but Clinton already has much more powerful and active segments of society—especially women—on her side to support her in this election.

I could end the article here. You have an introduction, some facts, a thesis. It would be the whole package, much like a BLT sandwich. Adequately satisfying, but you know that you strive for more. Well, here's what I'll throw in this is our publication. It's something created by, run by, and produced for students who, among myriads of different races, genders, ethnicities, and socio-economics backgrounds, probably fall most neatly into the category of "millennial." Despite having everything at our fingertips—youth, time, a working knowledge of the internet— and superficially claiming to be an integral aspect of our country's democracy, we fail to participate in one of the most common conventional forms of political participation out there: voting.

Here at The Governor's Academy, there are students taking this central tenet of democracy to heart. Evident throughout the new A.P. U.S. Government and Politics class, for example, nearly all eligible students—citizens and 18 years of age—are registered to vote in November. Perhaps most vocally, the campus Young Republicans, though split on their Party's nominee, are encouraging individuals to participate. As one student put it: "It doesn't really matter at all. No one our age can really vote and, honestly, this time, both candidates suck." Many are pessimistic, though some remain hopeful.

At the end of the day, we can ask for the people to exercise their right to vote and impress upon this land the truest, representative form of democracy. And maybe, if we simply all go to vote, in record numbers for millennials, then maybe the millennial issues at hand—college tuition, recreational drug use, urban revitalization—will gain the recognition it deserves. But until we become more enthusiastic, patriotic, and vocal than our grandparents, these issues will fail to assert themselves in our political agenda.

Works Cited:

1. <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/google>
2. "29 Surprising Facts That Explain Why Millennials See the World Differently." Inc. N.p., n.d. Web.
3. "For Millennial Voters, the Clinton vs. Trump Choice 'feels like a Joke'" Washington Post. The Washington Post, n.d. Web. 25 Oct. 2016.
4. "For Millennial Voters, the Clinton vs. Trump Choice 'feels like a Joke'" Washington Post. The Washington Post, n.d. Web. 25 Oct. 2016.