

To: Governor-elect Dr. Ralph Northam, Lieutenant Governor-elect Justin Fairfax, Attorney General Mark Herring, DPVA Chairwoman Susan Swecker, DPVA Executive Director Chris Bolling & Interested Parties  
From: The Virginia Young Democrats (VAYD) – James Lewis, President  
Date: November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
Re: The Youth Vote in the 2017 Election - Delivering a Blue Virginia (again)

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### Executive Summary:

- Young voters helped elect Governor-elect Northam, Lieutenant Governor-elect Justin Fairfax, Attorney General Mark Herring, and a host of House of Delegates candidates.
- Virginia Young Democrats (VAYD) made **more than 121,000 voter contact** attempts from October 1<sup>st</sup> to Election Day.
- The youth vote (18-29) performance was **69 percent** and **61 percent** for older millennials (30-44).
- **Turnout was up 8 points** at college and **7 points** at millennial precincts.
- Young voters cast **252,000-plus ballots** for Governor-elect Northam, representing slightly more than his margin of victory.
- Virginia's youth voter turnout has **doubled** since 2009.

### The Youth Vote – Delivering Virginia:

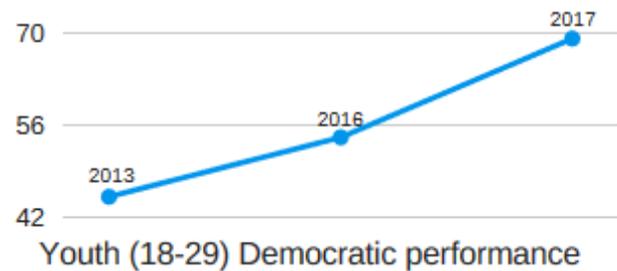
Young people (18-29) delivered **more than 252,000 ballots** for Governor-elect Northam, slightly more than (108 percent) the number of votes by which he won.

#### Performance:

With a **69 percent of the youth vote**, Governor-elect Northam performed the best of any Democratic candidate **amongst young voters (18-29)** in recent history.

The massively strong support from young people and older millennials helped Governor-elect Northam overcome losing margins amongst voters older than 45.

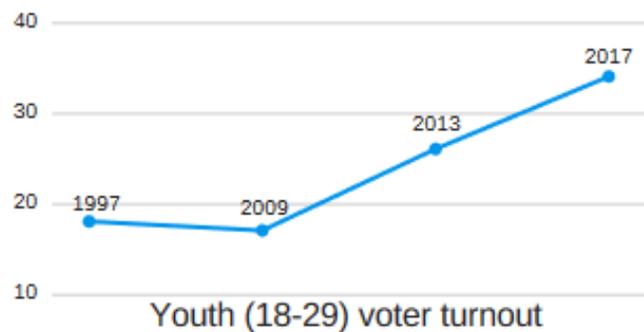
The Democratic performance amongst young voters has **climbed 7 points**, from the 63 percent level that delivered Virginia to Sec. Clinton in 2016 and **24 points** since helping to elect Governor Terry McAuliffe in 2013.



#### Turnout:

Turnout was way up across college and millennial precincts. Turnout at **millennial-heavy precincts**, which delivered more than 80 percent of their votes for the Democratic ticket, was **up seven percent** over 2016 and 2013 levels. College precincts saw a **turnout growth of eight points** over 2016 and 2013 levels, with a 70-plus percent Democratic performance.<sup>1</sup>

While this represents a historic turnout increase, Virginia's young voters have been showing up to vote for a long time. Since 2009, Virginia's youth voter turnout has **doubled from 17 percent to 34 percent**. By comparison, the young voter turnout in New Jersey declined by one percent from 19 percent in 2009 to 18 percent in 2017.<sup>2</sup>

