

Rising Stars: 18 Members of America's Next Political Generation

How 18 remarkable individuals under the age of 18 are changing the face of American politics

Feb 14

Your election briefing — from the polls to the primaries. A @ReadByline project.



By Campaigner Staff

Published at 7:00 p.m. EST; all photos used with permission

American youth — dubbed “millennials” — have become a crucial voting bloc in the 2016 presidential election, with thousands of

high school and college students across the nation volunteering for campaigns and participating in political organizations.

In the past year, *Campaigner* talked with dozens of student activists and up-and-coming leaders that are ushering in the next generation of American politics and selected 18 of them. These individuals, all who are under the age of 18, are already hard at work at getting fellow millennials involved in the political process. Furthermore, this remarkable group is redefining early youth engagement and proving that teens deserve a seat at the decision-making table.

This list, composed of both Democrats and Republicans, aims to provide a glimpse into the evolving world of political activism and the thoughts of youth leaders — from their go-to news sources to their concerns about the future of the nation.

John Ball

Senior, Granville High School (Ohio)



Current Titles: *Chairman, Ohio High School Democrats; Governor, Ohio YMCA Youth in Government Program*

John Ball got his start in Democratic politics working on two historic campaigns, President Obama's 2012 reelection and Terry McAuliffe's 2014 Virginia gubernatorial race. Since then, Ball has emerged as Ohio's foremost high school Democratic activist. The leader of two statewide political operations, the Ohio High School Democrats and the Ohio Youth in Government Program, John Ball will play a critical role in the Democratic Party's efforts to retake in the Buckeye State in 2016. John is an advocate for comprehensive mental health reform, through his involvement on the Ohio Youth Board of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and his service on the Ohio Teen Ambassador Board (a post he was appointed to by Ohio Attorney General Michael DeWine), he is helping to reshape the national conversation on mental illness.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

Robert Reich. His candid political commentary on inequality in the American Political System has influenced nearly all of my personal ideologies.

Who is your political hero?

Eleanor Roosevelt.

How did you get involved in politics?

I wanted to keep up with my older sister. She became a field organizer for the Obama campaign in 2012 and I have been volunteering for campaigns ever since.



Ball with U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

I believe that we should make America fair again. Generations of American politicians have failed to address inequality, and by now, the issue has compounded to the point where social standing and income inequality have become a product of one's birth as opposed to one's merit.

What are your go-to news sources?

MSNBC and The Daily Show, of course.

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

One year ago, I was listening to Ohio Representative Christina Hagan while she was giving a lecture to high school students on civic engagement. She asked all of us the question: “How many of you think that there is literally NOTHING wrong with your government?” No one raised their hands. She continued by saying “that means each and every single one of you have an obligation to run for public office.” I had never had someone so quickly empower me while simultaneously affirming the value of my opinions.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

I think that millennials appreciate the art of compromise more so than our current government. Especially with the looming threat of global climate change and our national debt, millennials will rise to the challenge of solving America's greatest problems.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

We want quick answers for difficult problems. Instead of focusing on important issues like how to get big money out of politics, we focus on media headlines. Consequently, we never agitate on an issue for long enough to make a difference.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

Never lose interest in a topic just because it's no longer in any news headlines. While watching the news, it's easy to momentarily become entrenched in a single-issue debate. If we are constantly absorbed in the media's portrayal of one issue at a time, we forget how to formulate our own political ideologies, only regurgitating the opinions of others.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

I hope to see myself working for the National Alliance on Mental Illness to take mental health policy out of the stone ages.

Julia Khan

Senior, Los Altos High School (California)



Current Title: *Chief of Staff, California YMCA Youth & Government*

Julia Khan currently spearheads youth civic engagement efforts for California's YMCA Youth & Government program. As the Chief of Staff and a member of its Board of Directors, Khan is instrumental in setting the legislative agenda for the group's 3500 members, directing the organization's internal operation and managing its external affairs. No stranger to California state politics, Khan has had significant public policy experience serving as an intern in the California State Senate and at Organizing for Action, President Barack Obama's nonprofit. In 2014, Khan served as a Student Representative on the Mountain View Los Altos School District Board of Trustees, where she successfully advocated for the creation of an official homework policy, an initiative to combat the notorious Silicon-Valley stress levels felt by high school students. In addition, Julia's successful efforts in establishing mentorship programs to empower young women across the state of California

has given her the reputation of being the Golden State's premier high school advocate for the empowerment of women and youth.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

Senator Elizabeth Warren is a champion. She's a champion for the middle class, she's a champion for women's rights, and she's a champion for herself. Her work in the financial industry does not stem from a desire for power, but rather, an ability to keep her policies in an incredibly human context.

Who is your political hero?

Speaking strictly politically, I believe that George Stephanopoulos's work on the Clinton campaign and in the administration is unparalleled. I've long admired his uncanny ability to define narratives and contextualize his surroundings. Reading *All Too Human: A Political Education* is what sparked my interest in political strategy.

How did you get involved in politics?

When I joined Youth & Government's middle school Model United Nations program, I was immediately trusted with large amounts of responsibility and also held accountable for staying informed. These combining forces and the generally collaborative atmosphere showed me what a liberating force political literacy can be.



Khan with technology executive Sheryl Sandberg

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

I consider myself fairly liberal. But my liberalism doesn't stem from the idea that I think we should all end up in the same place, but rather, that we all deserve equal opportunity. Growing up with a father who fled Bangladesh as a child, grew up in the Philippines, came to America for an education, and ended up working in Silicon Valley has affirmed my belief in the American Dream like no other. I see no reason why we cannot be simultaneously patriotic and critical of our country.

What are your go-to news sources?

For immediate information, I mostly turn to CNN and MSNBC. For more in-depth and lighthearted information, I read or listen to Vox, MSNBC, NPR, and Vice.

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

This event took place before I really became politically involved, but, since it inspired an overwhelming sense of efficacy, I'm going to have to go with when I met Sonia Sotomayor freshman year. She spent about five minutes giving me advice for how to make the most of my high school experience, which centered around a singular, crisp, pointed idea: find a mentor. I remember her being maternal, which I found surprising since I had always felt that to be successful in politics and as a public figure one had to present themselves as masculine. She taught me the importance of representation and the power of an intimate mentorship.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

In an increasingly globalized world, millennial involvement is being seen as more and more legitimate. Major media groups and public figures alike are beginning to move to 'new media' platforms. Millennials have the capacity to fully utilize all available technologies in this new digital age to reach a bigger and more motivated audience than ever before.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

This is really the first generation of Americans that will really have to live and learn to survive with the effects of climate change. For all the rhetoric out there about 'leaving a better world for our children', it seems that a lot of the grand-scale action and grassroots organization is coming from these children themselves.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

Find a mentor who shares your beliefs, passions, circumstances, and thought processes.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

I see myself, having just received an undergraduate degree, most likely taking some time to work for new, energized political groups and causes before entering law school.

