Survey of Young Americans’ Attitudes Toward Politics and Public Service: 20th Edition

Institute of Politics, Harvard University

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Twitter Hashtag:
#HarvardPoll

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Introduction

Conceived by two Harvard undergraduate students during the winter of 1999, Harvard University’s Institute of Politics Survey of Young Americans’ Attitudes toward Politics and Public Service began in 2000 as a national survey of 18-to-24-year-old college undergraduates. Over the last eleven years, this research project has grown in scope and mission, as this report now includes an analysis of 18- to 29-year-olds on a broad set of longitudinal and current events issues.

Methodology

The first survey of N=800 college undergraduates was completed in the Spring of 2000 and all interviews were conducted over the telephone; since that time, 19 subsequent surveys have been released. Over this period, a number of modifications have been made to the scope and methodology in order to ensure that sampling methods most accurately capture the view of the population of young adults in a manner that will be useful to both the Institute of Politics and the broader research and political communities.

• In 2001, the survey was expanded from N=800 to N=1,200 college students in order to capture a robust sample of the undergraduate population.

• In 2006, the survey expanded to N=2,400 interviews, as we began interviewing members of the 18-to-24-year-old cohort who were not currently attending a four-year college or university. In addition, because of changing uses of technology among younger Americans, in 2006 the survey moved from a telephone poll to a survey that was administered online.

• In 2009, we expanded our scope a third time to include the population of young adults aged 18 to 29. While we will continue to report on the attitudes and opinions of U.S. college students, this change in our research subject was made to allow for better and more direct comparisons to the broader set of election and general public opinion research tracking data which tends to track the 18- to 29-year-old demographic group. Our Fall political tracking surveys will include samples of N=2,000 while the Spring semester’s research project will be more in-depth and include N=3,000 interviews. All of our interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish. Using Knowledge Networks as our research partner, the Institute of Politics surveys use RDD and Address-Based Sampling (ABS) frames and are administered online (see Appendix for more information).

The interviewing period for this survey of N=2,028 18- to 29-year olds was November 23 to December 3, 2011. The margin of error for the poll is +/- 2.2 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. During the interviewing period, major media stories included ongoing uprisings in Syria, the U.S. airstrike in Pakistan that killed 28, the Gingrich endorsement by the Union Leader IOP Polling Director John Della Volpe supervised the survey group of undergraduate students. As always, the IOP survey group would like to thank IOP Director Trey Grayson and Executive Director Catherine McLaughlin for their insight and support over the course of this and all IOP projects.
Overview

Until the 2010 midterm elections, every election since the first Harvard Institute of Politics survey was released in the Spring of 2000 saw increased levels of participation among America’s youth (18- to 29- year olds) compared to the last comparable election.¹

- The 2000 election for president saw an increase of .7 points (to 40.3% turnout of all eligible 18- to 29- year olds) compared to the 1996 presidential election;
- In the 2002 midterms, there was a slim increase of .2 points over the 1998 elections;
- In the 2004 Bush/Kerry election, there was an increase of 8.7 points over Bush/Gore in 2000;
- In 2006, the midterm election increase was 3 points over President Bush’s first midterm in 2002; and
- In 2008’s Obama/McCain election, the increase was 2.1 points over the 2004 presidential election.

Compared to the last midterm election of 2006 however -- in 2010, the youth turnout decreased 2.7 points from 25.5 percent to 22.8 percent of eligible voters.

Less than one year from the 2012 election for President, the results from our latest data set from America’s youngest voting cohort continues to show signs of increasing political disengagement and disenchantment with the individuals and parties controlling Washington, D.C.

Much has been written about the impact that young voters had in nominating and electing Barack Obama in 2008. This survey, the 20th edition of the Harvard University Institute of Politics Survey of Young Americans’ Attitudes Toward Politics and Public Service focuses on the political standing of the President, his Republican challengers as it closely investigates:

- Opinions and approval ratings of President Obama and Congress;
- The mood of the country;
- Views toward Occupy Wall Street and the Tea Party;
- The status of the Republican primary for president and likely 2012 general election scenarios;
- Potential political engagement levels of young voters and activists in 2012.

