



**To:** NextGen Virginia Allies and Supporters

**From:** Carter Black, Virginia State Youth Director

**Date:** April 11th, 2019

**Re:** New Voter File Data Shows Impact of NextGen Virginia on 2018 Midterms

NextGen Virginia began organizing young people in the 2017 statewide election, when NextGen registered more than 20,000 young people, organized on 26 campuses, and helped three statewide Democrats take power in Richmond. Young voter (18-35) turnout in 2017 reached 28% -- about 8% higher than in 2013 -- and helped Democrats win 15 seats in the House of Delegates. In 2018, NextGen built upon that 2017 momentum and fortified progressive youth infrastructure in Virginia. Ahead of November, NextGen mobilized young voters to help flip three highly contested Congressional districts from red to blue and overwhelmingly [re-elect Senator Tim Kaine](#).

	2014 Turnout	2018 Turnout	Percentage Increase
<b>18-35</b>	20%	41%	+21 pts
<b>All Ages</b>	41%	59%	+18 pts

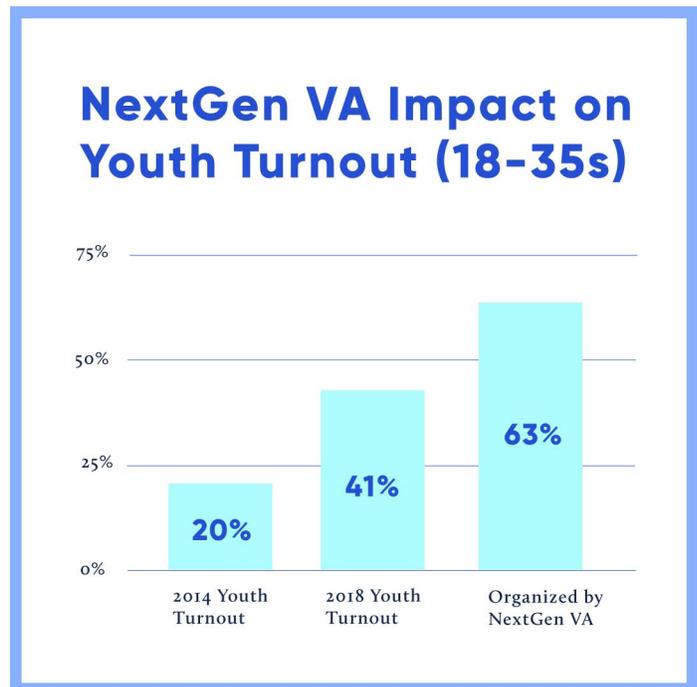
While turnout was high across all ages in 2018, the turnout rate of young Virginians increased disproportionately to the general public, propelling Democrats to office up and down the ticket. A historic **41% of young Virginians (18-35)** cast a ballot last November -- up 21 points over the state's young voter turnout rate in 2014. Furthermore, young Virginians were a larger bloc of all voters than in any other midterm year, increasing their vote share [from 8% in '14 to 13% in '18](#). According to [Catalist](#), the increase in the youth vote largely favored Democrats. Democrats won both white and non-white young voters by considerable margins -- winning young Virginians of color by an incredible 73 points and white young Virginians by 14 points.

**NextGen America's program was key to victory**

In 2018, NextGen Virginia ran a massive face-to-face field organizing program, a digital advertising program aimed at motivating over 270,000 unlikely-to-vote young people, and an experiment-informed Get Out The Vote mail program. With Virginia's voter file updated, it is clear NextGen's comprehensive mobilization program helped play a decisive role in electing progressives, such as Tim Kaine, Elaine Luria, Jennifer Wexton, and Abigail Spanberger, to office. As Democrats look to flip the state legislature this year, the lessons learned from NextGen's 2018 program are critical.

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

Young Virginians, who are not traditionally targeted by political campaigns, are the ones Democrats need to win in 2019 to flip the House of Delegates and the State



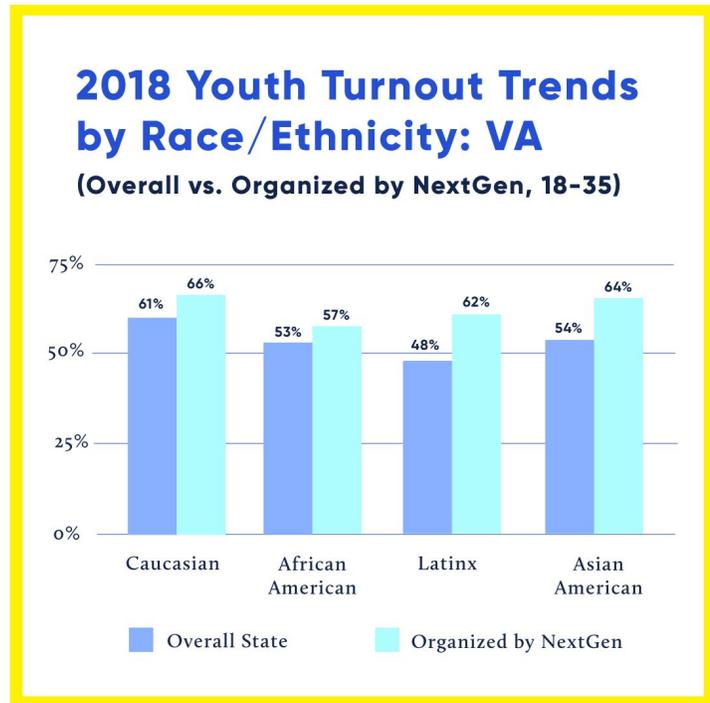


Senate. They are willing to show up and vote, but only if we actively engage and mobilize them. In Virginia, the young people we began organizing in 2017 turned out **10 points higher** than those we started talking to in 2018. Voting is habit forming, and it pays off to start connecting with young people early in the cycle.

