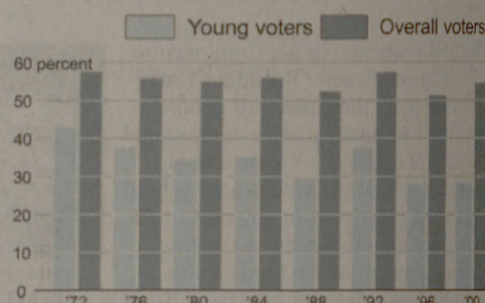


# Candidate appeals to young voters fail

## Young voters still not rocking the vote

Despite some unorthodox appearances on MTV and late night talk shows, candidates still find the youth vote elusive. Census studies and Voter News Service exit polls show young voters have been steadily drifting away from the voting booth for the last three

Voter turnout in presidential elections since 1972 for voters from ages 18 to 24



SOURCE: Committee for the Study of American Electorate; Voter News Service

By Will Lester  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Politicians — remember President Clinton in 1994? — have put up with some personal questions in their quest to earn the affection and support of millions of young voters.

Among people age 18 to 24, apathy toward the political process has grown, evident in the diminishing number of young voters who have turned up at the polls over the past three decades.

In the 2000 election, one of the closest in U.S. history, just 29 percent of eligible voters ages 18-24 — about 8.4 million — cast a ballot for president.

There was a brief surge in voting by young people in 1992, when Clinton, Ross Perot and the first President Bush fought for the White House. That year, close to 38 percent of young voters went to the polls. Four years later, however, when Clinton — who answered “usually briefs” at an MTV town hall meeting — won re-election, the percentage of young voters had dropped to around 28 percent.

Still, the candidates have worked to capture the youth vote.

Democratic presidential hopeful Howard Dean has undertaken “Generation Dean.” It includes house parties, social events for young professionals and sessions to raise political awareness.

Rival John Edwards has proposed offering a year of tuition to college freshmen willing to work or serve their communities for 10 hours a week.

This appeal to young voters will be front and center Tuesday night when Rock the Vote, an organization that tries to increase youth involvement in politics, sponsors a 90-minute town hall meeting with the candidates in Boston. The session will be aired on CNN.

Tony Cani, a leader of Generation Dean and a 25-year-old student at Arizona State University, said candidates need to understand that young adults' failure to vote is not a sign they don't want to be involved.

“We go to soup kitchens, we volunteer with kids because we want to see the change we're creating,” Cani said. “In the past when we've been courted, it's almost a ploy to show that a candidate is enthusiastic about young; we're props.”

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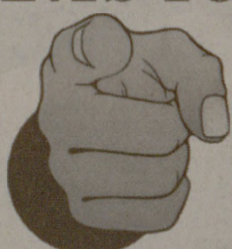
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