In addition to this report, a top-line report is available that provides responses of the total sample and college students. A SPSS data-file and verbatim responses to relevant questions are available upon request.

Demographic and Political Profile

For this survey, we completed N=2,028 web-enabled interviews with 18- to 29-year-olds in the United States.

Demographic profile:

- 50 percent male, 50 percent female;
- 58 percent are between the ages of 18 and 24; 42 percent are between the ages of 25 and 29;
- 60 percent White (non-Hispanic), 20 percent Hispanic, 13 percent African-American (non-Hispanic), 6 percent other and 2 percent 2+ races;
- 20 percent are Catholic, 13 percent Fundamental/Evangelical, 11 percent Protestant, 1 percent Jewish, 2 percent Mormon, 1 percent Muslim, 12 percent another religion, 24 percent cite no religious preference, and 11 percent decline to answer;
- 23 percent are married, 14 percent are living with a partner, 2 percent are divorced, 1 percent are separated and 59 percent have never been married;
- 82 percent own a cell phone, 11 percent have a landline, and 1 percent have VOIP;
- 88 percent have Internet access at home.

Current educational status:

- 12 percent of the sample indicated that they are in a two-year junior or community college, 21 percent in a four-year college, 4 percent in graduate school, 1 percent in a business or professional school, 2 percent are not enrolled but taking at least one class, and 53 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds surveyed are not enrolled in any of these categories;
- 80 percent of college students attend a public institution, 19 percent a private one;
- 53 percent of students attend college in an urban area, 26 percent in a suburb and 19 percent in a small town or rural area.

Political and ideological profile:

- 66 percent say they are registered to vote;
- 62 percent of those who were 18 in 2008 said they voted in the 2008 general election (40 percent at a polling place, 10 percent by absentee ballot and 5 percent early);
- 25 percent consider themselves to be politically engaged or active;
- 38 percent self-identify as liberal or leaning liberal, 23 percent moderate, and 37 percent conservative or leaning conservative;
- 38 percent consider themselves Democrats, 25 percent Republicans, and 36 percent Independents;
- 11 percent are supporters of the Tea Party, 21 percent are supporters of Occupy Wall Street movement.

Employment and health care status:

- 57 percent are working as a paid employee, 3 percent are self-employed, and 20 percent are looking for work;
- 70 percent have health care coverage.
With Few Believing that U.S. is Headed in the Right Direction, Approval Ratings for President and Congress Hit New Lows

Job Performance of Obama, Democrats and Republicans in Congress Slip to New Lows

Despite a six percentage-point increase after the midterm elections that was reported in our Spring 2011 polling, President Obama’s job performance rating among young Americans, ages 18 to 29, is at the lowest point since we began polling the Obama administration in the fall of 2009. Currently, 46 percent of young Americans approve of the job the President is doing and 51 percent disapprove.

While young Americans’ views toward the President decreased nine percentage points from 55 percent approval to 46 percent since our last poll was completed in late February - early March 2011, views toward Democrats and Republicans in Congress also slipped significantly. Currently only one-third (33%) of 18- to 29- year olds approve of the job that Democrats in Congress are doing, and less than a quarter (24%) approve of the job that Republicans in Congress are doing.