Aylon Berger

Sophomore, Livingston High School (New Jersey)



Current Titles: *Co-Founder and Chairman, New Jersey High School Democrats; National Campaigns Director, High School Democrats of America*

Aylon Berger got his start in New Jersey politics as an aide on a 2014 Congressional race. Since then, Berger has emerged as New Jersey's top high school political operative and activist. Aylon has received widespread

recognition for building the New Jersey High School Democrats into a statewide political machine, complete with top-notch communications, political outreach and membership engagement operations. In 2015 the High School Democrats of America named the organization “State Chapter of the Year”. Berger and the New Jersey High School Democrats will play an instrumental role in the Democratic Party’s effort to retake the NJ Governor’s mansion in 2017 and preserving the Democratic majority in the state legislature. Earlier this year, Aylon was tapped to serve as the National Campaigns Director for the High School Democrats of America. In this role, Berger has worked with the organization’s over 40 state chapters to coordinate and execute national initiatives and volunteer efforts on the state and federal level. An outspoken advocate for a strong US-Israel relationship, Aylon has lobbied dozens of members of the House and Senate on a host of foreign policy initiatives on behalf of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Berger’s activism will remain at the forefront as the pro-Israel community continues to ramp up its efforts to engage with progressives.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

My Senator, Cory Booker. I’ve seen first hand, his unique ability to bring people together and solve complex problems with innovative solutions. I’m particularly inspired by his bipartisan push to reform the broken criminal justice system. I couldn’t be prouder of the fact that he is my Senator.

Who is your political hero?

Bill Clinton and Bobby Kennedy.

How did you get involved in politics?

Lobbying members of congress when I was in elementary school on a host of policy initiatives to strengthen the critical US-Israel alliance. I later got

involved on the local level serving as a body man (while I was still in middle school) on a 2014 congressional race.



Berger with former Senator Joe Lieberman

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

In the words of Bill Clinton “we’re all in this together” is a far better philosophy than “you’re on your own.”

What are your go-to news sources?

For national political news, I wake up to Politico Playbook and Morning Joe on MSNBC. HBO’s Last Week Tonight with John Oliver is also terrific. For NJ

political news, I read PolitickerNJ religiously.

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

In 2013, I lobbied members of the Senate to fund an Israeli missile defense program called Iron Dome. When I traveled to Israel the next summer (in the middle of the 2014 Gaza War), I witnessed first hand how many lives were saved as a result of it. It made me realize how blessed I am to live in a country where I can make my voice heard. If you were to tell my great grandparents who fled the pogroms in Eastern Europe that their great grandson could make his voice heard in the halls of power, they'd have thought you were crazy.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

Our generation is going to have to solve the problems that the current one has not been able to resolve. We are the generation that will have to come up with lasting solutions for the national debt, climate change, tailoring education to the global economy, fixing a broken criminal justice, reforming our broken campaign finance and immigration systems, and dealing with the emerging threats of radical Islam.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

Lack of civic engagement. We must continually work to inform our generation about the issues that face our country in order to empower them to take much more of an ownership over the government.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

If you find something you love, you'll never work a day in your life. Find the

issue that you are the most passionate about, and do everything in your power to tackle it. No matter how hard you labor at it, it won't feel like work.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

I see myself finishing up an undergraduate degree in international relations and working in a Senate office where I would be able to combine my love of political strategy and foreign policy.

Noah Pintar

Junior, The Kinkaid School (Texas)



Current Title: *Texas State Director of Student Outreach, Marco Rubio for President*

Before he became a Republican, Noah Pintar helped craft targeted field efforts on two Texas democratic campaigns in 2014; Wendy Davis' Gubernatorial campaign, as well as a congressional race. After careful deliberation, Pintar determined that his views on the economy coincided more with the Republican Party. Since then, Noah has gained the reputation of being one of Houston's most forceful high school Republican activists. In 2015, he served as a senior aide on Tom McCasland's city council campaign.

In his position, Pintar helped craft economic policy and raised funds for the eight-way-race. Earlier this year, Pintar was tapped by the presidential campaign of Marco Rubio to serve as Texas Director of Students for Rubio. In this role, Pintar serves as the campaign's primary liaison to high school and college campuses across the state of Texas.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

I admire Congressman Justin Amash (R-MI) for sticking with his principles and for being remarkably transparent, he posts an explanation of every vote he makes on his Facebook page.

Who is your political hero?

I wouldn't say that I have one political hero, but I admire elected officials that are willing to work with members of the other party, while still maintaining their principles.



Pintar with Senator Lindsey Graham

How did you get involved in politics?

I began by volunteering on Wendy Davis' campaign for Governor of Texas. About five months after I started volunteering on Wendy Davis' campaign, I became an intern on a congressional campaign. Since then, I have interned on a Houston City Council campaign, and I am currently serving as the State

Director at Students for Rubio, getting high school and college campuses across Texas involved with the campaign.

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

I would call myself center-right or fiscally conservative and socially moderate.

What are your go-to news sources?

The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg, Politico, and CNBC

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

I don't think I can choose just one experience to call the most inspiring, but I would say that I love interacting with voters over the phone and on their doorsteps, and it is really rewarding to have frank conversations with them about political issues.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

I think that millennials will be very involved with the future of the United States. Millennials have often been characterized as apathetic and lazy, however, I have met so many civically engaged millennials.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

I believe that in the long term, our federal debt will prove to be the biggest problem for America's youth. This debt cannot be solely attributed to one party, but rather, it is a result of the culture of Washington.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

Just do it, it's so easy! Contact local campaigns you're interested in helping with, I've never heard of a political campaign that turns down volunteers. Reach out to your county's Democratic or Republican party and volunteer with them as well. In addition, most high schools and colleges have political clubs, and most cities have Young Democrats or Young Republicans organizations that are great to get involved with.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

Either beginning a career in politics, finance, or business.

Emma Vahey

Senior, Fairfield Warde High School (Connecticut)



Current Titles: *Congressional Intern (Congressman Jim Himes, CT-4); Deputy Campaign Manager (State Representative Cristin McCarthy Vahey, 133rd District); President, Fairfield Warde High School Young Democrats*

Emma Vahey got her start in politics in 2006, while she was still in Elementary school, working on her mother's campaign for town council. Flash forward ten years, and Emma currently serves in the office of Congressman Jim Himes (CT-4) where she specializes in constituent services,

legislative correspondence and special projects. In 2008, Vahey played an instrumental role assisting then-candidate Himes to win his first term in congress. A veteran of both Obama campaigns, the Malloy for Governor campaign as well as numerous municipal campaigns, Vahey possesses knowledge on Connecticut politics that is unrivaled, and she has earned her status as Connecticut's top high school political operative. In 2014, Vahey served as Deputy Campaign Manager on her mother's campaign for the Connecticut House of Representatives. In this role, she helped craft and implement the fundraising and communications strategies that led State Representative Cristin McCarthy Vahey to victory in 2014 beating an incumbent Republican.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

Hillary Clinton. *"I'm a progressive, but I'm a progressive that likes to get things done."*

Who is your political hero?

Abigail Adams. *"I've always felt that a person's intelligence is directly reflected by the number of conflicting points of view he can entertain simultaneously on the same topic."*

How did you get involved in politics?

