



THE CENTER FOR INFORMATION & RESEARCH ON CIVIC LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT
www.civicyouth.org

2016 Election

Millennials After 2016: Post-Election Poll Analysis

Analysis of youth attitudes, tendencies,
and prospects for future engagement

CIRCLE Staff



Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Civic Life

Key Findings

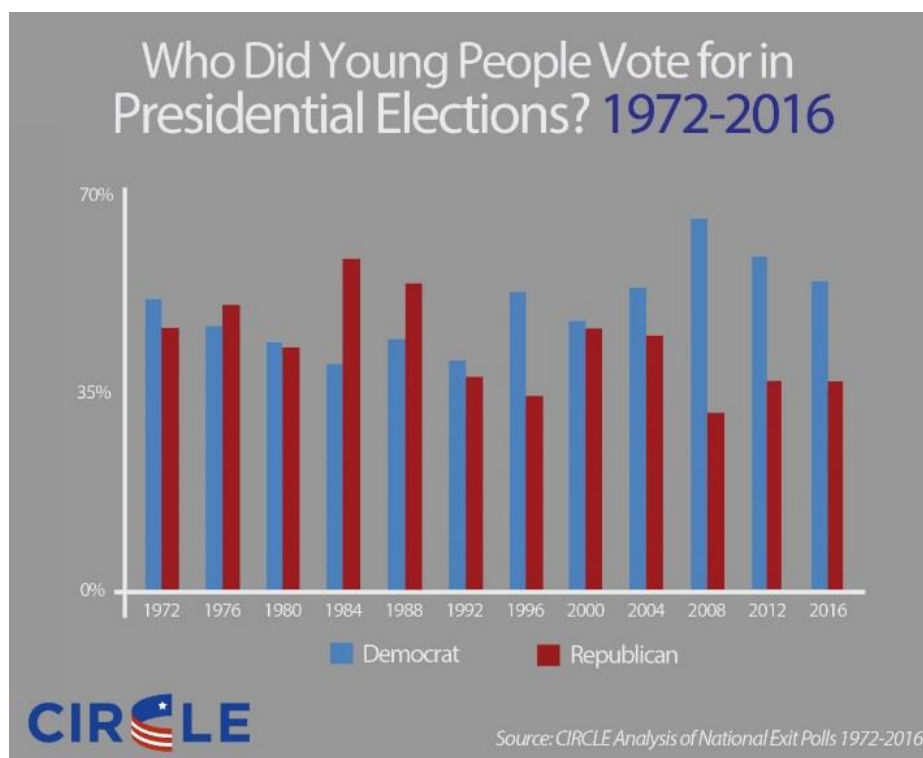
This memo describes the latest findings from Tisch College's Millennial Election Polls, which were conducted before and after the 2016 presidential election. Analysis by Tisch College's [CIRCLE](#) of new data and of trends in Millennials' engagement indicates:

- Millennials have been an influential, diverse, large, and active group when it comes to electoral engagement. Millennials want to have an impact and make choices driven by their values, and they often see direct community engagement (like community service) as more important and influential than political engagement.
- Millennials favored Secretary Clinton over President Trump more than any other age group, by about 20 points, but as an age-cohort their support for the Democratic candidate has declined considerably since 2008, when a record-breaking year 66% of young people supported President Obama. Young people's level of support for Republican presidential candidates held roughly steady from 2012 (37% for Romney) to 2016 (35% for Trump), though there was an uptick in 3rd party support.
- Our polling finds that Trump and Clinton voters differed drastically by values, demographic backgrounds, and opinions about the state of the United States. In some cases, the divides were stark. For example, 72% of young Trump voters agreed that we must "protect traditional American values from outside influences" (vs. 26% of Clinton voters), while 65% of Millennial Clinton voters agreed that "racial discrimination is a fundamental aspect of the United States" (vs. 23% of Trump voters).
- Young Trump voters are less likely to engage in civic and political life beyond voting in the presidential election. They are less experienced in civic and community engagement and in political action, and they are less likely to say that they would take up a formal civic opportunity (like regularly volunteering for a nonprofit organization).
- The one area where Trump voters come closest to Clinton voters is in local engagement and helping others. This suggests they may especially value—and be open to—grassroots, interpersonal civic acts as an avenue for making a positive impact on society.
- On the other hand, Clinton voters are more experienced with political engagement and more likely to say that they would pursue opportunities to engage if they are available. The biggest motivator for engagement among Clinton supporters is resisting the new Trump administration, as evidenced by their willingness to support impeachment and to actively protest.
- Given their relative experience and willingness to remain civically engaged, Millennial Clinton voters carry the potential to make significant contributions to civic and political life. However, this may depend on how the Trump administration responds to individuals and organizations with diverse viewpoints, including those of young people who largely oppose him. It remains to be seen how prevalent and sustained their engagement will be.

