



To: NextGen Michigan Allies and Supporters
From: Eliza Webb, Michigan State Youth Director
Date: April 24, 2019
Re: New Voter File Data Shows Impact of NextGen Michigan on 2018 Midterms

After Democrats disappointingly lost Michigan in 2016, NextGen saw an opportunity to build progressive youth infrastructure in the state to avert another devastating Republican defeat in the midterm elections. NextGen's team of young organizers helped turn out young voters and make incredible Democratic gains in the Great Lakes state in November: a historic **42% of young Michiganders (18-35) cast a ballot** — up 22 points from the last midterm election.

While turnout was high across all ages, the turnout rate of young Michiganders increased disproportionately. According to [Tom Bonier of TargetSmart](#), voters under 30 increased their vote share from about 6.9% in 2014 to 10.5%, and [per exit polls](#), young Michiganders overwhelmingly chose to send Gretchen Whitmer to the Governor’s mansion and Senator Stabenow back to Washington, DC.

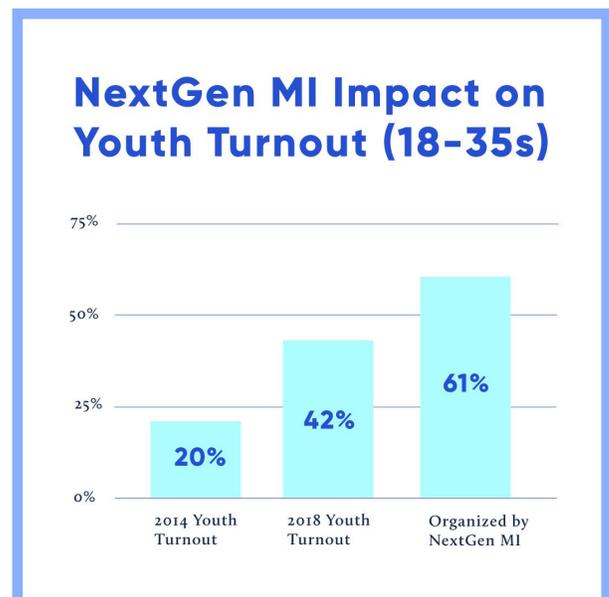
	2014 Turnout	2018 Turnout	Percentage Increase
18-35	20%	42%	22 pts
All Ages	42%	57%	15 pts

NextGen America’s program was key to victory

In 2018, NextGen Michigan ran a massive face-to-face field organizing program, a digital advertising program aimed at motivating nearly 1 million unlikely-to-vote young people, and an experiment-informed Get Out The Vote mail program. With Michigan’s voter file updated, it is clear NextGen’s comprehensive mobilization program helped play a decisive role in helping Democrats win nearly every statewide election and flip key Congressional districts. Michigan is key to Democrats winning back the White House in two years, and the lessons learned from NextGen’s program will be critical for victory in 2020.

FIELD: Talking to young people in person is the most effective tactic

Young Michiganders, who are not traditionally targeted by political campaigns, are the ones Democrats need to win in 2020. They are willing to show up and vote, but only if we actively engage and mobilize them. Our team helped boost youth turnout by training folks to organize in their own communities — 91% of our organizing team was from the Michigan towns, cities, and campuses they were organizing, more than any other state in our program. NextGen also partnered closely with local grassroots organizations, such as the Sunrise Movement, Voters Not Politicians, and Michigan Student Power Network, to build capacity and power.



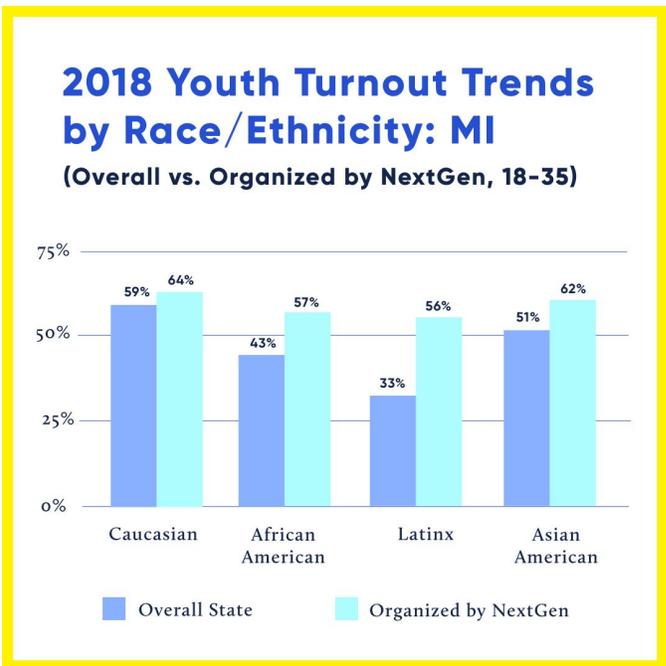
As the above graph shows, **61% of young Michiganders** organized¹ by NextGen turned out to vote — 19 points higher than their age cohort writ large. As shown in the table below, our year-long voter registration efforts increased turnout dramatically, as did the canvassing and pledge-to-vote organizing programs we ran in the fall.