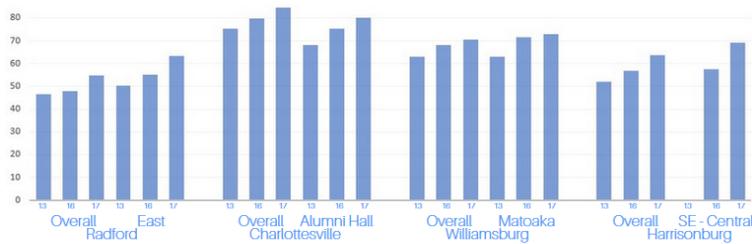


<sup>1</sup> VPAP. (2017). Election Results by Demographics. Retrieved from <https://www.vpap.org/electionresults/statewide-election-8098/demogs/>

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Youth Voter Turnout Doubled between 2009 and 2017, Estimates Suggest. CIRCLE. (2017, November 11). Retrieved from <https://civicyouth.org/virginia-youth-voter-turnout-doubled-between-2009-and-2017-estimates-suggest/>

### College Students Continue Driving Communities Blue:

Fifty percent of communities experiencing the largest positive shift in Democratic performance, from 2013-2017, contain four-year universities and have VAYD chapters: the cities of Harrisonburg (16.8 percent), Charlottesville (10.6 percent), Williamsburg (10.1 percent) and Radford (7.8 percent).<sup>3</sup>



In every community, except for Charlottesville, student voters are overperforming and driving this trend as the campus precinct outperforms the community's overall Democratic performance. In Charlottesville, the eighty-plus percent performance amongst student voters continues to support the city's overall positive trend in Democratic

performance.

### VAYD's Impact:

VAYD's 49 chapters in high schools, on college campuses, and in communities came together to organize, register voters, canvass neighborhoods, phonebank and get out the vote with great success. Our efforts helped lead to another Democratic sweep of the statewide offices and double-digit gains in the House of Delegates.

Our preliminary report, with just under half of all chapters providing data, shows **more than 121,000 voter contact attempts** and **557 hours of campaign volunteer work**, including:

- **65,000 doors knocked,**
- **39,000 phone calls made and**
- **16,800 texts sent.**

We hosted three statewide canvasses:

- **Delegate-elect Schuyler VanValkenburg (HD72)** with Governor-elect Northam. We **knocked nearly 900 doors.**
- **Delegate-elect Kathy Tran (HD-42)** with Congressman Don Beyer and the 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Democratic Committee. We **knocked 150 packets.**
- **Delegate-elect Chris Hurst (HD-12)** as part of our Gun Violence Prevention Policy Summit. We **knocked more than 500 doors** for Chris Hurst.



*VanValkenburg Canvass with Governor-elect Northam. We knocked nearly 900 doors.*

A few other highlights of statewide, regional and local efforts to help Democrats, include our:

- Northern Region Phonebank for **Del. John Bell** and **Delegate-elect Jennifer Carrol Foy (HD-02)**,
- Joint VAYD-LGBT+ Democrats canvass for **Delegate-elect Danica Roem (HD-13)**,
- Canvass joined by the **Young Democrats of Maryland** and **Eastern Panhandle West Virginia Young Democrats**,
- Coordination of out-of-state Young Democrats to phonebank and canvass in partnership with the Democratic National Committee (DNC), Young Democrats of America (YDA) and College Democrats of America (CDA),
- **Metro Richmond Area** young candidates fundraiser,
- Support of **seven Get Out the Vote campaigns** on college campuses and in communities,
- Campus voter registration drives with NextGen,
- Contribution to **Lt. Governor-elect Justin Fairfax for a Richmond Free Press ad** , and
- **Hampton Roads Young Democrats'** canvasses for Delegate-elect Cheryl Turpin (HD-85) and others.