Vote Choice and Political Engagement

Millennials have been one of the key voting blocs in each Presidential Election since 2008, when this generation came of age, because of their size, diversity, and a strong Democratic lean. In 2008 and 2012, CIRCLE found that under-30 voters influenced a number of electoral votes in key swing states like Ohio, Florida, and Pennsylvania by supporting President Obama with decisive margins.¹

In 2016, CIRCLE's analysis of exit polling suggests that, though still a significantly Democratic-leaning bloc, under-30 voters' support for the Democratic Candidate (55% for Hillary Clinton) declined, from 66% and 60% for President Obama in 2008 and 2012, respectively. At the same time, these voters still favored Hillary Clinton by about a 20-point margin over President Donald J. Trump, which is considerably higher than the historical pre-Obama margin for Democrats.



Yet Millennials are not particularly inclined to run for office and many are skeptical of the value of political engagement more broadly:

- For example, in a 2013 Bipartisan Policy Center Survey, about 58% of Millennials chose community involvement as the way to make major positive changes in our society, rather than political involvement at the local, state, and federal level (32% chose this option).²

¹ <http://civicyouth.org/at-least-80-electoral-votes-depended-on-youth/>

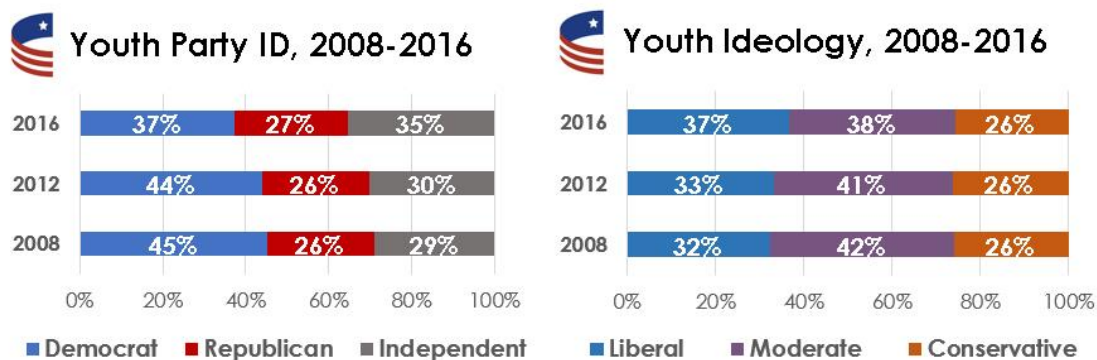
² Data available at: <http://cdn.bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/BPC%20Public%20Service%20Crosstabs.pdf>

- Furthermore, just 13% of Millennials said that they had seriously considered running for office.³
- Young people were far more interested in working for a major corporation (28%), a nonprofit organization (32%), or a small business (45%) than serving in government (12%) or running for office (13%).
- Other surveys of Millennials strongly imply that they want to have a positive impact through their careers, and many of them choose to pursue careers that they feel will allow them to make positive impacts.⁴