As the graph above shows, **63% of young Virginians** organized<sup>1</sup> by the NextGen field program turned out to vote, **22 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 pledge-to-vote program that we ran in the fall.

Tactic	# of People	% Turnout
Registered to Vote by NextGen	24,788	65%
Pledged to Vote by NextGen	28,940	67%

Following a drop in turnout of Black voters nationwide in 2016, NextGen doubled down on its efforts to organize young people of color across the Commonwealth. NextGen emphasized organizing at community colleges that serve minority populations and HBCUs. **64% of the students NextGen registered to vote at Hampton University and 46% of registrants at Virginia Union University cast ballot**, far surpassing the statewide turnout of 41%. Overall, our field program had a disproportionate impact with young people of color, as shown in the graph on the next page.



**RED-TO-BLUE: NextGen made the difference in crucial Congressional districts**

In VA-02, NextGen’s presence helped tip the scales in favor of Elaine Luria (D) over incumbent Scott Taylor (R). In a race that was decided by 6,113 votes, 69% of young people organized by NextGen Virginia cast a ballot -- 34 points higher than the district’s overall youth (18-35) turnout rate. Similarly, the young people organized by NextGen in VA-10 and VA-07 turned out 8 and 17 points higher than youth district-wide (see below).

District	Turnout (All Ages)		Youth Turnout (18-35)			
	2014 Overall	2018 Overall	2014 Overall	2018 Overall	Organized by NextGen	Increased Turnout of NextGen Targets
VA-2	38%	56%	16%	35%	69%	+34 points
VA-7	48%	64%	24%	46%	63%	+17 points

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

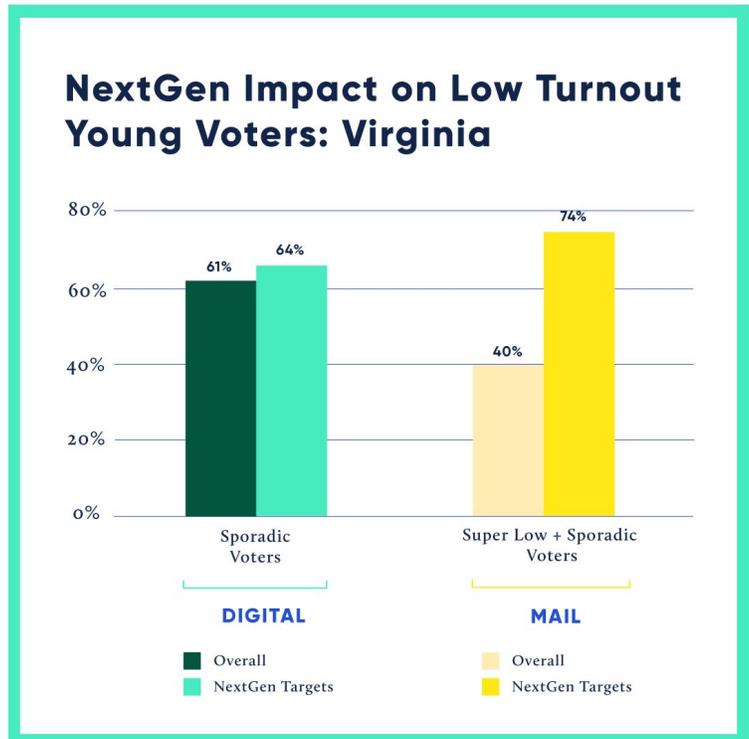
VA-10	44%	64%	22%	46%	54%	+8 points
-------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----------

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

To get young people to vote, campaigns and organizations must talk to them 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 Virginia ran a 11-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 3 points higher** than the young voters we didn't target. Similarly, we sent get-out-the-vote mail to over 186,000 Virginians, and these voters turned out **34 points higher** than those we did not send mail to (read: mail works with young people!).

Analysis shows that if NextGen Virginia talked to a young person through a multitude of different mediums (in person, via text, online, in the mail), they were more likely to vote. **48%** of the young people NextGen VA talked to by only one method cast a ballot, while **75%** of the young people NextGen talked to through three different channels (field, mail, digital and text) 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?***

Young voters are key to sustaining Virginia's blue wave in 2019. Democratic candidates will need to galvanize young people to flip the Virginia state legislature, and NextGen is on the ground putting in the work to do so. NextGen Virginia will mobilize young voters in up to 18 House of Delegates districts and up to 10 State Senate districts in an effort to flip both chambers blue. Before Election Day, NextGen plans to register at least 12,000 students to vote across the state. Energizing voters is even more difficult than usual during an off-election year, which is why NextGen is already engaging young voters on the issues at stake this November.

In addition to registering young people to vote and organizing on college campuses and in communities, NextGen Virginia will continue its fight to expand access to the ballot box for young Virginians. Efforts will include a petitioning campaign to inform students about limited ballot access in Virginia, now the [second-hardest state to vote in](#) nationwide, and campus-specific campaigns urging teachers and administrators to give students Election Day off to maximize their ability to cast a ballot. 2019 is a critical election year for Virginia, and NextGen is already hard at work expanding our democracy and ensuring young people can make their voices heard.