With the exception of Blacks, who have remained steady between 83 and 84 percent job approval in our last five surveys dating back to 2009, the President’s approval rating has slipped across the board and most significantly with:

- College students (from 60% in February 2011 to 48% now);
- Hispanics (from 68% in February to 52% now);
- 18 -to 24- year olds (from 55% in February to 44% now); and
- 18- to 29- year olds who live in the Midwest (from 56% in February to 43% now) and the West (from 57% in February to 45% now).
By a Margin of 4-to-1, Young Americans Believe U.S. is Headed in Wrong Direction

At nearly every pass, young Americans in our survey found opportunities to express their dissatisfaction with Washington, DC and the status quo. However, in no area did they express their discontent more strongly than when they were asked about the direction of our nation. By a margin of more than 4-to-1, young Americans believe things in the nation are headed in the wrong direction. Only 12 percent of young Americans believe things are headed in the right direction, 52 percent believe things are off on the wrong track -- with 36 percent saying that they are not sure, or decline to answer. In March of this year, this opinion was felt by a ratio of 2-to-1, as 39 percent said things were off on the wrong track, and 20 percent said they were headed in the right direction. This net shift of opinion -- totaling 21 percentage points -- is highly significant and worth monitoring carefully as we head into the upcoming election year.

### OBAMA APPROVAL RATING BY SUBGROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18-24</strong></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>25-29</strong></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IN 4-YR COLL</strong></td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEM.</strong></td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REP.</strong></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IND.</strong></td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHITE</strong></td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BLACK</strong></td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HISPANIC</strong></td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MALE</strong></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEMALE</strong></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NORTH-EAST</strong></td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MID-WEST</strong></td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOUTH</strong></td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WEST</strong></td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nearly Three-in-Four Cite Economy as Their Issue of Top Concern

When young Americans are asked to cite the national issue that concerns them most, 74 percent reported jobs and the economy -- an increase of 17 percentage points since our last survey was completed in March 2011.

An additional 5 percent cited health care, 5 percent cited education, 4 percent immigration, and two percent mentioned issues related to national security as their top priority.

Obama’s Job Performance on Most Important Issues Continues to Slide

Less than one-third (32%) of 18- to 29-year-olds approve of the way that President Obama is handling the economy which accounts for a 10 percentage point drop since our last poll was taken in February and March 2011. Overall, the President’s approval ratings are below 50 percent on every issue tested, other than Afghanistan where 51 percent indicate that they approve of his job performance.

On his handling of Iran, his job approval rating is 46 percent; on health care it is 43 percent; it is 39 percent on immigration; and it is 30 percent on his handling of the federal budget deficit.
Romney Leads Among Young Republican Electorate; Despite Current Lead, More Believe Obama Will Lose in '12

Likelihood of Voting Among Youngest Cohort (18-24) Down 11 Points Compared to Fall 2007

With the general election slightly less than one year away from the time that our poll was taken, a slim majority of young voters indicated that they would “definitely” be voting in the 2012 election for president. Among the youngest cohort of the group, 18- to 24- year-olds, 50 percent said they would “definitely” be voting. This represents a net decrease of 11 percentage points compared to our Harvard Institute of Politics survey that was conducted between October and November of 2007 at which time 61 percent of the 18 to 24 year-olds surveyed indicated that they would “definitely” be voting.

Among young Republicans and Independents, 19 percent reported that they would “definitely” vote in their state’s primary or caucus; an additional 14 percent said that they would “probably” be voting – and 18 percent said that their chances of voting were about “50-50.” Overall, 25 percent of voters under 30 say they are “politically engaged;” the number rises slightly on college campuses (31%).

Romney Leads Among Young Republican Voters

Among young Republicans and Independents who indicated that they were at least somewhat likely (definitely, probably or 50-50) to vote in their state’s primary or caucus (n=637), Mitt Romney led the field with 23 percent. Ron Paul earned 16 percent of the vote, Herman Cain received 15 percent and Newt Gingrich received 13 percent.

With Herman Cain suspending his campaign the day that our interviews were completed, we were able to allocate where Cain voters would likely shift their allegiance by analyzing their second choice ballots. In both scenarios, Mitt Romney leads; with Herman Cain out of the race, Ron Paul (18%) and New Gingrich (17%) are in a statistical tie for second place.