My mom was elected to our town's Representative Town Meeting (RTM) — similar to a town council — when I was eight years old. I first learned how to canvass on that campaign, and can distinctly recall standing at the polls for several hours on Election Day that year. Two years later, I helped my mom run for her seat again, and also began to learn more about how politics shapes our society on a larger scale. While at our Democratic Town Committee's headquarters one evening in 2008, I first met Congressman Himes (for

whom I now intern), and began helping him with his first bid for the U.S. House of Representatives. He and my mom also encouraged me to work on Obama's campaign, so as a ten year old, I did what I best knew how to do — used my (somewhat lacking) artistic ability to make signs for an upcoming rally. Barely a decade on this planet, and politics had already pulled me in.



Vahey with Congressman Jim Himes

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

My political philosophy centers on equality. I believe every human being on Earth is equal, and should be treated as such. I know that there is a delicate balance between affording someone their rights and infringing upon someone

else's, and for this reason, I would call myself a moderate liberal.

What are your go-to news sources?

It truly depends on what I want to read about. For breaking news updates, I keep notifications on for my CNN and BBC apps. For global affairs, I'm subscribed to the magazine Foreign Affairs, but I also keep tabs on Al-Jazeera English. My other favorites include Politico, Wall Street Journal, The Economist, and of course, the New York Times.

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

I've had two incredibly inspirational experiences because of my political involvement, and I simply cannot choose between them. The first was marching in the People's Climate March in September of 2014, before the United Nations summit meeting on climate change. A fellow town citizen and friend of my mother's, whom I'd met while advocating for more stringent environmental policies, invited me to go into New York with her. I specifically remember stopping at Times Square for the minute of silence. Standing there with my arm in the air, surrounded by hundreds of thousands of other marchers, my hope for humanity's future here on Earth was reinvigorated. And after that minute was up, all 400,000 of us spent the next full minute making as much noise as possible, as a collective alarm for the world. In those moments, I felt so purposeful — arguably the best possible feeling.

The second experience was attending a rally for the Democratic gubernatorial candidate in my state. This one was special because President Obama spoke to endorse incumbent Governor Dannel Malloy and to encourage the citizens of Connecticut to go out and vote, and make their voices heard. After he had finished his speech, which was inspiration in and of itself, I was lucky enough to have a quick moment to speak with him and shake his hand. While shaking

President Obama's hand, I told him, "You are such an unbelievably inspirational human being." Shaking his head in disagreement, President Obama himself told me, "No, it's you and America's youth who are inspiring." This stamp of approval has lingered with me ever since. We are inspirational. Let's leave our legacy.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

Whenever I am asked about the impact our generation could potentially have, my mind always goes directly to the environment. As unfortunate as it is, if our generation doesn't fight for a healthy planet now, there will be a limited future in which to affect political or societal change. Besides that, of course, I truly believe we can be the most influential generation yet. America has somehow managed to trick itself into believing that so many of its issues are things of the past. It is going to be entirely up to us to not only prove that these issues are real and still present, but that we need to take action and actually do something about them. No more creating committees on committees and taking meaningless action — millennials must genuinely walk the walk.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

This is a weighty question, to say the least. Quite obviously, there is no one answer to this. I won't put on my social justice hat to respond, though. I think there is a larger problem, which is clouding up everything else. Political apathy is a dangerous force here in America. It's arguably the newest form of political disenfranchisement. After all, with seemingly perpetual gridlock in the federal government comes the assumption that individual voices carry little weight. It is irrefutable that America now must rely on our generation to fight for equality in every sense of the word, but our battle extends further than that. On yet another front, we have to fight against apathy. We have to

get young people to care about what happens to them — to their society.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

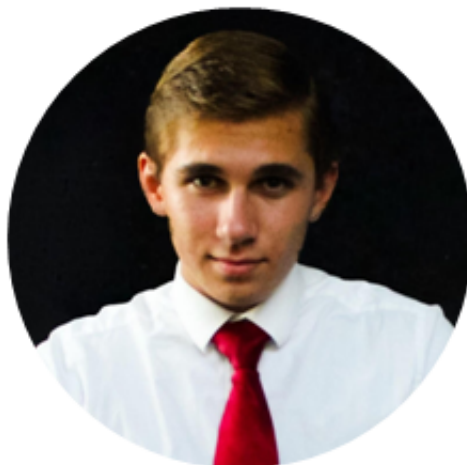
Don't be intimidated. There are so many young people who don't care about politics at all, so those of us who are invested sometimes try to overcompensate. But if you're new to the political scene, that doesn't make you less important, less influential, less admirable. Don't place a value on your perspective — trust me, it's invaluable.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

To be completely honest, there are a few situations in which I could foresee myself being entirely content. I might be in law school at that point, but I also might be working in a congressional office, or for the bureaucracy. Whatever it is that I'm doing, I know I'll be doing my best to affect change through government. I suppose it simply depends on which manner I deem most effective, and who will take me!

Devon Kurtz

Senior, Westfield High School (Massachusetts)



Current Titles: *Vice-Chairman of the Youth Conservatives of Massachusetts; Councilor on the Massachusetts Governor's Youth Council*

Devon Kurtz got his start in Massachusetts politics interning for state representative Donald Humason. Half way through his internship, the representative announced his candidacy for the state senate, and Kurtz immediately joined his campaign committee. Devon gained an intimate knowledge of the inner-workings of the MA state senate serving as an intern for Humason after the senator rose up the ranks of to become Senate Minority Whip. After his stint in the State Senate, Kurtz co-founded the Youth Conservative of Massachusetts Political Action Committee, where he currently serves as Vice Chairman. The group has played a key role in raising campaign funds for candidates across the Bay State. Devon's reputation being one of Massachusetts' top high school conservatives led to his appointment by MA Governor Charlie Baker to serve as on the state's youth council. Since his appointment, Kurtz has been outspoken about addressing the state's growing opiate epidemic.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Who is your political hero?

Former Vice President Dick Cheney.

How did you get involved in politics?

I started paying attention, and suddenly I found myself unable to not act on my beliefs.



Kurtz with Massachusetts State Senator Humason

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

A Nixon Conservative.

What are your go-to news sources?

NPR, This American Life and Fox News.

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

Being with Senator Humason after his victory was announced.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

I see millennials as blind followers of inaccurate information. Our naivety is dangerous.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

Opiate addiction.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

Start small, but work hard. A sign-holder can quickly become a campaign coordinator if enough effort is put in.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

Law school.