Tisch College/CIRCLE Millennial Tracking Poll

Since 2008, CIRCLE, a nonpartisan research center at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life that focuses on young people’s civic and political engagement, has observed three key trends about Millennials:

1. Millennials value making a positive impact on the world, whether it is through their careers or through civic engagement.
2. Young people have been increasingly drawn to community-based, direct engagement, partly because they have been growing more skeptical of political involvement as a means to effect positive change, and partly because of greater institutional support for community engagement.
3. Millennials have diverse and complex political ideologies that often do not fit neatly into the “Democrat” and “Republican” boxes. As the graphs below show, the youth voting bloc has become *more liberal* over the last 8 years, but *less likely* to identify as Democrat.



Source: Tisch College’s CIRCLE analysis of the Edison Research National Exit Poll, 2008-2016

³ Furthermore, there was a significant gender difference in this measure: 22% of young men, compared to just 8% of young women, have seriously considered running for office.

⁴ <https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/millennial-survey-making-impact-through-employers.html>

In 2016, CIRCLE set out to answer some questions related to these observed trends leading up to, and after, the 2016 presidential election. Some key questions were:

- **What are Millennials' political ideologies and how do they relate to the way they vote?**
- **Will Millennials become more or less politically engaged?**
- **Which Millennials will be mobilized as a result of this unusual election?**

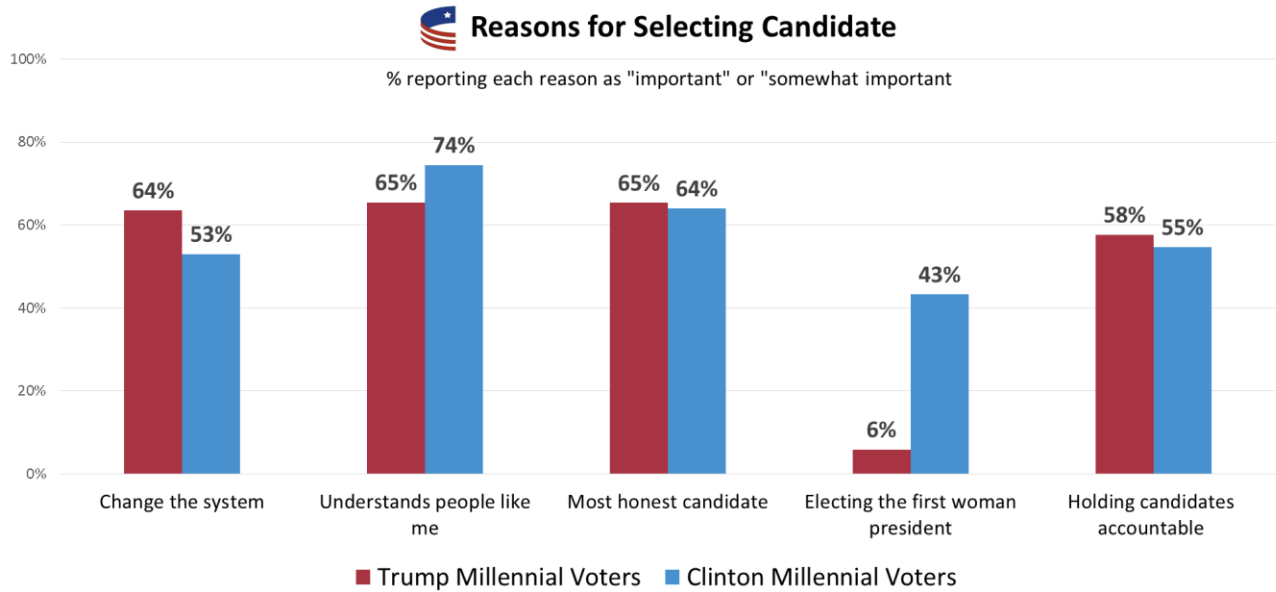
To answer these questions, CIRCLE designed and analyzed a pre- and post-election tracking poll of 1,608 Millennials (ages 18-34) who were part of a representative survey panel by GfK, an international polling company. Of the total sample, 1,101 Millennials were retained for the second survey. With this sample, CIRCLE researchers were able to understand how young people perceived the 2016 election in October 2016, and again in December 2016.

