

# Low youth voter turnout essay sample

[Life](#), [Adolescence](#)



Voting is the civic duty of every American citizen that is eligible to vote. However, there was a low young voter turnout in favor of Obama in recent elections. According to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, the young voter turnout decreased by two percent from 51 percent in the 2008 elections to 49 percent in the 2012 elections. There could be three plausible causes for this political phenomenon: apathy, lack of marriage, and voting restrictions.

In Hunk 15: Political Participation, or Who Votes, apathy is a professional explanation for low turnout in the US. In relation to the low young voter turnout, voters (especially ages 22-29) most likely did not vote because they were disillusioned with Obama's performance since the 2008 elections. Unemployment was 7.9 percent on Election Day which was higher than when Obama took office, the economy is still struggling. Voters ages 18-29 were either in college or trying to find work which is very challenging considering the rise of tuition and the difficulty of finding a job in this economy. According to a Gallup survey, a full 44 percent of 18-29 year olds were unemployed or underemployed. This year, Obama suffered a six percent drop in support from young voters compared with 2008 levels. In 2008, 66 percent of young people voted for Obama, while only 31 percent voted for Republican candidate John McCain. However in 2012, Obama received 60 percent of the youth vote in contrast to Republican candidate Mitt Romney's 37 percent, according to The New York Times Exit Polls. Young voters were struggling in the economy, and they felt Obama did not accomplish anything in his previous term.

If these young voters were struggling to earn some type of income, marriage would be the last thing on their minds since it is so expensive. Astonishingly, the percentage of single men rose from 59 percent in 2008 to 64 percent in 2012, while the percentage of single women increased from 45 percent in 2008 to 50 percent in 2012. If there is no financial security, then marriage will most likely not even be considered. This is unfortunate because married people are more likely to vote than single people since they have a greater sense of civic responsibility.

In 2008, Obama and the Democrats saw a huge turnout of minority voters because their agenda pushing for federal support for medical care, housing, and education. However, since the November 2010 elections, Republicans have control over many statehouses. This led to more than a dozen states imposing several restrictions including voter ID laws, limiting early voting periods, and enforcing new constraints on voter registration drives or redrawing the electoral maps. With the voter ID laws, twenty-five percent of African Americans and 16 percent of Latinos lack such identification, or are less likely to have it with them compared to 9 percent of whites, according to the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University. The numbers go even lower for young voters. Thirty-three states have passed laws requiring identification for voting. Five — Pennsylvania, Indiana, Kansas, Tennessee and Georgia — have what are called strict photo identification requirements, meaning voters must present specific kinds of photo IDs before voting. Six states — Michigan, South Dakota, Idaho, Louisiana, Hawaii and Florida — have less strict photo requirements, meaning voters may be able to sign affidavits or have poll workers who recognize them verify their identities.

Instead of “weed[ing] out fraudulent votes and preserv[ing] the integrity of the ballot box” as Republicans have said, it has actually increased obstacles for Democratic voters especially young minorities in battleground states.

Two swing states, crucial to the presidential elections, passed laws disenfranchising young minority voters. Ohio passed a law eliminating early voting on a Sunday, while Florida passed a law eliminating voting on the Sunday before the Election Day. This particular Sunday in Florida is when African-American churches planned “souls to the polls” drives for members of their congregations specifically the young voters. In another attempt to reduce the number of young minority Democratic voters, electoral maps were drawn in such a way to reduce minority voting strength in predominantly Hispanic or African-American areas. It is all about intimidation. These measures were meant to reduce the amount of minority voters. Yet this impacted and trickled down to the young voters.

If young adults see the frustration and hassle their parents are going through or even close friends, then the most common response would be to avoid the whole process. Unlike the other hypothesis about apathy where the young voter being personally uninterested about voting, these young voters were apprehensive about the restrictions and new laws. Therefore, it only makes sense if they did not want to vote or became less engaged to vote or register to vote. All in all, the low young voter turnout for the 2012 elections could have three possible causes. Apathy affected many young voters simply because they did not care anymore, or have the internal drives or personal efficacy to go out and vote. Then there's the lack of marriage, where young people are refusing to get married because of a declining economy, and

hence are less likely to vote. Lastly, the young voter turnout was low because of voting restrictions which provide to many complications for such a simple process.

#### References:

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