Jordan Cozby

Senior, Bob Jones High School (Alabama)



Current Titles: *National Chairman, High School Democrats of America*

Jordan Cozby first got involved in politics during the 2012 election as a Fellow on President Obama's 2012 reelection campaign. A few months after the election, Jordan started the Alabama High School Democrats as an outlet for students to build a progressive base in the state. In less than a year, Cozby had transformed the organization into a statewide political machine and in 2013 the High School Democrats of America (HSDA) named the organization "State Chapter of the Year". In 2014, Jordan was elected as HSDA's Communications Director where he expanded the organization's online presence and helped plan its first Washington D.C. Strategic Summit. His reputation as the nation's premier high school democratic organizer led to his unanimous election as National Chairman of the High School Democrats of America. Since his tenure began last summer, he has spearheaded the establishment of HSDA's adult Advisory Board, and expanded national voter registration projects. The Democratic Party will turn to HSDA and Cozby's leadership as they try to retake the White House and the Senate in 2016.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

Congressman John Lewis embodies in my mind everything a leader should be. For decades Congressman Lewis has stood up for what is right on a variety of issues. His activism from the civil rights movement to today's struggle for comprehensive immigration reform exemplifies how far we've come and the progress we still need to make.

Who is your political hero?

President Barack Obama is a courageous leader for our nation and I believe his time in office will be viewed very favorably in history. It was President Obama who motivated me to first become active in politics. Despite the frequent brinksmanship of our current Congress, Obama has been a reminder

to me that when we work hard, run on a progressive message, and turn out the vote, the American political system responds to the people's call.



Cozby with Congresswoman Terri Sewell

How did you get involved in politics?

I wasn't ever really involved until the 2012 election cycle when I began volunteering in my Mayor's re-election campaign and President Obama's re-election effort.

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

I'm proud to be a Democrat in a state like Alabama. I truly believe in the ideals of equality and social justice that our party champions.

What are your go-to news sources?

I typically lean on NPR for my news during the day. Twitter is also very helpful for a wide variety of updates particularly with breaking news.

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

On a few fortunate occasions, I've had the opportunity to meet and hear Congressman John Lewis speak. As a young person Lewis organized the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and was a major leader in the civil rights movement. His stories of crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, AL on 'Bloody Sunday', consistently utilizing civil disobedience to peacefully create change, and role in American politics for decades clearly show that the work of many can achieve justice for all.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

Political leaders are already recognizing the millennial generation as an increasingly important voting constituency. Moreover, I think our generation is already bringing innovative solutions to all levels of government.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

There needs to be a growing recognition that young people are not only 'future leaders' in our communities, party, and nation, but that students have valuable perspective on issues in the present. We need to increase investment in student organizing and understand that every issue we face — from college affordability to LGBTQ rights, from the national debt to foreign policy, from energy independence to gun violence prevention — affects youth in particular.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

Political involvement can open up so many opportunities to young people. I think young people first getting active can really benefit from placing value on what is really important. If improving government and our political system is your passion, it's crucial to see the importance in the people you come across and the principles that motivate you. Civic engagement is bigger than any one person; staying focused on how to help others is essential.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

Hopefully I'll have completed my undergraduate education and will be looking towards graduate school or job options

Alexa Weinstein

Senior, Community School of Naples (Florida)



Current Titles: *Junior Precinct Captain, Collier County Democratic Party; Intern, Bernie Sanders for President*

Alexa Weinstein got her start in politics debating public policy as an award

winning representative at the national Model Congress run by Harvard University. An active member of the Florida Democratic Party, Weinstein was tapped by her county's Democratic Party to serve as a Junior Precinct Captain. In this position, she will play a vital role in the Democratic Party's 2016 voter mobilization in Florida. In 2015, Weinstein was awarded the University of Rochester's prestigious Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony Award for her commitment to her community and for addressing key social issues. Alexa currently is working with the Bernie Sanders campaign assisting it in its Florida outreach.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

Claire McCaskill.

Who is your political hero?

Elizabeth Warren.

How did you get involved in politics?

Joining the Harvard Model Congress Club and realizing how much I deeply cared about political issues.



Weinstein with former House Speaker John Boehner

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

A moderate liberal.

What are your go-to news sources?

CNN, BBC, POLITICO, Huffington Post, and the New York Times.

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

I was chosen as one of four students to be honored in front of Former Speaker John Boehner and 450 members of the Forum Club in Southwest Florida. I felt humbled to be able to meet such an influential man who is as passionate

about politics as I am.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

This generation's attachment to social media will better connect us with current events in the country's future. The quickness to check news sources for recent happenings will keep this generation in contact with anything that goes on.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

A lack of activism.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

Just go for it. People are going to disagree with your ideology but don't let that stop you from fighting for what you believe in. "Our lives begin to die the day we become silent about things that matter."

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

Law school and then interning on the Hill.

Mary Schulten

Senior, St. Augustine Catholic Homeschool (Florida)



Current Titles: *Vice Chairwoman, Florida Federation of Teenage Republicans; Chairwoman, Volusia County Teenage Republicans; Member at Large, Atlantic Federated Republican Women; Florida Director, Teens for Ted*

Mary Schulten got her start in Florida politics as the Executive Director of the Florida Federation of Teenage Republicans (FLTARS) overseeing the organization's operations during the 2014 election cycle. The FLTARS, under Schulten's leadership played an instrumental role in reelecting Governor Rick Scott in a decisive victory. Her experiences coordinating grassroots efforts on the campaigns of Governor Rick Scott, Florida State Senator Travis Hudson, Florida State Representative Paul Renner, as well as Americans for Prosperity have given Mary Schulten the reputation of being the Sunshine State's foremost high school conservative activist. An outspoken social conservative, Schulten was tapped by the Ted Cruz campaign to serve as Florida Director for Teens for Ted. As a member of the Cruz campaigns' inner-circle in Florida, Schulten will play an influential role in Cruz's efforts to win the state.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

I most admire Senator Ted Cruz for standing strong in the fight for religious liberty and respecting the dignity of life.

Who is your political hero?

Ronald Reagan, of course!



Schulden with Senator Ted Cruz

How did you get involved in politics?

I became personally involved in politics in 2013 as Florida geared up for our 2014 gubernatorial race. I had always considered myself a Republican because it was my family's party. After researching, I saw the logic behind my family's choice of political party. I was drawn to the Republican Party's respect for life at all stages, protection of economic prosperity, and stand for smaller government.

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

My political philosophy is the same as my life philosophy: to never change who I am and to stand for the truth that comes from the Word of God. I want my political views to be something I'm not ashamed of on Sunday.

What are your go-to news sources?

Fox News! I'm really excited about Jesse Watters' segment, Watters' World, becoming a full length report! I love his style of journalism and the way that he keeps it real!

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

My cousin and I have developed a great friendship with Florida's Lieutenant Governor, Carlos Lopez-Cantera. It is truly inspiring to see how he serves the people of Florida with honesty and integrity. It means so much to me that he and his aide have taken the time to be so hospitable to us.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

This summer, I was so inspiring by all the young people I met at the National Teenage Republicans Convention! Millennials from all over the country are

standing up for what they believe in. I am particularly impressed by my friend and former Teenage Republican, Representative Justin Burr, who has been serving for 6 years as the youngest member of the North Carolina House of Representatives. I am so thankful to know so many young people dedicated to the Republican Party!

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

Our society has become a place where even mentioning the name of the Lord is “offensive.” I pray that we will return to the God honoring principles and morals of our founding fathers. It is extremely disheartening that we live in a nation where half a billion dollars taxpayer dollars go to funding a company that provides abortions.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

Surround yourself with wise people who want to see you succeed!