How Did Millennials' Political Ideologies Relate to their Vote Choice?

Our nationally representative survey panel of Millennials showed a voting pattern similar to the exit-poll estimates of age 18-29 voters:

- Secretary Clinton had a sizable margin over President Trump (50% for Clinton, 33% for Trump), with the remainder (17%) choosing to vote for someone other than Clinton or Trump.
- Demographically, Trump voters were about twice as likely as Clinton voters to come from rural areas, and they were slightly more likely to be male (56% of Trump voters were male, though young men's dominance among Trump voters was not statistically significant).
- Trump voters were less likely to have a college degree (38% of Clinton voters and 22% of Trump voters have a degree).
- 85% of Trump voters were White, compared to 49% among Clinton voters. Over one-third of Trump voters are regular (weekly or more) churchgoers, while just over one-fifth (22%) of Clinton voters are regular churchgoers.
- As expected, a majority of registered Republicans (77%) voted for Donald Trump and a majority of registered Democrats (82%) voted for Hillary Clinton. Among independents, 27% voted for Trump, 52% for Clinton, and 20% voted for other candidates (including write-ins).

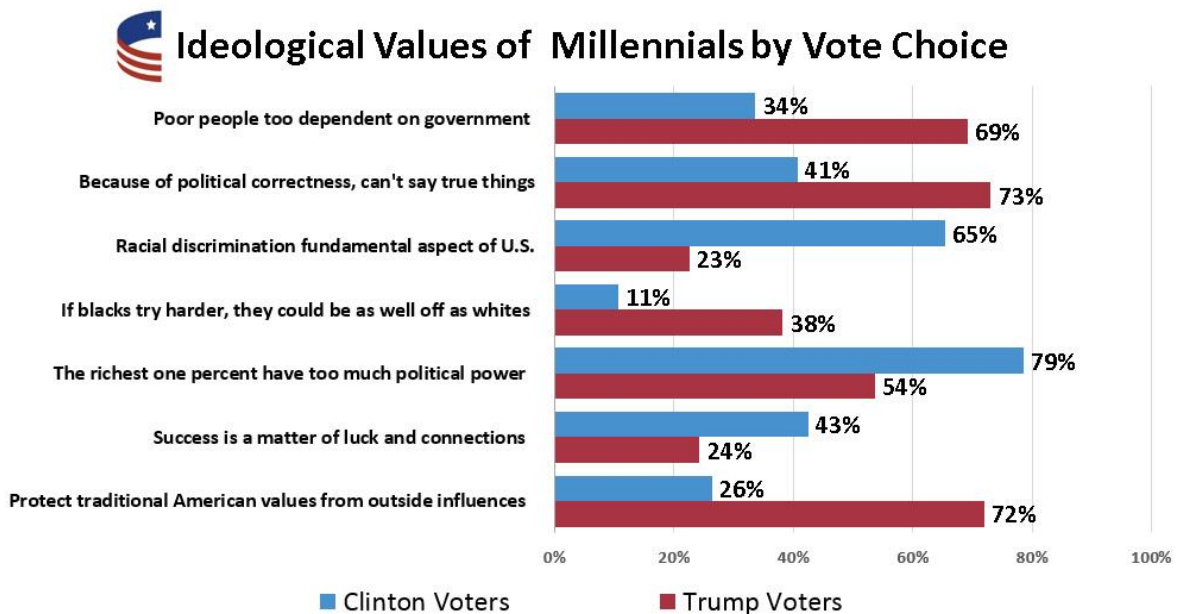
Trump and Clinton voters were very different demographically, but were also deeply divided by values. [We found](#) that Millennials were divided by partisanship, geography, gender, and race; as well as on issues like which institutions they believe in, whom they trust, and how they feel about the United States. Millennials voted as they always have: they supported the candidate they believed aligned more closely with their values and was more likely to make a positive impact on their behalf.