IF THE REPUBLICAN PRIMARY FOR PRESIDENT WERE HELD TODAY, WHICH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES WOULD BE YOUR FIRST CHOICE? (N=691)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>With Cain</th>
<th>With Cain 2nd Choice Votes Allocated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romney</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cain</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gingrich</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachmann</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perry</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntsman</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santorum</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Harvard IOP Survey conducted by Harris Interactive; N=2,526 18-24 year olds; Interviews conducted from October 28-November 9, 2007.
Slight Majority of Republican Primary Voters and Caucus Goers Are Satisfied with Field

Slightly more than one-half (56%) of the young Republican primary and caucus electorate report that they are satisfied (8% very satisfied and 48% somewhat satisfied) with the current field of Republican candidates. Forty-three percent (43%) are either very (13%) or somewhat dissatisfied (29%).

The level of satisfaction is 57 percent among 18 to 24 year-old voters -- which is a 7 percentage point decrease compared to our Fall 2007 survey when 64 percent indicated that they were satisfied with the Republican field at the time.

Obama Leads Generic Republican by 6, Romney and Gingrich by 10+

With the general election slightly less than one year away, Barack Obama leads an unnamed, generic Republican candidate by six points, 35 percent to 29 percent. Approximately one year ago, Obama was statistically tied, 31 to 30 percent; in February his lead against the Republican was 12 points.

As the table below demonstrates, America’s newest generation of voters are indicating that their vote should not be taken for granted by either party. Typical Democratic stronghold populations like college students report a dead heat between Obama and the generic Republican nominee at this time; and half of 18- to 29-year-old Hispanics are currently undecided.

| OBAMA VS. GENERIC REPUBLICAN BY SUBGROUP |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                 | OBAMA | REPUBLICAN | DONT KNOW |
| 18-29 TOTAL     | 35%   | 29%        | 34%        |
| 18-24           | 35%   | 30%        | 34%        |
| 25-29           | 36%   | 27%        | 34%        |
| IN 4-YR COLL    | 37%   | 34%        | 28%        |
| DEM.            | 66%   | 4%         | 29%        |
| REP.            | 6%    | 80%        | 13%        |
| IND.            | 24%   | 20%        | 55%        |
| WHITE           | 28%   | 40%        | 31%        |
| BLACK           | 72%   | 7%         | 21%        |
| HISPANIC        | 35%   | 13%        | 50%        |
| MALE            | 35%   | 32%        | 31%        |
| FEMALE          | 36%   | 26%        | 37%        |
| NORTH-EAST      | 37%   | 28%        | 34%        |
| MIDWEST         | 35%   | 34%        | 29%        |
| SOUTH US        | 35%   | 31%        | 33%        |
| WEST US         | 35%   | 22%        | 40%        |
As is typically the case, President Obama’s lead is extended when he is matched with specific candidates. For example, among 18- to 29-year-olds:

- Obama leads Mitt Romney by 11 points, 37 percent to 26 percent;
- Obama leads Newt Gingrich by 16 points, 39 percent to 23 percent;
- Obama also leads Rick Perry by 16 points, 39 percent to 23 percent.

Plurality of Young Voters Predict that Obama Will Lose His Bid for Re-Election

In what may be an early, yet ominous sign for President Obama’s re-election prospects, more young voters believe that he will lose re-election (36% say he will lose) than win (30%). Another 32 percent are not sure. Among the voters in our survey who were old enough and voted for Obama in 2008, less than half believe he will win re-election at this time. Forty-eight (48%) percent of this group say that he will win, 19 percent say he will lose -- and 33 percent are undecided.

Democrats Are More Likely To Actively Support Their Candidate Than Republicans

When young voters were asked how likely they would be to engage in various campaign-related activities for the candidate that they will support in the general election, young Democrats consistently appeared more willing to volunteer and engage than young Republicans.