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

I pray that in 5 years I'll have graduated Ave Maria University, where I will be attending next fall, and will be working wherever God wills me to be! It is my goal to run for Florida House of Representatives shortly after college.

Blake Burdge

Senior, Gainesville High School (Florida)



Current Titles/Positions: *Chairman, Florida Federation of Teenage Republicans*

Blake Burdge got schooled in Florida GOP politics working on the reelection campaign of Governor Rick Scott in 2014. Burdge's seven-month stint on the campaign, (where he knocked on over 4,750 doors and made more than 30,000 phone calls) gave him the reputation as one of the hardest working high school political activists in the state of Florida. In 2014, Blake was honored by the Republican Party of Florida for his efforts that helped lead Governor Scott to a decisive victory in one of the closest FL gubernatorial races in recent memory. Additionally, Burdge has been very active in the Florida Federation of Teen Republicans. Over the past three years, Burdge has quickly risen through the organization's ranks, first serving as a local chapter chairman, then a country chairman, then state Vice Chairman and he was elected earlier this year to a full term as chairman of the Florida Federation of Teenage Republicans. Blake Burdge and the Florida Federation of Teen Republicans will play an influential role in GOP efforts to secure Florida during the 2016 general election.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

I admire my local Congressman, Ted Yoho, for a few reasons. He seems to

perpetually be in his district speaking and interacting with his constituents. He never loses an ounce of energy or compassion and genuinely cares about the concerns of the people that he represents.

Who is your political hero?

Honestly, I don't have a political hero. There are certain aspects that I like of politicians. I like George W. Bush's sense of humor.



Burdge with Senator Marco Rubio

How did you get involved in politics?

For a number of years, my ultimate goal was to be accepted to the Naval Academy. I had heard stories of students who were nominated by their

House Representative after initiating a relationship with between themselves and their representative at an early stage in high school Motivated by these success stories, I went to an event in Gainesville that Congressman Ted Yoho was attending. Intrigued by what he had to say, I decided to become more active as a leader in Teenage Republicans and I became a volunteer on Governor Rick Scott's 2014 campaign.

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

Pragmatic. My humanities teacher, Jim Owens, who could not possibly be farther from me on the political spectrum, told me that my ideas were pragmatic and I really appreciate hearing that from someone else.

What are your go-to news sources?

Politico and The Hill.

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

Seeing a team of people who have never met come together to reach seemingly unattainable goals. In the later stages of Governor Scott's reelection campaign, our office was making tens of thousands of calls every week in order to maximize voter outreach.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

It will shape the future of the United States. We need more millennials to become involved in the political process in order to serve our best interests.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

Disinterest. When we stop taking interest, we stop getting involved. When we

stop getting involved, we allow a small group of individuals to dictate our lives according to their interests, not ours.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

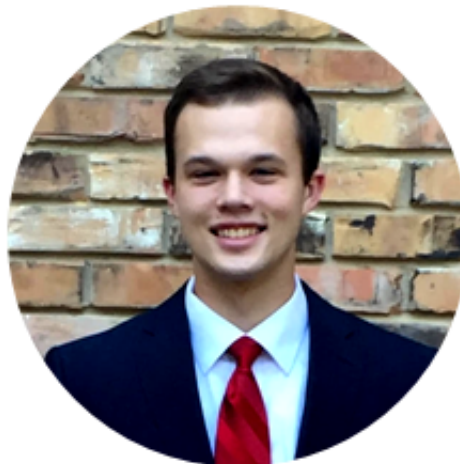
I have two. The first is that you need to understand that the other side thinks you're just as stupid as you think they are. The second is that you need to be involved for your own ambition and satisfaction, not to appeal to others or to be able to flaunt a title.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

I hope to have studied International Affairs in college and be working in the Foreign Service.

Cade Palmer

Senior, White Oak High School (Texas)



Current Titles: *Chairman, High School Republicans of Texas; Member (Ex-Officio), Texas State Republican Executive Committee*

Cade Palmer got his start in Texas GOP politics working on the campaign of Governor Greg Abbott. Palmer gained widespread acclamation from the Texas GOP establishment for his ability to recruit dozens of high schools students to join the Abbott campaign. After his work on the 2014 Texas gubernatorial race, Cade was appointed by his state representative, David Simpson, to serve as an intern in the State House of Representatives. When Simpson announced his candidacy for the State Senate, Cade was tapped by the campaign of Jay Dean, who is vying for Simpson's old seat, to serve as a senior advisor to the campaign. Palmer is very active in the High School Republicans of Texas. Elected as State Vice-Chairman in 2014, and recently elected as State Chairman, Cade has worked to turn the organization into a well-oiled political machine. Under his leadership, the organization's membership has grown by 300, and the group recently put on its largest state convention. Cade has been recognized for his leadership as one of the Lone Star State's top high school conservative operative, and has received the Teenage Republicans Tony Blankley award.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

As far as currently politicians go, I would say Paul Ryan is my favorite. The man took a job no one, including himself, wanted and has so far made the most of it. His leadership has been one that Republicans have been able to get behind for years. I'll be interested to see what he does in the future as Speaker.

Who is your political hero?

George Washington never wanted power, or fame, he just wanted to win the war and build a nation. His leadership alone was what allowed the Constitutional Convention to succeed among so many dissenting voices. It is ability of unification that makes him stand out among so many other great

politicians.

How did you get involved in politics?

I became involved in politics when after a family gathering during which I had to sit through hours of family members bashing Obama and his policies. I had agreed for the most part, but I was mad because I realized that simply talking about the policies among family members wasn't going to achieve anything. I went to my principal the next week and started the process of forming a school-sponsored organization that would later become the White Oak High School Republicans.

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

I am a conservative. I stand for small government and individual liberty. Typically when forced to choose between government regulation of anything, social or economic, I stand with the individual or free market, though I do believe some regulation is necessary.

What are your go-to news sources?

I tend to watch CNN while reading the Associated Press, the New York Times, Politico, CNN, and Fox News.

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

Honestly, the best experience I've had is watching students develop a love of government. After forming my organization I saw my friends, a bunch of athletes, find themselves engrossed in elections and discussing politics with teachers and peers. This transformation has been truly inspiring to watch.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

The millennial generation will be one of the most instrumental in the history of this nation. As technology makes our nations more interconnected than ever, we're going to have to find a way to capitalize on that. We also have an ever growing, seeming insurmountable debt that we'll have to find a way to deal with. Additionally, we are at a time of great change in our nation with regard to social issues and the result of these will likely be on the backs of our generation.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

Political apathy. I know as a student engaged in politics student political apathy has been something I've struggled with in recruiting new volunteers and club members. Most students simply don't see the impact or importance politics plays in their lives and that's a hard mentality to overcome.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

Email or call somebody. Every campaign is looking for volunteers, some are dying for them, and simply contact someone and they'll find a way to get you involved. Also don't get discouraged. People will slam their door in your face, hang up on you and disagree with you, just stay persistent and the difference you make will be palpable.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

In five years I hope to be in law school pursuing a graduate degree in that field of study.