Tufts UNIVERSITY | Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Civic Life

Source: Tisch College's CIRCLE 2016 Post-Election Millennial Poll
www.civicyouth.org

As such, how Millennials felt about the status of the country, and about issues like race relations, equality, and political correctness, all contributed to their choice of candidates before the election.



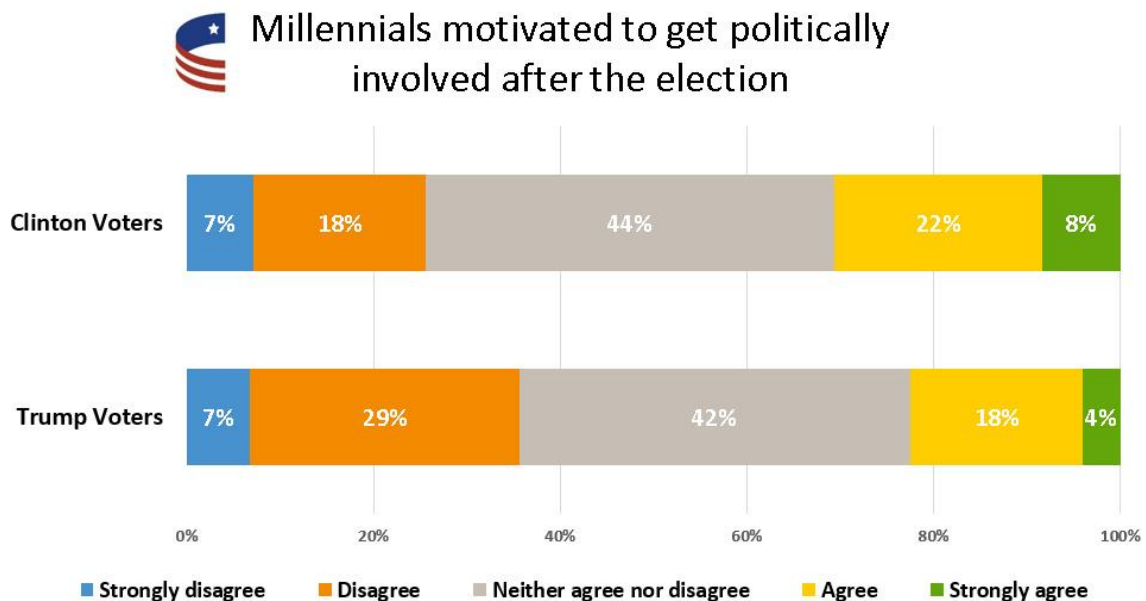
Tufts UNIVERSITY | Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Civic Life

Source: Tisch College's CIRCLE 2016 Pre-and Post-election Millennial Poll
www.civicyouth.org

Which Millennials Will Stay Engaged after the Election and Why?

In our [pre-election polling](#), we found that President Trump's supporters were less experienced with most types of political involvement while also being less likely to say they would become engaged if opportunities arose. However, after the election, a significant number of both Trump and Clinton voters are motivated to stay engaged in civic life, though the underlying reasons for—and levels of—their commitment to civic and political engagement differ. Trump supporters continue to lag behind Clinton voters in both experience and intent to participate in civic and political life. However, the level of interest in following the news and current events is similar between Trump and Clinton supporters.

As we would expect, Trump voters are far more likely than Clinton voters to expect the new administration to be receptive to their views (61% vs. 13%). However, Trump voters did not necessarily show more interest in becoming politically involved due to the election results: only 22% said that they are more motivated. Furthermore, with some notable exceptions, Trump voters continue to lag Clinton voters in their levels of engagement and of interest in most types of civic engagement.



