

NEW REPORT EXPLAINS HOW STATES CAN SUPPORT YOUNG VOTERS AND STRENGTHEN TURNOUT

MEDIA CONTACT:

Rebecca Farmer, Movement Advancement Project

(mailto:rebecca@mapresearch.org) (mailto:rebecca@mapresearch.org)

(mailto:rebecca@mapresearch.org)rebecca@mapresearch.org (mailto:rebecca@mapresearch.org) | 303-578-4600 ext 122

January 17, 2024

As the 2024 election cycle ramps up, a new report examines specific barriers that young voters face, what states can do to support young voters, and how each state's election policies impact this important demographic.

The report, *A Silenced Generation: How the Power of the Youth Vote Collides with Barriers to Voting* (<https://www.mapresearch.org/2024-youth-voting-report>), authored by Movement Advancement Project (MAP) and released in partnership with The Civics Center (<https://www.thecivicscenter.org/>), creates a framework for evaluating states' policy climate for youth voting. The report also details policy solutions to remove obstacles that impact youth voter turnout. Analysis in the report finds that nearly one in ten young voters live in a state with a low Youth Democracy Score. Included in the report is a foreword by Laura W. Brill, Executive Director of The Civics Center.

"Young voters are a formidable voting demographic and engaging them now is vital to creating a new generation of active, lifetime voters. However young voters face a range of obstacles in registering to vote and casting their ballot," said Brian Hinkle, Senior Voting Policy Researcher at MAP.

policy foundation for removing the barriers to voting and accelerating young people's full participation.”

An estimated 53 million voters under 30 will be eligible to vote this year, including an estimated 8 million young people who have become newly eligible to vote since the 2022 midterm elections.

Young Voters Face Key Barriers to Registering and Voting

That young people are less likely to vote isn't surprising considering the core obstacles they face, which are detailed in the report. The lack of voting experience creates an information gap about where, when, and how to register and vote.

- Moving frequently creates challenges for registration and voting.
- Fewer resources and unpredictable work schedules make it hard to get to the polls to vote.
- Targeted efforts by lawmakers to suppress turnout and disenfranchise young voters.

Youth Democracy Scores

MAP analyzed 11 key policies that particularly impact young voters to develop Youth Democracy Scores. This metric provides a look at the electoral landscape for young voters across the states, showing which states are providing robust youth voter environments and those that are not. (Click here to see how each state ranks in the full list of Youth Democracy Scores (<https://www.mapresearch.org/file/MAP-Youth-Democracy-Score-tables.pdf>).

Takeaways from the Youth Democracy Scores include:

- Nearly one in 10 young voters live in a state with low Youth Democracy Scores.
- Almost one-third of young voters live in states that rank in the second lowest category of Youth Democracy Scores.
- The top five states in MAP's Youth Democracy Scores are Illinois, Minnesota, Maryland, Colorado, and New Mexico. The states with the lowest five scores are Tennessee, Missouri, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas.

MAP analysis also tracked the relationship between a state's young voter policies and youth voter turnout. For example, the report found that states with the lowest Youth Democracy Scores were also among the lowest rates of turnout among young voters – out of the five lowest ranked states, three also ranked among the lowest in youth voter turnout in 2022.

Policy Recommendations

Included in the report is a series of policy recommendations for how states can remove barriers and engage young voters. Lawmakers can take concrete steps to streamline voter registration and improve

DONATE (/DONATE)

- *Voter pre-registration:* Twenty states and D.C. allow pre-registration (https://www.mapresearch.org/democracy-maps/voter_preregistration) at age 16, so long as the person will be 18 when they cast their vote. An additional four states allow pre-registration at age 17. Research shows that pre-registration results in higher voter turnout among young voters and is growing in popularity. From 2014 to 2020, the number of pre-registered young people more than doubled to nearly 1 million young voters.
- *Election Day voter registration:* Allowing voters to register the same day that they cast their vote is a fail-safe, especially for young voters and others who move more frequently and may face challenges with registration as a result. Only 22 states allow voters to register on the same day they vote (https://www.mapresearch.org/democracy-maps/voter_registration_deadlines).
- *Voter ID and allowing student IDs:* Most states ask voters to show some form of ID to vote. However, young people are less likely to have a driver's license, the most common form of ID, and may only have a student ID. Nine states explicitly do not allow a student ID to be used for voting, including several states with the most restrictive photo ID laws (https://www.mapresearch.org/democracy-maps/in_person_voting). Restrictive photo ID laws are particularly harmful to young people of color.
- *Vote by mail:* In 36 states, voters can request an absentee ballot without having to provide a reason (https://www.mapresearch.org/democracy-maps/absentee_requirements). This makes voter participation easier for young voters, among other voters who may not be able to make it to a polling place. In states with the most restrictive mail voting policies, youth turnout is as much as 15 percentage points lower.
- *Early voting availability:* Young voters often work unpredictable schedules at hourly jobs where they may be forced to choose between wages and voting. Early voting increases the opportunities to vote, and youth voters are among the populations who benefit. In 2022, more than half (<https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/voting-laws-and-other-access-issues-shaped-youth-vote-2022>) of young voters cast their ballots before Election Day. While most states offer some form of in-person early voting, the length of availability varies widely (https://www.mapresearch.org/democracy-maps/early_voting_period).

