



To: NextGen Iowa Allies and Supporters
From: Haley Hager, NextGen Iowa State Youth Director
Date: November 1, 2018
Re: NextGen Iowa's Efforts in the 2018 Midterm Elections

“Democrats and progressive issue groups like NextGen America feel this year could be different, and are doing the groundwork to make that happen. If they can get young people to vote at significantly higher rates, it could have a significant impact on this fall's elections.”

— [“Young voters could sway election, if they show up.”](#) Cedar Rapids Gazette, September 9, 2018

NEXTGEN IOWA 2018: BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL SPEND: **\$2 million**
TOTAL STAFF ON THE GROUND: **58**
TOTAL VOLUNTEERS: **673**
TOTAL CAMPUSES WITH PROGRAM: **41**
TOTAL YOUNG VOTERS REGISTERED: **14,243**
TOTAL PLEDGE TO VOTE CARDS COLLECTED: **21,654**
TOTAL YOUNG VOTERS REACHED WITH DIGITAL ADS: **277,582**
TOTAL DOORS KNOCKED: **47,917**
TOTAL TEXTS SENT: **689,091**
TOTAL PIECES OF DIRECT MAIL SENT: **303,786**
TARGETED RACES: **IA-Gov, IA-Lt Gov, IA Secretary of State, IA-01, IA-03**

On Tuesday, November 6, Iowans will have their final chance to cast their ballots in the most important midterm election in recent history — and NextGen Iowa played a central role in organizing and [turning out young voters on campus](#), in their communities, and online. Young people are the largest eligible voting bloc in the the country, and they are overwhelmingly progressive. NextGen America has organized young people since 2013, and we know that when they turn out, Democrats win.

The stakes in Iowa are remarkably high: Governor Kim Reynolds has cut millions of dollars to Iowa's public universities, signed [the strictest abortion regulations](#) in the country, and is refusing to end privatized Medicaid, even though it is costing Iowans more money while providing worse coverage. Representatives David Young and Rod Blum support President Trump no matter what, whether that's voting to gut protections for people with pre-existing conditions, or targeting immigrants.

Over the past eight years, Iowa has swung to the right, culminating in a nearly 10 point win for Donald Trump — but this year, young voters are responding, reshaping the political landscape ahead of 2020. Iowa's radical Republican elected officials have awakened a generation of voters that are otherwise known for staying home on Election Day. With 58 paid staff and 673 active volunteers organizing statewide and a six-figure digital program, NextGen Iowa is doing the work to ensure young voters turn out at the ballot box to deliver Democratic victories up and down the ballot in 2018 and beyond.

NEXTGEN RISING

"Having the focus on young people and turning them out to vote will be the margin of victory that most candidates are going to see this year," said Haley Hager with NextGen Iowa.

— "[ISU seeing hike in student voter registrations](#)," *WeAreIowa (WOI)*, October 26, 2018.

In 2018, NextGen America is running the largest youth organizing program in American history, investing \$33 million across 11 states to elect progressive candidates up and down the ballot. The youth organizing program — NextGen Rising — launched in August 2017 to register and turnout young voters (between the ages of 18 and 35) for progressive candidates in Virginia's state elections. NextGen helped turnout young voters [in record numbers](#) in Virginia, propelling a Democratic wave and setting the stage for an even larger effort in 2018.

With a \$2 million investment, NextGen Iowa is working to register, engage, and organize young voters across the state to flip IA-01 and IA-03, and elect Democrat Fred Hubbell to the Governor's seat. With 58 staff and fellows on the ground, NextGen is working to organize young voters on 41 campuses and in their communities and has registered over 14,200 young Iowans to vote this year.

Young people ages 18-to-35 are the [largest voting block in the state](#), making up 28% of the electorate with over 600,000 registered voters statewide, but vote at about half the rate of older generations. According to [Tufts University](#), Iowa is uniquely positioned as a state where young voters can have a disproportionate impact on this year's election, and Tufts ranked Iowa's first congressional district as the number one house race in the country where young voters can swing the election.

Young Iowans have the numbers to decide this election and NextGen Iowa is working on multiple fronts to ensure they exercise their power at the ballot box. Voting is habitual, so the work being done to boost turnout 2018 will position young voters as an influential demographic in 2020 when the state will once again be flooded by Democratic presidential campaigns courting young Iowans.

POWER IN NUMBERS

"More than 500 people voted early in a single day at a small Iowa college campus. The turnout at the Grinnell College precinct in Poweshiek County would equate to almost one third of the student body. Politicos say it's a sign that younger voters are more engaged this election cycle."

— "[Organizers Impressed By Early Voter Turnout In Grinnell](#)," *Iowa Public Radio*, October 18, 2018

To prepare students to vote months ahead of the voter registration deadline, NextGen Iowa executed an [unprecedented voter registration drive in August](#) as students arrived back on campus to start the school year.

Even with a shortened early voting period in Iowa, young people have already turned out at a higher rate than they did in 2014. We're seeing increased early voting at college campuses across the board, from community colleges to small private schools to public universities. During the five days of early voting at Iowa State University, [nearly three times as many people voted on campus compared to the 2014 midterms](#). Ahead of on-campus early voting at ISU, NextGen Iowa registered over 2,200 students to vote, sent 5,000 text messages to students notifying them of the satellite campus polling place, and hosted visibility events to remind students in-person to vote.



In the final five days, NextGen Iowa's get out the vote efforts includes knocking on 16,581 doors at least twice, sending 400,000 text messages, and encouraging young Iowans to vote early. Organizers and volunteers will be hosting countless visibility events on campus to have face-to-face conversations with students walking to class about the stakes of the upcoming election.

We've already seen how young people can swing presidential elections in Iowa: in 2008, 59% of 18-24-year-old Iowans voted and President Obama won by 9 points; in 2016 only 36% of Iowans 18-24 voted and President Trump won by 10 points. This year, in some of the tightest races in the country, a surge in young voter turnout will help pave the path to victory for Democrats in 2018 and beyond.

DIGITAL & MAIL

To reach young people on and off campus, NextGen sent 303,786 pieces of direct mail and spent \$412,454 on [cutting-edge digital ads](#) to target 277,582 young Iowans. Running on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Hulu, and YouTube, these ads, like "[Show Up](#)" and "[Last Chance](#)" stressed the stakes of this election and the power young people have to make a difference this year.

As voters began to tune into the races in August and September, NextGen Iowa [released a series of voter guide digital ads](#) designed to educate young voters on key races for the first and third congressional districts in Iowa and compare the platforms of [Cindy Axne and David Young](#), and [Abby Finkenauer and Rod Blum](#) on issues like access to affordable health care, safe and legal abortion, and reasonable college tuition.

GIVEGREEN

GiveGreen, a fundraising partnership between NextGen America, the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) Victory Fund, and NRDC Action Fund PAC, raised over \$20 million for progressive candidates across the country. In Iowa, GiveGreen raised \$285,955 for Fred Hubbell, Abby Finkenauer, Cindy Axne and Deidre DeJear, among others.