Clinton voters are generally more likely to say they have, or would become engaged in various types of civic activities, including: volunteering, participating in demonstrations and marches,⁵ attending public meetings about community issues, attending campaign rallies, donating to

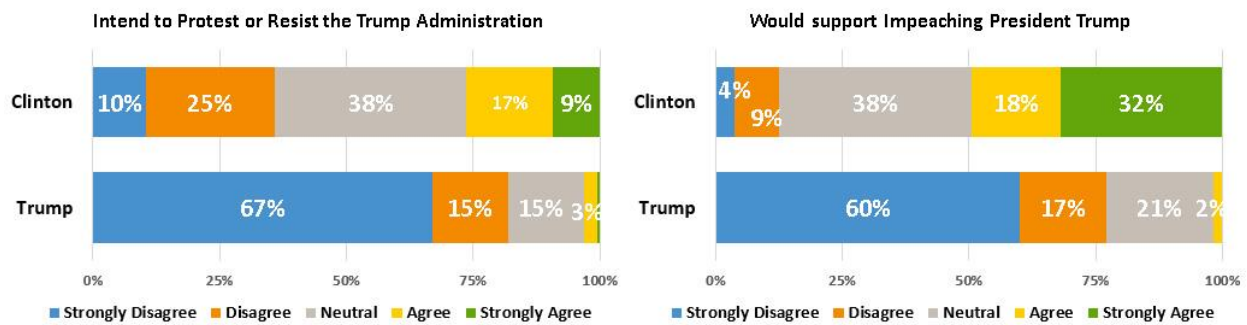
⁵ This survey was fielded before President Trump's inauguration, and our figures do not include the Women's March, March for Life, and other large-scale demonstrations and marches that took place following the inauguration.

campaigns or issue-based organizations, boycotting products, fundraising for community organizations and volunteer for campaigns:

- A significant minority of Clinton voters (26%) plan to protest or resist the Trump administration, and 50% say that they would support impeachment, suggesting that opposition may be a key driver in Clinton supporters' continued engagement.
- Clinton voters were more likely to be college-educated, and college education is a very strong predictor of civic engagement in general.



Millennial Voters on Trump Administration



Tufts University | Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Civic Life

Source: Tisch College's CIRCLE 2016 Post-Election Millennial Poll
www.civicyouth.org

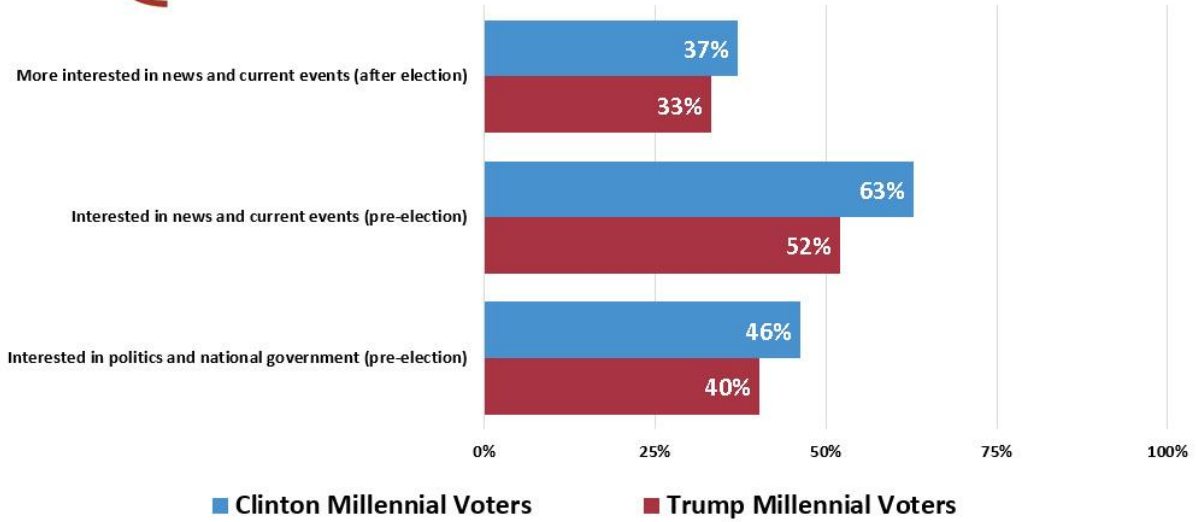
Trump voters are not only less experienced in these civic actions but also more likely to say that they would “never” engage in them.

