

4 Ways to Mobilize Young Voters

October 31, 2022

To: Interested Parties

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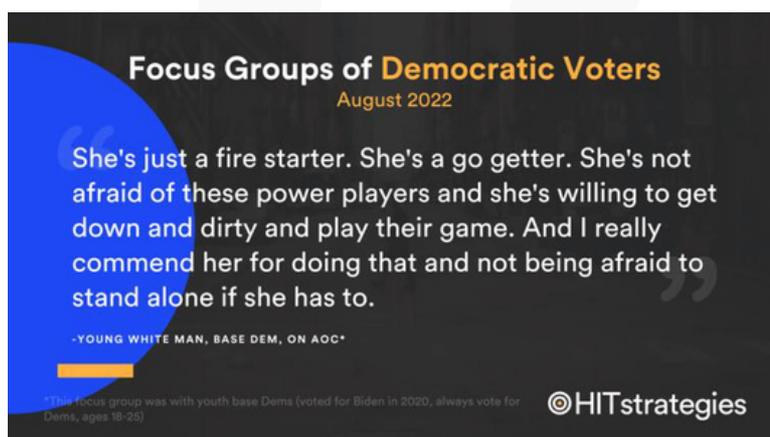
Re: How to Mobilize Young Voters: Copying Tactics from AOC and Beto, Connecting Voting to Grassroots Activism, and Selling Accomplishments on Cost of Living/Guns/Climate

In 2020, a surge in support from young voters helped Joe Biden capture the presidency. As we head into the midterm elections, retaining the support of young voters should remain a high priority of Democratic campaigns. As such, we devised a quick how-to-guide on mobilizing young voters, drawing on 18 months' worth of focus groups with young voters and a nationally-representative poll of college students:

Display Passion & Make On-The-Ground Appearances like AOC and Beto O'Rourke

In focus groups, young people consistently cite Representative Ocasio-Cortez and Beto O'Rourke as two politicians who are inspiring. This is due to their displays of passion and willingness to get their hands dirty. Young voters want politicians to take novel, sometimes risky actions to show their fight.

For example, in a focus group just after the Dobbs decision, a young voter cited AOC getting arrested outside of SCOTUS as proof that she cared deeply about reproductive rights.

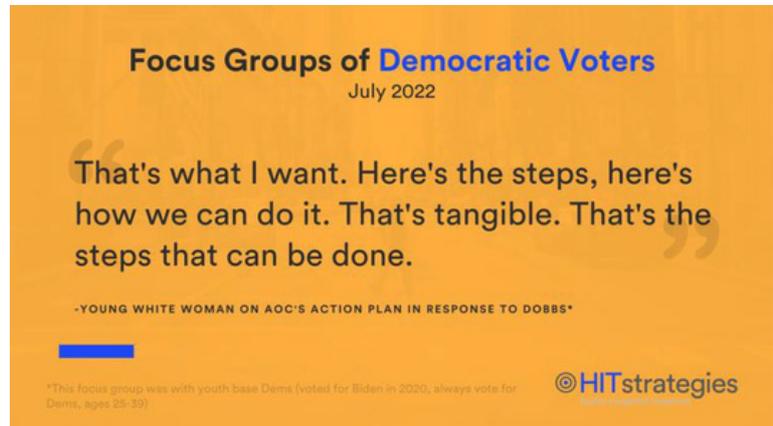


In focus groups, young people laud Beto for his frequent in-person appearances. Actions like his nonstop tour of Texas show young voters that he isn't an out-of-touch politician. Videos of his rallies are always amplified on social media, where young people can see them.

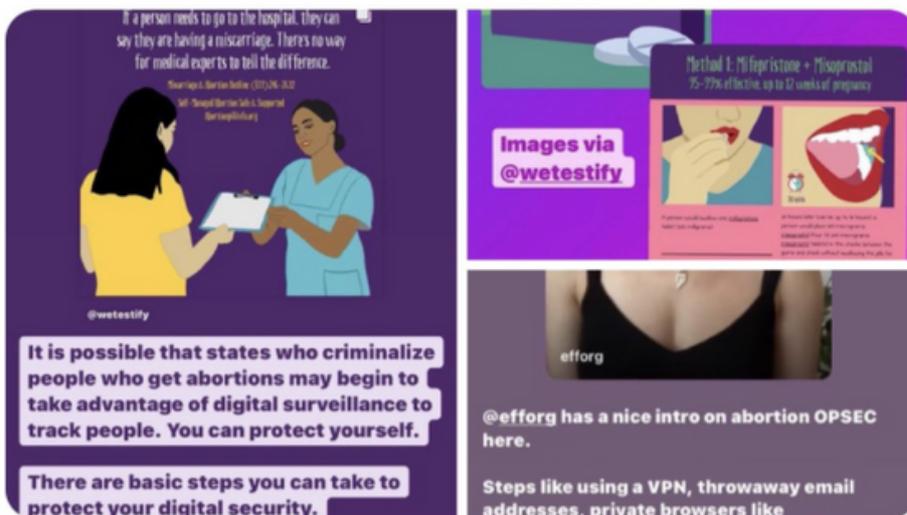
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Clearly Articulate Steps to Address Major Issues

In the wake of Dobbs, we prompted young voters with AOC's plan to respond to the ruling. Many reacted positively to her support for opening abortion clinics on federal lands, among other policies, to expand abortion access.