Among all 18- to 29-year-olds polled, 40 percent indicated that they would “spread the campaign’s message to friends and family” if the campaign they supported asked for their help. Additionally, 38 percent would join an online group, 35 percent would display a sticker or a sign, 30 percent would attend a rally or event, 20 percent would follow on Twitter, and 17 percent would make a financial contribution on the campaign’s website. Following is a table that illustrates that in every instance, the young Democrat would be more engaged than the young Republican.

If the campaign that you supported provided an opportunity for you to engage in some way, how likely would you be to participate in these activities? Net: Likely

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Republican</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spread the campaign’s message to your friends/family</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer for the campaign</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donate $9.99 or less on your cell phone</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a rally or event</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display a sticker on your car/sign on your door</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join an online group</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start a group on campus (N=670)</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Download ringtone</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wear a bracelet</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donate money on the campaign’s website</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow on Twitter</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Occupy Wall Street and Tea Party Party Movements
Not Resonating with Millennials

Approximately One-Third of Young Voters are Following Occupy Movement; 21% Are Supportive

Overall, 32 percent of 18- to 29-year olds tell us that they are following the Occupy Wall Street demonstrations either very (6%) or somewhat (26%) closely. Two-thirds (66%) are not following the demonstrations closely at all.

Approximately one-in-five (21%) young Americans are supporters of the the Occupy Wall Street movement. One-third (33%) say that they are not supportive, with 46 percent either unsure or refusing to answer the question.

Support for the Occupy movement is strongest among:

- Registered voters (24%) compared to those not registered (16%);
- Likely voters in 2012 (25%) compared to those who say they likely will not vote (15%);
- Democrats (32%) compared to Republicans (9%) and Independents (19%);
- Ron Paul voters (31%) compared to Romney (8%) and Gingrich voters (5%);
- Those who earn more than $85,000 per year (25%) compared to those who earn less than $50,000.

Currently, two percent of this age group reports that they have participated in this movement, and another 11 percent report that they know someone personally who has engaged with this group.

Sixteen percent (16%) believe that Occupy Wall Street will have the effect of changing economic policy in the United States -- compared to 24 percent who say that the Tea Party already has (12%) or will have (12%) a similar effect.

Slightly more than one-in-ten (11%) of this age cohort of Americans considered themselves to be a supporter of the Tea Party.

Occupy Wall Street Supporters Intrigued by the Americans Elect Platform

Americans Elect, the nonpartisan organization that will place an independent candidate for president on the ballot in all 50 states through a secure online voting platform, was introduced to the survey participants near the conclusion of the questionnaire. They were asked how likely they would be to participate in the online process that will nominate the Americans Elect candidate for president. Without much information other than a brief description, 37 percent of 18- to 29-year olds indicated that they would be either very or somewhat likely to participate; 60 percent said they would not be likely. It should be noted that the highest level of support for this effort came from Occupy Wall Street supporters -- 56 percent of this cohort indicated that they would be likely to participate in the online nominating convention. Nearly half (47%) of Tea Party supporters say the same.
Conclusion

In 2008, Millennials (i.e., voters under the age of 30) in the United States were largely responsible for nominating and electing a President. Three years later, young people helped change the world as tens of thousands banded together, organized themselves and helped usher democracy in to the Middle East. In 2012, Millennials hold the key to America’s future. In the 20th Edition of Harvard University’s Institute of Politics Survey of Young Americans we now ask key questions, such as:

- Will young voters turn out and vote in the substantial numbers that they did in 2008?
- Will they spend their free time volunteering and organizing for Barack Obama’s America?
- Will they support the Democratic ticket by the two-to-one margin that they did four years previous?
- Is there an opportunity for the Republican nominee, or Republicans squaring off in the primaries and caucuses, to rebuild or create a relationship with the largest generation in American history?

Arguably the most passionate and engaged members of the electorate when millions cast their first presidential ballot on November 4, 2008 -- Millennials today are growing increasingly frustrated with the direction of the country.