Serena Upadhyay

Senior, Waubonsie Valley High School (Illinois)



Current Titles/Positions: *National Chief of Staff, Junior State of America*

Serena Upadhyay got her start in politics through Junior State of America, nation's largest organization of teen civic engagement. Serena has had a significant hand in planning JSA's major events and activism initiatives as well as crafting the organization's fundraising activities. During her tenure at JSA, Upadhyay has served in numerous positions including Midwest Lieutenant Governor and currently as National Chief of Staff. As National Chief of Staff, Upadhyay works with the JSA's professional staff, National Cabinet, and Council of Governors to promote general civic engagement around the nation. An active member in Illinois politics, Serena has had experience on Pat Quinn's 2014 gubernatorial campaign and Bill Foster's congressional race in the same year.

Who do you most admire in American Politics today?

There are a lot people I admire in American Politics today, but Elizabeth Warren is at the top of that list. She always continues to fight for what she believes in, including her values of economic inclusion and community. She truly fights for people and especially students, and as someone about to head to college that's important to me. But perhaps most importantly, she's still reaching across the aisle to make real change. With our government

becoming so polarized, it's hard for bipartisanship to work.

Who is your political hero?

Eleanor Roosevelt. Despite being married to one of the greatest presidents, her accomplishments stand independently. She took a strong stance on everything she believed in and kept herself involved in politics and activism her entire life.



Upadhyay with Senator Dick Durbin

How did you get involved in politics?

I always knew I was passionate about my opinions, but the Junior State of America introduced me to how my passion for discussing these problems fit into the political process and also taught me the many ways youth could get involved in politics.

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

I am by all means an American liberal; my viewpoints on almost everything- especially social and political issues- align that way. I think money controls too much in our country.

What are your go-to news sources?

The New York Times, BBC, NPR

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

Although I have been very inspired by the many speeches and conversations I've had with politicians and other people working in politics, nothing inspires me more than seeing my peers simply believing in something. The first year we ran the JSA Fight Apathy campaign at my school and I saw all my classmates and teachers discussing issues they cared about, I was almost crying tears of joy. Seeing kids who are stereotyped to seem like they don't care about many things besides their grades or sports talk about equality, education or human rights with such fervor is something that inspires me to continue to fight for what I believe in.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

We are our nation's future, and I think despite everything going on today in terms of political polarization and gridlock, the future seems brighter to me. There's something very special about our generation in terms of acceptance and compromise, a change we see with every coming generation. Many claim that tons of kids currently don't care about politics or government, but if at least a portion of the kids I've met in the Junior State of America stay involved in the political process, I have no worries for the future.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

Despite being surrounded by a lot of passionate kids in the many things I do, I think there's too much of a fad around the words, "Who cares?". For a long time, showing you cared about something a lot wasn't considered "cool". I've seen this attitude changing a lot, but I still think it's the biggest barrier to American youth really fighting for change and what they believe in, because they don't think they can make a difference. I think the majority of us are finding out that is definitely not true.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

If you're someone who is interested in getting involved in politics, there's definitely something for you. Find what interests you. If you want to get involved in a campaign, it's as simple as going online and signing up, or emailing a campaign supervisor for your region. If you want to get more involved locally, there are tons of city council meetings or school board meetings that you can attend. You meet people there that you can express your interests to that can help you get involved. There are also tons of youth organizations that can give you many political opportunities. For me, that was the Junior State of America. It introduced me to many politicians and other political organizations. In high school I found that a lot of people wait for opportunities to be given to them by their school or people they know, but it's important that you go searching for them on your own as well, because you can find so much more.

Where do you see yourself personally in five years?

In five years I (hopefully) would have graduated from a university. Right now the plan is to major in Economics or International Studies, but that's definitely subject to change. Whatever I end up doing, I see myself continuing

to be involved in politics, whether that's seeking internships in our nation's capitol or volunteering for more campaigns. I have somewhat of a vision of where I'll be in five years, but if there's anything I've learned from all the speakers I've listened to is that there's never a straight path to anything in life.

Liana Wang

Senior, Bellaire High School (Texas)



Current Titles/Positions: *National Vice Chair, High School Democrats of America; Chair, Texas High School Democrats; Member, Houston Mayor's Youth Council*

Liana Wang first got involved in politics during the 2012 election as an intern on President Obama's 2012 reelection campaign. Wang later got worked on the successful 2013 reelection campaign of Houston Mayor Annise Parker. That year, Liana was tapped to serve on the Mayor's Youth Council, a body tasked with representing the city's youth. As a member of the Mayor's Youth Council, Wang hosted a citywide forum on race relations and was awarded the Princeton Prize in Race Relations for her leadership.

At the start of her sophomore year, Liana restarted the dormant Texas High School Democrats, and under her chairmanship, put the organization back on track to fulfill its goals of mobilizing TX high school students for the Democratic Party. Wang has transformed the organization into a political machine. In 2014, Liana played an instrumental role on Wendy Davis' gubernatorial campaign, Leticia Van de Putte's Lieutenant Governor campaign and James Cargas' congressional campaign. Currently, Liana serves as National Vice Chair of the High School Democrats of America, a national organization dedicated to mobilizing students in support of the Democratic Party. Since her election in the summer, Wang has spearheaded the organization's state and local expansion and played a key role in securing TX Rep. Joaquin Castro to serve on HSDA's Adult Board. Wang's work on Texas and national politics has given her the reputation of one of the nation's premier high school political activists.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

Elizabeth Warren

Who is your political hero?

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Samantha Powers, Elizabeth Warren, Hillary Clinton, Jake Sullivan, Barack Obama(... there are a lot)

How did you get involved in politics?

A neighbor's daughter introduced me to *The West Wing* at a young age



Wang with Congressman Joaquin Castro

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

I'm concerned with increasing women's rights, improving education, decreasing poverty and inequality, and am very interested in foreign policy. I feel that liberals have expanded access to opportunities for all peoples throughout history and that today, the Democratic Party most embodies that liberal, progressive spirit. I believe that government and the political process have huge potential to change people's lives positively and make progress.

What are your go-to news sources?

The New York Times, Council on Foreign Relations/FP, The Economist,

TIME, Vox (occasionally), Mic, The Huffington Post, The Guardian, The Atlantic.

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

The opportunity to hear Samantha Powers speak and to receive advice from Jake Sullivan.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

I hope it increases. Millennials are passionate about a wide variety of issues, and I think eventually many will realize that the best way to make change for the most people in those areas is through utilizing government and the political process and breaking the current gridlock/brinksmanship often seen in Congress. At its core, public service has a great role in society and I think youth will realize that more and more as they get older and more concerned and educated about issues no matter what side of the political spectrum they're on.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

An education system that often exacerbates inequalities instead of providing opportunity to most youth.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

Just do it. Find a local campaign that stands for what you believe in, and start volunteering. Talk to people. Be confident. Show that you're passionate about the issues that others are, and you'll find people willing to stand behind you.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

Well in five years I'll have just finished college. I'm heavily interested in global affairs and international affairs, so I could see myself entering a government role with a more international dimension. I may want to study international law. I'm not entirely sure right now.