.@AOC is posting about how people can skirt abortion bans.



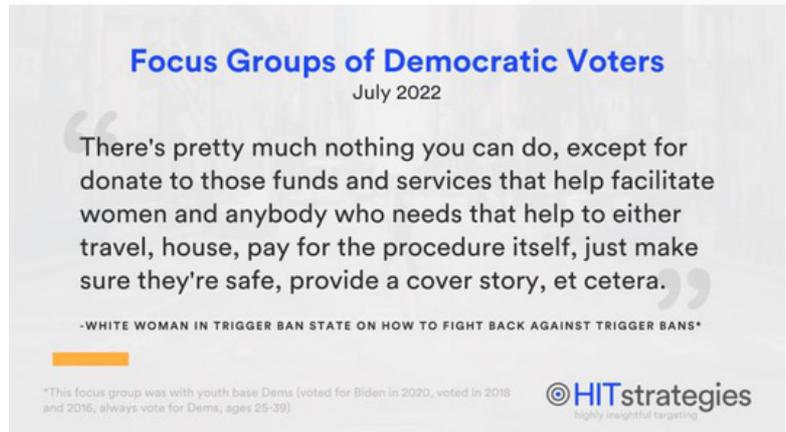
Her Instagram explainers of how to get around abortion bans represent another example of a tangible, usable response to Dobbs.

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The Call to Action: Empower Young Voters to Become Activists, Not Just Voters

Young voters are tired of being told to just vote to advance their key issues, especially on abortion. In the immediate wake of the Dobbs decision, focus group participants felt that voting couldn't be the only solution.

When we asked young people what they were doing in response to *Dobbs*, they mentioned various grassroots actions—protesting, reading, volunteering, etc. Campaign calls to action must tie voting to civic steps that young people are already taking, which they see as valuable and practical. We call this "and vote" messaging.



Here's "and vote" messaging in action. Maxwell Frost, who will be the first Gen Zer in Congress, implores a #March4OurLives crowd:

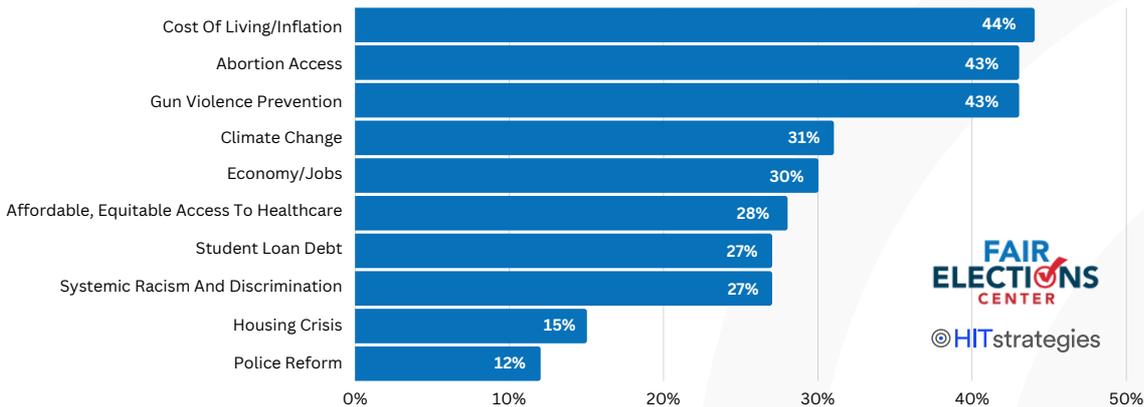


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Talk About Your Success on Young Voters' Priorities (Not Just What You Will Do)

Democrats have accomplishments to sell to young voters on their top priorities of cost of living, gun violence, and climate change.

How important are each of the following issues facing the country today? Please select the top three most important issues.



*This survey of 1,000 college students nationally, conducted by HIT Strategies on behalf of Fair Elections Center. The survey was conducted online and fielded from August 6 to August 11, 2022.

Focus Groups of Democratic Voters
September 2022

“Initially I thought, ‘this is a good thing’. It’s gonna help a lot of people, especially with inflation going on right now. A lot of people probably need this.”

-YOUNG WHITE WOMAN, MOBILIZATION VOTER*

*Mobilization voters: young and diverse voters ranging in age from 20-34 who voted for President Biden in 2020 but do not pay high attention to the midterms

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For example, student loan debt relief, the bipartisan gun control bill, and the climate investments in the Inflation Reduction Act address the top concerns of the cost of living, gun violence, and climate change. Young focus group participants respond positively when presented with these accomplishments.

Right now, just 52% of college students feel their vote is powerful. But young voters can be activated when presented with messages that tie the power of their vote of successful policy action—72% of college students found the message below to be convincing.

"Young voters have the power to make real change on important issues like police accountability and criminal justice. We've already seen it in action: In 2018, young voters in Chicago were fed up with unchecked police brutality and came together to elect candidates who created a police oversight board to hold police accountable. Want to see that happen? Use your vote this election to demand action because being part of 37% of the electorate means that we hold the greatest power to hold elected officials accountable."