On the other hand, Trump voters were about as likely as Clinton voters to engage in personal acts of kindness and standing for justice; in local politics, such as voting for and contacting local officials; in taking a leadership role in a community organization; and in helping someone or standing up for someone who was being bullied or mistreated. They also displayed signs and stickers about their views just as much as Clinton voters.

Finally, there are only small differences between Trump and Clinton voters in media consumption and interest in keeping up with the news, and about one-third of both Trump and Clinton voters say that they are more interested in news and current events as they reflected on the results of the election.



Interest in News and Politics By Candidate Choice



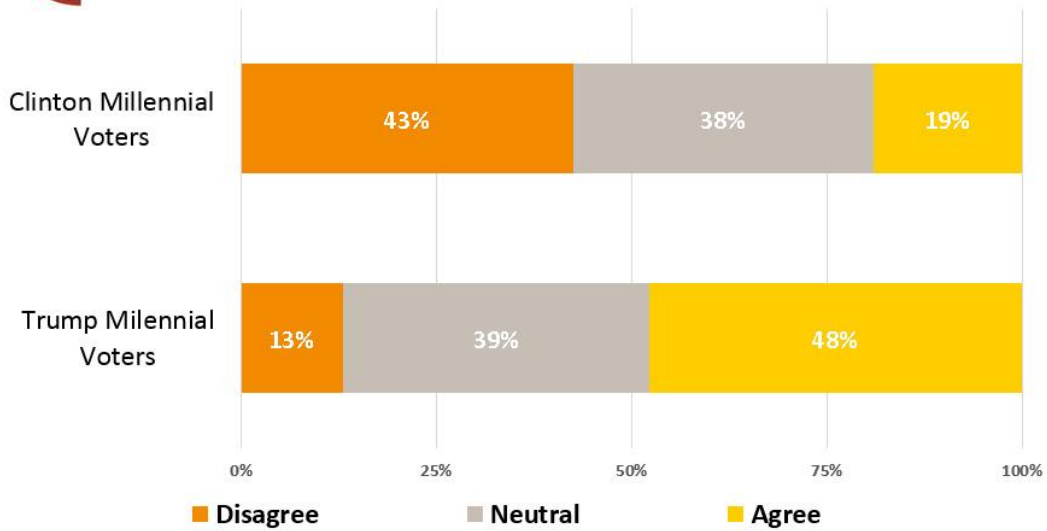
Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Civic Life

