

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NextGen Michigan Activated the Youth Vote

State's largest youth vote organization mobilizes young voters to vote-by-mail at unprecedented numbers

NEXTGEN MICHIGAN 2020: BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL SPEND: **\$5,450,494.50**

TOTAL STAFF ON THE GROUND: **66**

TOTAL VOLUNTEERS: **1,143**

TOTAL CAMPUSES WITH PROGRAM: **14**

TOTAL YOUNG VOTERS REGISTERED: **13,340**

TOTAL PLEDGE TO VOTES COLLECTED: **33,482**

TOTAL YOUNG VOTERS REACHED WITH DIGITAL ADS: **775,182**

TOTAL CALLS MADE: **795,316**

TOTAL TEXTS SENT: **2,520,509**

TOTAL PIECES OF DIRECT MAIL SENT: **570,623**

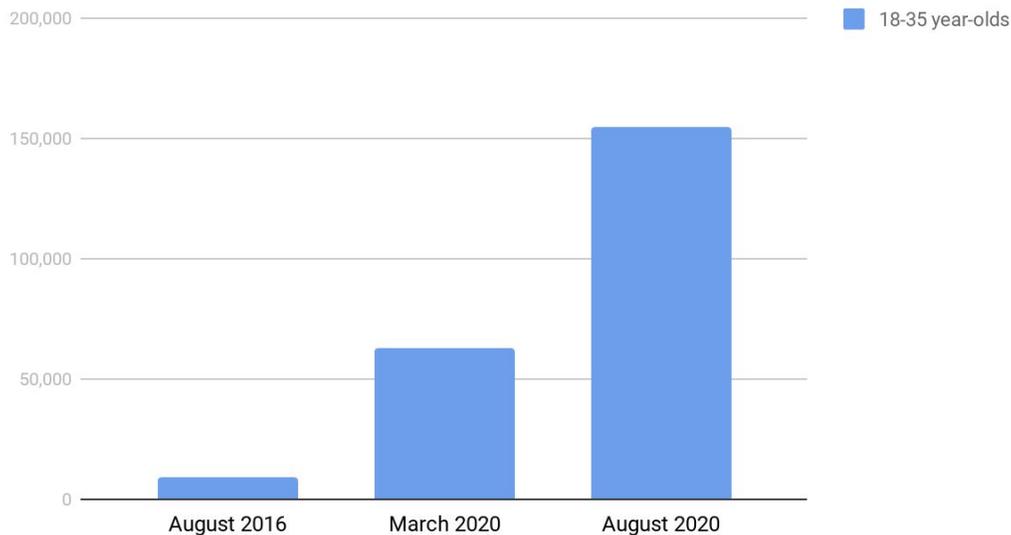
DETROIT, MI — Today, Michigan will head to the polls to vote in the most consequential election in recent history. NextGen Michigan's pivot to digital organizing played a central role in mobilizing young voters and ensuring they practice their right to vote safely amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"More than 570,000 young Michiganders requested absentee ballots for the November election," said **Jay Williamson, NextGen Michigan State Director**. "That's an increase of 324% over the number of absentee ballots cast by young voters in 2016. This proves that the idea that young people don't care about voting is a myth; they've always cared, but their voices have been purposefully and systematically suppressed. No reason absentee voting and same-day voter registration have uplifted the voices of thousands of Michigan's young voters and resulted in storming the ballot box. If anyone can turn the tide this year in Michigan, it's young people."

NextGen Michigan has been on the ground rallying the youth vote since 2017. We've mobilized voters under 35 for the midterm elections, local primaries in 2019, 2019 local and municipal elections, and now the 2020 election cycle. In 2016, when Donald Trump won in Michigan, it was by only 10,704 votes. In 2018, we registered almost four times that many people to vote. Youth voter turnout also tripled that year, which helped Democrats win all statewide offices, flip two United States House seats and protect the United States Senate seat.

Thanks to new election laws, coupled with a global pandemic, the state has seen an increasingly high number of young voters requesting absentee ballots dating back to the March and August primaries. In comparison to the August 2016 primary, more than 145,000 young voters requested absentee ballots, according to data from political consultant Mark Grebner.

Voted by absentee



The total number of absentee ballots requested for the 2020 general election is more than four times higher than the number of absentee ballots returned in 2016. These increases show young voters are engaged and ready to make their voices heard.

The stakes of an election have never been higher in Michigan. While younger generations already faced massive challenges to their livelihood -- from a ballooning student debt crisis to an environmental mess left by past generations to mass racial injustice -- voters were confronted with unprecedented public health and economic crisis this year that almost immediately cast a shadow on the single-core tenet of our democracy: voting.

With a dual goal of revitalizing grassroots democracy and electing progressive candidates up and down the ballot, NextGen Michigan ran an innovative organizing program that reached young voters where they are: on campus, in their communities, and online. NextGen Michigan deployed a team of 66 staffers, organizers and fellows on college campuses and youth-dense communities around the Great Lakes State and invested a total of 5.4 million in turning out young voters to deliver Michigan's 16 electoral votes to a Democratic president, send Senator Gary Peters back to the Senate, and defend the Democratic House gains from the midterms.

In March, COVID-19 forced us to shift to a digital-first approach for the safety of our team and Michigan voters. Some of our digital efforts included:

- The Green Week of Action highlighting Earth Day

- A Pride month concert with Flint-native LGBTQIA artist Tunde Olaniran
- Called more than 100,000 Detroiters to get out the vote for Rashida Tlaib
- Sent text messages to 300,000 Michiganders on National Vote by Mail Day
- Sent 100,000 text messages on National Voter Registration Day
- A two-episode web series, 'Bridging the Gap', to connect the issues young, Black Detroiters care about to the ballot

"This year, we've seen unprecedented racial uprising and social unrest, and we've encouraged voters to translate their emotions into action," said **Lateshia Parker, NextGen Michigan Press Secretary**. "Voting is one of the most powerful forms of protest young people have available to them, and kicking the officials who allow this mess out of office is one way we can start to win back our power."

Young people are the largest eligible voting bloc in the country, and they are overwhelmingly progressive. NextGen Michigan knows when young people turn out, Democrats win.

About NextGen Michigan

After a nail-bitingly close defeat by Donald Trump in 2016, all eyes are on Michigan to remove Trump from the White House in 2020. NextGen Michigan is committed to delivering Michigan's 16 electoral votes to a Democratic president, sending Senator Gary Peters back to the Senate, and defending Democratic House gains from the midterms. Michigan offers competitive down-ballot races with the opportunity for Democrats to take control of the State House by gaining four seats. NextGen Michigan built an aggressive \$3.5 million midterm program that knocked on over 125,000 doors, sent over 474,000 text messages to young voters, and organized on 61 campuses to deliver a historic youth voter turnout of 31% -- up 10 points from the last midterm election. For more information on NextGen America's plan to remove Trump from the White House, flip the Senate, and elect progressives up and down the ballot please visit, <https://nextgenamerica.org/2020-plan/>.

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