<sup>3</sup> VPAP. (2017). Change in Party Performance. Retrieved from <https://www.vpap.org/visuals/visual/change-party-performance/>

## Recommendations Moving Forward:

### *Investing in Young Voters is Paying Dividends*

It would be difficult to imagine a statewide Democratic ticket or key House candidates that have done more to invest in young voters and young voters rewarded them at the polls. With significant gains over Sec. Clinton's margins with young people, Governor-elect Northam significantly outperformed all statewide candidates in recent history. As young voters continue to be a key part of Virginia's blue coalition, candidates should follow the lead of the Northam-Fairfax-Herring ticket and invest in VAYD and young people.

### *Increase college campus polling places*

As discussed above, young voters are helping to drive at least half of the largest Democratic shifts in the Commonwealth and are delivering a large share of votes for the Democratic ticket. Half of these locations have campus polling locations and the other two have polling locations that are easily accessible from campus.



*Gun Violence Prevention Policy Summit & Canvass for Chris Hurst. We knocked more than 500 doors.*

DPVA, VAYD and local committees should collaborate to push for more campus or campus-adjacent polling places. Our Republican friends have long used this tactic. In 2017, the polling location at Liberty University offered more than 1,200 ballots (93 percent) to Gillespie.<sup>4</sup>

### *Continue engaging NOW for 2018*

Much of the growth in the youth Democratic performance can be explained by exciting, young House of Delegates candidates and the statewide ticket's long-term investment in young people and in VAYD. It's imperative that the Party capitalize **on this moment** to build for 2018 and for moving forward with millennials, soon-to-be voters and high school students.

Historically, the youth vote (18-25) is modeled to decline 8 percent by VPAP. This year, turnout was up across the board, but 2016-to-2017 **turnout was up eight points on college precincts**<sup>5</sup> and **seven points at millennial precincts**.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, turnout was only up three points for middle-aged precincts and four points for 61+ precincts, precincts Governor-elect Northam lost.<sup>7</sup>

We need to continue targeting and engaging youth voters to maintain this level of Democratic performance and turnout, because an **un-or-under-engaged youth voter will not vote**.

### **Context:**

Starting in 2008, young voters have been critical to turning and keeping Virginia blue. In 2012, young voters again delivered Virginia for President Barack Obama, despite voters over the age of 45 strongly favoring Gov. Mitt Romney.<sup>8</sup> That trend continued into 2016. Sec. Clinton's margin of victory amongst young voters (18-34) was 34 points.<sup>9</sup> This strong Democratic performance from young voters kept Virginia blue, despite Trump winning older Virginians.<sup>10</sup> The trend was repeated in the 2017 election.

In the coming years, young voters will continue to represent a growing percentage of the electorate. According to the US Census Bureau<sup>11</sup> millennials surpassed Baby Boomers as the largest living generation in April 2016.

<sup>4</sup> State Board of Election. (2017). 2017 November General. Retrieved from <http://results.elections.virginia.gov/vaelections/2017%20November%20General/Site/Locality/LYNCHBURG%20CITY/Governor.html>

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Northam won these precincts with **70-plus percent of the vote**.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Northam won these precincts with **80-plus percent of the vote**.

<sup>7</sup> VPAP. (2017). Election Results by Demographics. Retrieved from <https://www.vpap.org/electionresults/statewide-election-8098/demogs/>

<sup>8</sup> At Least 80 Electoral Votes Depended on Youth. CIRCLE. (2016, November 7). Retrieved from <http://civicyouth.org/at-least-80-electoral-votes-depended-on-youth/>

<sup>9</sup> 2016 Election: Exit Poll (Millennials (ages 18-34)). Survey Monkey. Retrieved from

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/elections/map/2016/us?poll=sm-exit-millennials-cps>

<sup>10</sup> 2016 Election: Exit Poll (Seniors (ages 65+)). Survey Monkey. Retrieved from <https://www.surveymonkey.com/elections/map/2016/us?poll=sm-exit-age65-cps>

<sup>11</sup> USA. Census Bureau. (2016, April 21). Estimates of U.S. Population by Age and Sex: April 1, 2010, to July 1, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2016/cb16-tps95.html>