Jeremy Cronig

Pre-College Gap Year, recent graduate of Shaker Heights High School (Ohio)



Current Titles/Positions: *President, North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY)*

Jeremy Cronig's experience engaging millennials stems from his leadership of NFTY, the Reform Jewish Youth Movement with over 8,000 members across North America. Since his election last summer, Cronig has deepened the organization's social justice and political focuses. Under his leadership, he has mobilized NFTY members on an international gun violence prevention campaign patterning with Everytown for Gun Safety and other organizations. An Ohio resident, Cronig has been active in organizing around preventing gun violence in Cleveland. Through interfaith initiatives, he has been able to integrate Ohio teens in community efforts to limit gun violence. Cronig's

work on the national level has made him at the forefront for faith-based youth progressive activism.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

My answer would definitely have to be Vice President Joe Biden. He leads with humility and that is something I really try to emulate in my own leadership. He is a real human being in the way he leads and I admire that. He also has been through so much personal hardship and still has devoted his life to serving his country.

Who is your political hero?

Joe Biden, see above.



Cronig with Vice President Joe Biden

How did you get involved in politics?

I have two very politically engaged parents and live in an incredibly engaged and democratic area. The NYT had an interactive online map that showed the most liberal and conservative cities in the country. Shaker Heights, Ohio was picked as the most liberal city (politically liberal not socially) in the entire country.

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

I am a social and economic liberal. I believe the government has an obligation

to its citizens and is responsible for their well-being when they cannot provide for themselves.

What are your go-to news sources?

The NYT is generally my go-to-news source.

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

NFTY participated in the first “Gun Violence Awareness Day” which was organized by Everytown for Gun Safety on June 2, 2015. The social media push was to wear orange and post a picture of yourself that day (more info at wearorange.org). NFTY inspired hundreds and hundreds of teens to post pictures on social media and get the word out. Being able to physically see that my work and the work of others had engaged so many was really inspiring. While it was only social media, it was an incredible first step in getting teens engaged in the issue.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

I am the biggest advocate for millennials you will find! I believe that our unique qualities as a generation actual lend itself to making change, despite what the narrative is about us. I feel that millennials can move us forward as a nation because of our idea that one person can change the world. This belief lets us imagine what could be, rather than what always has been. And I feel this will keep America innovating and leading in the world.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

Apathy. I feel that the biggest threat is people not caring. We need to find a way to engage American youth in a different way than we always have.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

Find your niche! Politics is such a broad word. I am not interning in Washington, DC, however I consider myself extremely involved and in my own way. I feel that this makes the work even more rewarding because I am working to move an issue I care about forward. There is not one way to get involved in politics.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

I hope to be organizing communities around preventing gun violence. I do not know where or in what way, I just know that this is the issue I want to devote my professional life to working on.

Frederick D'Wayne Bell

Senior. Iberville Math, Science, and Arts Academy — East (Louisiana)



Current Titles/Positions: *President, Louisiana State Beta Club; Chairman, Louisiana High School Democrats*

Frederick Bell got his start in Louisiana state politics in 2014, working on Mary Landrieu's senate reelection and former LA governor Edwin Edwards's congressional run. Bell played an integral role in both races field organizations. Frederick's GOTV efforts earlier this year assisted Democrat John Bell Edwards to a historic victory over Republican David Vitter. Additionally, Bell has worked on municipal races across the state of Louisiana. A key player in state politics, Bell currently serves as Chairman of the Louisiana High School Democrats, a statewide organization that mobilizes teens in support of the Democratic Party. Under his leadership, the Louisiana High School Democrats has emerged into a statewide political machine. Frederick also serves as Louisiana President of the National Beta Club, a national leadership development organization that focuses on academic achievement and community service. Bell's reputation as an up and coming leader in the state of Louisiana led to his appointment as President of the state's Legislative Youth Advisory Council earlier this year.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

Rachel Maddow

Who is your political hero?

Barack Obama

How did you get involved in politics?

I accidentally turned on CNN during the 2012 election cycle and instantly became intrigued. That was the catalyst to my interest and journey into American politics.



Bell with former Senator Mary Landrieu

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

I am a moderate liberal, but I'm still discovering and developing my opinions each and everyday.

What are your go-to news sources?

New York Times, CNN, and Rachel Maddow

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

While I was canvassing for Senator Mary Landrieu during the 2014 midterm elections, I met one lady who had no idea that there was an election going on. She thanked me for the work that I was doing and immediately hopped in her car and drove to the polls. Before she left, she told me I inspired her to go vote and become more aware and involved in politics. I'm glad that I was able to reignite that political flame within her. I was greatly inspired by this because it showed me that the work I was doing actually meant something to someone.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future

I see a drastic change from the way things are today. I believe our generation is more hopeful and optimistic about the future. These truths will lead to an age where we can disagree without being disagreeable and learn that it is acceptable to compromise as long as we know that which must never be compromised. I see higher voter turn out because we've implemented automatic voter registration. I see more educated voters, and more importantly, more educated politicians because we invested in education. I see less teens murdered in the streets, because we've sent a message that that is not the main purpose of a firearms. I see people freed from the fist of poverty, because the minimum wage became the living wage. I see immigrants welcomed into our communities, because they're our family too. I see an America where dreams are attainable because no one was subjugated to hate and discrimination. I see we, the millennials, having a very active involvement in the nation's future; and our nation's success could not be more dependent upon that.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

The biggest issue facing the American youth is the American people not being able to come to a consensus that the challenges our youth face, are the challenges that we all face. A child in poverty, will lead to their children being in poverty and therefore, adversely affect the course of this nation. A child not being able to learn or not given adequate resources to be able to thrive in the classroom, will be of great detriment to America and it's future. A child not being able to learn the difference between right and wrong, will inevitably lead America right down the wrong path. There is no one singular issue that is inherently the right answer to a question such as this. There are many answers, each with a unique solution.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

In my letter from President Obama, he writes, “No matter what career you land in, if you always work hard, give back to your community, and chase your dreams with passion, I have confidence you will do big things. I wish you all the best.” This was by far the best and most inspiring advice that I’ve received so far.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

In five years, I’ll be 23 years old. I hope to be concluding my final year(s) of law school. From there I would like to pursue a career in law and public service.

Morgan Yurosek

Senior, Santa Margarita Catholic High School (California)



Current Titles/Positions: *Co-President of the SM Young Republicans Club*

Morgan Yurosek got her start in California GOP politics spending a summer working at the Republican Party of Orange County. During her tenure, Morgan assisted numerous republican campaigns in voter outreach. Additionally, Yurosek played a key role in executing the county party's fundraising and communications strategies; where she planned fundraising events and served as the organization's principal media liaison to local and national news outlets. Morgan Yurosek's work has given her the reputation of being Orange County's premier conservative political operative.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

I admire the emergence of new and diverse faces in the Republican Party. It's encouraging to see the GOP stereotype broken with personalities such as Marco Rubio and the like.