Source: Tisch College's CIRCLE 2016 Pre-and Post-election Millennial Poll

www.civicyouth.org



Confident about Democracy in the United States



Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Civic Life

Source: Tisch College's CIRCLE 2016 Post-Election Millennial Poll

www.civicyouth.org

		Trump Voters		Clinton Voters		Total Willing (have done + would with opportunity)	
		Have done	Would with opportunity	Have done	Would with opportunity	Trump total	Clinton total
Post-Election	Volunteer for a community organization on a regular basis	32%	26%	35%	40%	58%	76%
	Vote in local elections	73%	15%	74%	16%	88%	90%
	Help raise money for a cause or an organization	34%	19%	45%	30%	53%	76%
	Donate money for a cause or an organization	47%	16%	55%	22%	64%	77%
	Participate in demonstration or protest	7%	11%	19%	32%	18%	51%
	Display sticker or sign supporting candidate or a cause	20%	16%	22%	29%	37%	51%
	Use a social media platform to express opinions about issues	30%	13%	36%	17%	43%	53%
	Contact a public official about local issues	24%	30%	19%	40%	54%	58%
	Attend a meeting where residents engage in a discussion about local issues	19%	31%	25%	40%	50%	65%
	Serve in a leadership role at a community organization (e.g., board member, parent leader, youth representative)	19%	30%	19%	39%	49%	58%
	Help someone (e.g., neighbor, younger student, stranger) who was in need of help	67%	18%	69%	21%	86%	91%
	Stand up for someone who was being bullied/attacked in any way	53%	30%	50%	39%	82%	89%
Pre-Election	Volunteer for a political campaign	8%	12%	9%	24%	20%	33%
	Donate money to a campaign	8%	16%	17%	14%	24%	31%
	Attend a campaign rally or event	11%	21%	15%	26%	32%	41%
	Display a sticker or sign supporting a candidate	18%	20%	18%	22%	38%	40%
	Follow a candidate/campaign on social media	21%	16%	23%	17%	37%	40%
	Signing a petition	37%	26%	49%	20%	63%	69%
	Joining in a boycott	10%	9%	12%	25%	20%	37%
	Attend a demonstration or march	6%	11%	11%	24%	17%	35%
Run for elected office	3%	13%	2%	14%	16%	16%	

Note: Due to rounding, some row percentages may add up to be more than 100%.

Why would young Clinton voters be more motivated to engage politically than Trump voters, whose candidate won? Based on the findings above, the Clinton voters may conclude that they need to be more engaged precisely because they do not trust the new administration. In addition, since the youth who voted for Clinton have more experience with civic and political engagement, they may have the confidence (and skills) to believe that their collective action can help improve the government and make a difference in people's lives.

Conclusions

The differences between Clinton and Trump voters, both in experience with civic engagement and in the types of civic opportunities that interest them, offer some insights into how to continue engaging Millennials of different values and political opinions after the election.

For **Trump voters**, it will be very important to provide diverse ways to become civically engaged, particularly outside of formal settings such as civic organizations and higher education institutions with which Trump voters are less likely to be connected—in part because these institutions are less available in rural areas. One exception is religious institutions; as over one-third of young Trump voters attend church at least weekly.

Trump voters also appear to be interested in connecting with local issues, both by voting for and by talking directly with public officials. Given that they are also very open to helping others, especially when they are being mistreated, Trump voters may be looking to make a tangible impact through civic engagement opportunities that involve direct work with others in local communities. This tendency may be related to the fact that Trump voters are more likely than Clinton voters to live in rural areas where residents know each other well and routinely work together to solve problems, but often without involving formal institutions such as nonprofit groups. Because Trump voters are generally less civically experienced and less likely to be connected to formal pipelines and networks, it would be important to actively invite and include young people who supported President Trump and may now be ready to find different ways to have an impact on their communities and their country.

Clinton Voters generally have higher levels of educational attainment and are more experienced and more willing to engage in a broad range of civic acts related to electoral politics (campaigns and rallies), issues (petitions and boycotts), or institutions (volunteering or fundraising). The fact that Clinton voters are more experienced with a wide range of civic acts is at least partly attributable to the fact that Clinton voters, on average, have higher educational attainment (college education consistently predicts civic engagement levels). Just as Trump voters' civic inclinations may be shaped by their geographic profile, the fact that Clinton's Millennial voters are relatively less engaged in local and direct civic action may be due to the fact that a higher share of them live in urban areas where they may not have strong connections with their neighbors. For Clinton voters, the strongest driver of their civic motivation is to resist the Trump administration and keep government accountable. With this group, it will be important to create opportunities that help them engage with the administration, not only to oppose actions, but to find shared solutions.

CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement) is a nonpartisan, independent, academic research center that studies young people in politics and presents detailed data on young voters in all 50 states. CIRCLE is part of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University.

Learn more at www.civicyouth.org