The key findings in our survey suggest that Millennials are prepared to show their frustration not through strong support for the eventual Republican nominee, but rather by punishing President Obama and the Democrats by not engaging, volunteering or voting in the same volume that they did in 2008.

With nearly three-quarters of the generation seriously concerned about jobs and the economy, only about one-in-ten believing our country is headed in the right direction -- and more believing that the President that they helped elect will lose, rather than win re-election in 2012 -- this survey may well serve as an ominous sign for the re-election chances of America’s 44th Commander-in-Chief and also the political engagement of America’s largest generation.

Even more significantly, this alarming trend of growing Millennial disengagement in the political process has the potential to rob our nation’s government and citizens of the talents of some of the most passionate, creative, entrepreneurial Americans our country has ever known.

It will also deprive this generation of a voice in the policy debates and priorities as our nation charts an uncertain future. Tens of millions of Millennials will grow, engage, love and serve their communities and country -- their voice is needed today -- and in the years to come if our democratic institutions are to thrive.
Trey Grayson
Director, Institute of Politics

Catherine McLaughlin
Executive Director, Institute of Politics

John Della Volpe
Director of Polling, Institute of Politics
Founder & CEO, SocialSphere, Inc.

Esten Perez
Director of Communications, Institute of Politics

Laura Simolaris
Director of National Programs, Institute of Politics

Jonathan Chavez, ’05
Student Chair ’03-05
Director of Analytics, SocialSphere, Inc.

Student Survey Chair
Han He ’13

Student Survey Committee
Forrest Brown ’15
Thomas Esty ’14
Michael Gribben ’15
Eva Guidarini ’15
Kimberly Herrmann ’12
Eric Lu, ’12 (Student Chair, 2010)
Mason Marek ’15
Vivian Shaw ’15
Matthew Warshauer ’14
Ben Zhou ’15

Harvard’s Institute of Politics (IOP) was established in 1966 as a memorial to President Kennedy. The IOP’s mission is to unite and engage students, particularly undergraduates, with academics, politicians, activists, and policymakers on a non-partisan basis and to stimulate and nurture their interest in public service and leadership. The Institute strives to promote greater understanding and cooperation between the academic world and the world of politics and public affairs. The Institute has been conducting national political polls of America’s college students since 2000. More information, including past results, is available online at www.iop.harvard.edu
Appendix

Methodology

Knowledge Networks conducted a study of young adults on political issues on behalf of Harvard University’s Institute of Politics. The goal of the project was to collect 2,000 completed interviews with young Americans between 18 and 29 years old. The main sample data collection took place from November 23 to December 3, 2011. A small pretest was conducted prior to the main survey to examine the accuracy of the data and the length of the interview.

Four thousand, eight hundred and five (4,805) KnowledgePanel members were assigned to the study. The cooperation rate was 42 percent resulting in 2,028 completed interviews. Ninety-one (91) interviews were conducted in Spanish with the remainder done in English.

The web-enabled KnowledgePanel® is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. Initially, participants are chosen scientifically by a random selection of telephone numbers and residential addresses. Persons in selected households are then invited by telephone or by mail to participate in the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®. For those who agree to participate, but do not already have Internet access, Knowledge Networks provides a laptop and ISP connection at no cost. People who already have computers and Internet service are permitted to participate using their own equipment. Panelists then receive unique log-in information for accessing surveys online, and are sent e-mails throughout each month inviting them to participate in research. More technical information is available at http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp/reviewer-info.html and by request to the IOP.

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About Knowledge Networks

Knowledge Networks delivers quality and service to guide leaders in business, government, and academia – uniquely bringing scientifically valid research to the online space through its probability-based, online KnowledgePanel®. The company delivers unique study design, science, analysis, and panel maintenance, along with a commitment to close collaboration at every stage of the research process. Knowledge Networks leverages its expertise in brands, media, advertising, and public policy issues to provide insights that speak directly to clients’ most important concerns. For more information: www.knowledgenetworks.com