Who is your political hero?

Ronald Reagan

How did you get involved in politics?

The news is always on in my house, and current events occupied typical dinner table discussions when I grew up. In elementary and middle school I took interest in my US History classes, which ignited my passion for national politics.

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

I am conservative on economic and national security issues and moderate on social issues.



Yurosek with Senator Rand Paul

What are your go-to news sources?

Wall Street Journal, Fox News, CNN, CNBC, Breitbart, Politico, Drudge.

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

In third grade I wrote a letter to then President George W. Bush. Approximately three months later I received a response from the president: a letter along with signed photographs, stickers, and bookmarks. This experience truly made me feel that our government is accessible to all, and this is what makes America special.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

Our generation is going to be tasked with solving economic problems in the US such as social security and the national debt. Thus, millennials will be tasked with not only producing but implementing new solutions to tackle these problems.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

Political correctness. I fear that in the future, our generation will be unable to have an honest conversation about controversial, yet critically important, issues.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

Do your homework. An opinion holds no weight unless you have the evidence and logic to prove yourself to others.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

Working on the hill while pursuing a law degree.

Andrew Peng

Junior, Livingston High School (New Jersey)



Current Titles/Positions: *Marketing Director, High School Democrats of America; Digital Director, New Jersey High School Democrats*

Andrew Peng got his start in progressive activism as the founder of Reason Squared, an activist-focused liberal Facebook page that used graphics to highlight key stats and quotes. The page generated hundreds of thousands of comments and millions of organic views. Peng later got involved in politics, crafting and implementing communications strategies on a successful 2014 school board race. In 2015, Andrew began his tenure as Digital Director of the New Jersey High School Democrats. Peng's work to rebrand the New Jersey High School Democrats helped propel the organization to be honored as the High School Democrats of America "Chapter of the Year." This past summer, Peng was tapped to serve as Marketing Director of the High School Democrats of America. In this role, Peng helps develop messaging strategies and design graphics on various social media platform. Andrew's work on the national level has given him a reputation of being one of the nation's premier high school social media strategy experts. As digital become an increasingly integral part of campaigns, the Democratic Party will continue to rely

individuals like Andrew Peng to lead it to victory.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

I admire the fact that anyone who is willing to work hard can make a difference and participate in the political process, no matter their race or age. There are organizations and opportunities for everyone, and exposure to diverse viewpoints allows me to shape my own views through healthy discussion and debate that is both respectful and productive.

Who is your political hero?

My political hero is President Barack Obama. At a young age, he was the first politician I knew by name, and I watched as he led the nation through crisis and fought hard for a second term. His message of change and optimism has been the driving force throughout my political experience, and his 2008 and 2012 campaigns have served as one of the defining moments in political history.

How did you get involved in politics?

My first real exposure to politics was *Reason Squared*. Earlier, I had expressed the desire to become a journalist, and I honed my skills to fit that package learning graphic design and social media strategy for breaking news. Luckily, those are also great for volunteer political positions, and I quickly utilized them to gain valuable experience.



Peng talks with Senator Cory Booker

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

I am liberal on social issues, but tend to lean more centrist on economic issues. On foreign policy, I am a realist, but generally oppose military intervention.

What are your go-to news sources?

The New York Times, Bloomberg Politics, POLITICO, The Hill, Roll Call, The Wall Street Journal and BuzzFeed News.

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

I've enjoyed the diversity of people and opinions — they've helped to shape my viewpoints and give me the inspiration to move forward.

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

Millennial voters will continue to grow in importance in future elections and they already make up the largest bloc of eligible voters. If efforts to get out the youth vote are successful, we could see a real shift in how Washington works. Overall, millennials (who apparently are seen as lazy) already volunteer in record numbers and I expect more campaigns, organizations and projects will be launched by millennials in the years to come.



Peng (bottom left-hand corner) interviews a man at New Jersey Governor Chris Christie's presidential announcement at Livingston High School

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

College affordability and student loans

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

Be prepared to work hard and get a LinkedIn.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

I see myself working for campaigns or at a progressive organization on rapid response and digital communications.

Hattie Seten

Senior, Sioux Falls Lincoln High School (South Dakota)



Current Titles: *National Communications Director of the High School Democrats of America; National Communications Director of the Campaign for a Presidential Youth Council*

Hattie Seten is a senior at Lincoln High School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She is a strong advocate for youth political involvement. Currently, Hattie serves as the National Communications Director for the High School Democrats of America (HSDA). In addition to her work with HSDA, she also combines her political interests and communications skills in serving as the

National Communications Director for the Campaign for a Presidential Youth Council. Hattie's passions also lie in advancing education efforts; she works with multiple members of Congress in advocating on behalf of DECA — a national career technical student organization.

Seten's interest for political involvement was first sparked when she joined her high school's speech and debate team. She spent her next two years researching political issues while she participated in varsity policy debate and varsity domestic extemporaneous speaking. In the summer of 2014, Hattie led canvassing efforts for South Dakota Representative Karen Soli's campaign for South Dakota's 15th Legislative District. Then in 2015, Hattie was selected to serve as a Legislative Page in the South Dakota State Legislature. Following her experience in the Legislature, Hattie founded the High School Democrats of South Dakota, and the state organization became officially chartered with the South Dakota Democratic Party and HSDA. Hattie's communications experience has given her the reputation as one of the top up and coming strategists in the Democratic Party.

Who do you most admire in American politics today?

I admire Vice President Biden for everything he has accomplished both politically and personally in his encounters with multiple hardships.

Who is your political hero?

My political hero is State Legislator, Representative Karen Soli for taking me in for my first political campaign.

How did you get involved in politics?

I first became involved in politics because I joined my high school's debate team. Being an active policy debater sparked interest in learning about how

political decisions can foster change in the surrounding environment.

How would you briefly describe your political philosophy?

I'm a Democrat. I believe in using the political field to: promote equality for all, provide education, stand up for the environment, and promote economic political policies that benefit the nation and small business owners.

What are your go-to news sources?

The Associated Press, The New York Times, National Public Radio, The Economist, The Independent, and CSPAN.



Seten with Congresswoman Kristi Noem

What's the most inspiring experience you've had as a result of your political involvement?

My most inspiring experience that I have had as a result of my political involvement occurred as I was canvassing and I met a woman that had never voted before

How do you see millennial involvement in the nation's future?

Millennial involvement today is more important than anything because essentially that is the demographic that will be leading in the future.

What is the biggest issue facing American youth at the moment?

The presence of crippling college debt.

What is your best piece of advice for someone who wants to get involved in politics?

First it is important to find causes/individuals you want to fight for, then plan and organize for support, and finally take action through your political involvement.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

Five years from now I intend to have completed my undergraduate studies with a double major in International Relations and Economics. From there, professionally in five years I plan to be attending law school.

Follow us on Twitter at [@campaigner2016](#) and [like us](#) on Facebook. Send tips, questions and complaints to campaignernow@gmail.com.

Be the first to write a response...

Frederick Bell