Additional recommendations in the report address policies that include online voter registration, automatic voter registration, increasing polling locations, paid time off to vote, and recruiting young voters as poll workers, among other policies. The full list of policy recommendations is available in the report (<https://www.mapresearch.org/2024-youth-voting-report>).

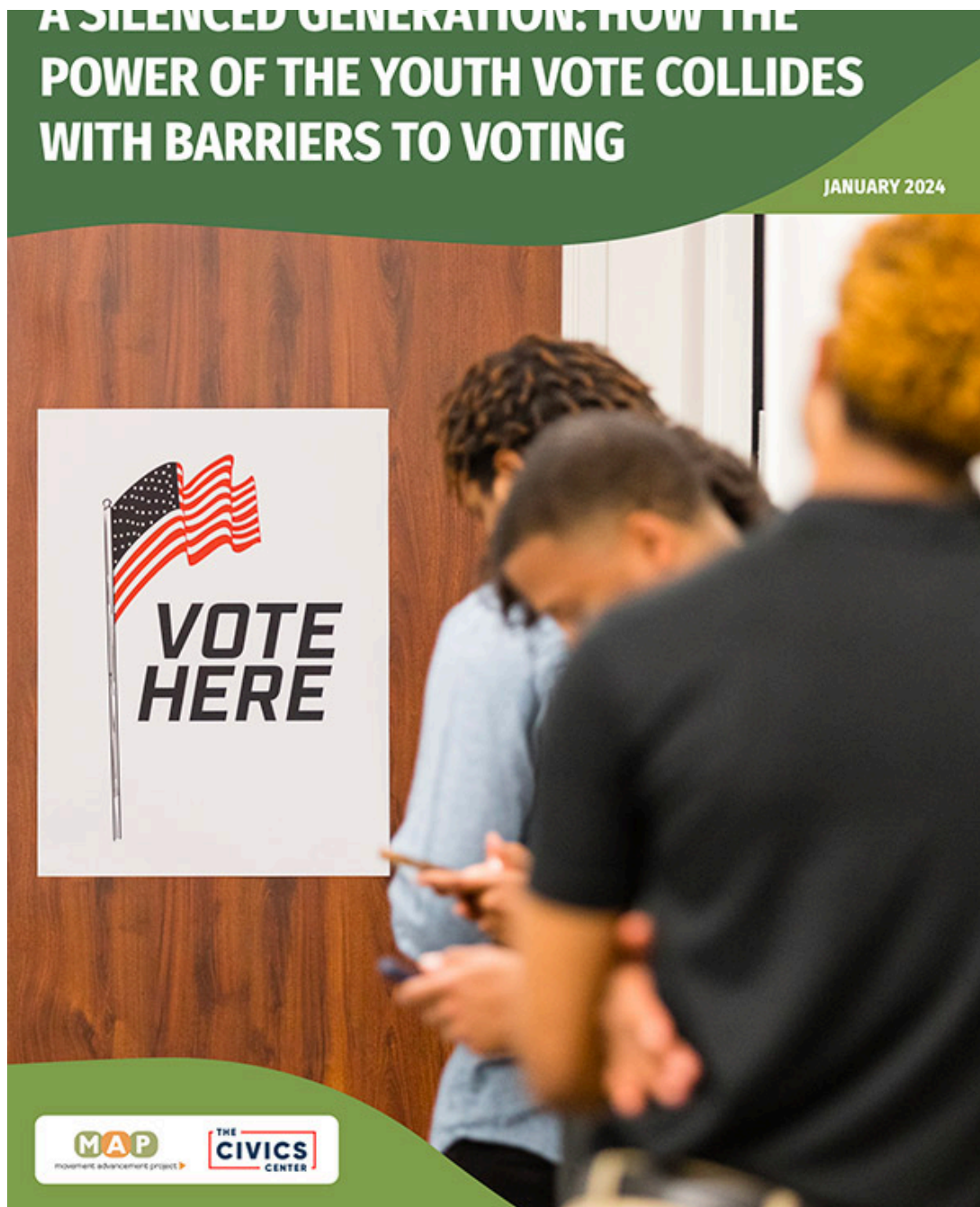
DONATE (/DONATE)

###

This report is part of MAP's Democracy Maps project, which tracks 50 laws and policies related to voting and elections (https://www.mapresearch.org/democracy-maps/ratings_by_state).

MAP's mission is to provide independent and rigorous research, insight and communications that help speed equality and opportunity for all. MAP works to ensure that all people have a fair chance to pursue health and happiness, earn a living, take care of the ones they love, be safe in their communities, and participate in civic life.

DONATE (/DONATE)



(<https://www.mapresearch.org/file/MAP-2024-Youth-Voting-Report.pdf>)

AUTHORS

Movement Advancement Project (MAP) (<https://www.mapresearch.org/>)

The Civics Center (<https://www.thecivicscenter.org/>)

[DONATE \(/DONATE\)](#)