Tactic	# of People	% Turnout
Registered to Vote by NextGen	39,353	59%
Pledged to Vote by NextGen	23,676	70%
Canvassed by NextGen	12,008	46%

In competitive US House districts, the youth vote helped pushed candidates across the finish line. Young people truly made the difference in MI-08, where Elissa Slotkin beat incumbent Mike Bishop by 13,098 votes. Michigan’s 8th district is home to Michigan State University and Lansing Community College, where NextGen had over 300 volunteers. NextGen registered 4,750 young people, knocked on nearly 20,000 doors and sent 29,355 texts in the district. **67% of the young people** organized by NextGen Michigan in the 8th district cast a ballot -- 19 points higher than the district’s overall youth (18-35) turnout rate. Youth turnout in the neighboring 11th District was similarly impressive, as Haley Stevens defeated Lena Epstein to flip the district blue.

District	Turnout (All Ages)		Youth Turnout (18-35)			Increased Turnout of NextGen Targets
	2014 Overall	2018 Overall	2014 Overall	2018 Overall	Organized by NextGen	
MI-8	47%	64%	23%	48%	67%	+19 points
MI-11	48%	65%	24%	51%	67%	+16 points

Following a [drop in turnout](#) of Black voters in Michigan in 2016, NextGen doubled down on its efforts to organize young people of color across the state. Michigan was a key state for our [Black Lives Rising](#) program. In collaboration with organizations run by and for young Black people, like Color of Change PAC, WokeVote, Black Futures Lab, and [millennial media outlet Blavity](#), NextGen hosted events and created unique digital ads to boost Black youth turnout. Overall, our field program had a disproportionate impact with the young people of color we organized across the state of Michigan, as they turned out up to **23 percentage points higher** than the young people of color that our program did not reach.

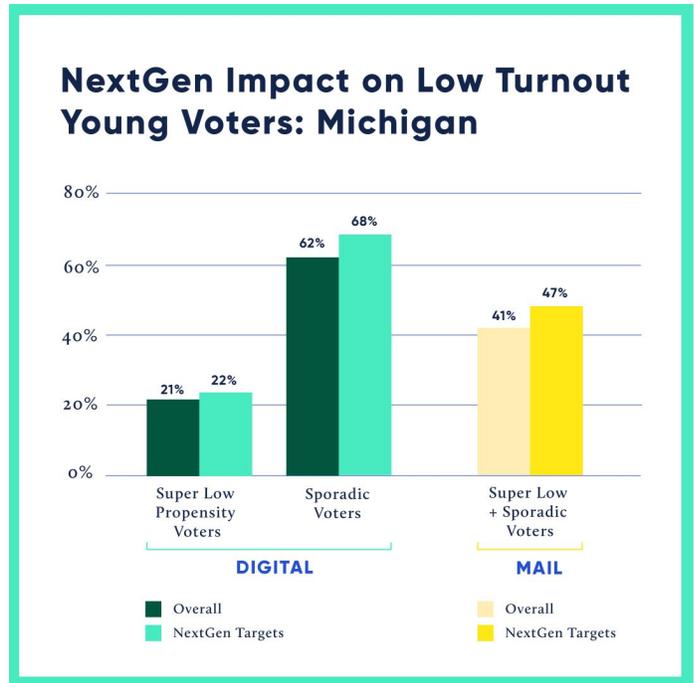


¹ “Organized” includes young people who were registered, canvassed, or committed to vote by NextGen’s field and mail programs.

DIGITAL + MAIL: An effective youth program talks to young people where they are... and often

To get them to vote, campaigns and organizations must talk to young people where they are. A smart young voter program cannot be limited to face-to-face conversations, it must also include a digital, mail and texting program to reach young voters who are more difficult to reach in person. NextGen Michigan ran a 9-week digital ad program aimed at turning out young people who either have never voted before or are sporadic voters at best. Young voters targeted by our digital program turned out up to **6 points higher** than the young voters we didn't target. Similarly, we sent get-out-the-vote mail to over 500,000 Michiganders, and those voters turned out **6 points higher** than those we did not send mail to.

Analysis shows that if NextGen Michigan talked to a young person through a multitude of different mediums (in person, via text, online, in the mail), the more likely they were to vote. 44% of the young people NextGen MI talked to by only one method cast a ballot, while **84% of the young people** NextGen talked to through three different channels voted. It's clear -- to mobilize this crucial demographic in 2020, Democrats need to start engaging young people now and talk to them where they are often.



What's Next?

In 2020, Michigan will be at the center of attention. A successful Democratic presidential candidate will need to galvanize young people and people of color to win Michigan's coveted 16 electoral votes, and NextGen is already on the ground putting in the work to help them.

The youth vote turned out in full force in November, and on-campus polling places at Michigan State University, University of Michigan Ann Arbor, Eastern Michigan University were key to increased turnout. However, polling sites on only three campuses is not enough. This year, NextGen Michigan will organize to get polling locations on-campus at Ferris State University, Central Michigan University and Saginaw Valley State University to ensure students at these universities are able to easily vote in 2020.

NextGen organizers and volunteers are continuing to organize young people on college campuses and in communities. In the spring, NextGen will host Youth Vote town halls with newly elected Reps. to introduce them to the young people who helped power them to office and to hold them accountable to their campaign promises on issues like climate action, gun safety, and college affordability. 2019 might be an off-cycle year, but NextGen Michigan continues to be hard at work expanding our democracy and ensuring young people can make their voices heard.

