

Document 1

Gen Z announces itself in midterms with Democratic boost, historic wins

By Samantha Chery, *The New York Times*, November 11, 2022



Gen Z candidates, from left, Maxwell Frost, Nabeela Syed and Joe Vogel all won their elections this week.

Generation Z voters this year boosted candidates in tight midterm races who acknowledged their political potential and promised to tackle what they care most about, youth activist organizations said.

The result, because of how their priorities aligned with Democrats', helped them combat a predicted Republican wave.

"Gen Zers are making it clear that they're voting based on where you are on issues that concern them," said Andrea Pringle, voter engagement expert and executive director of the organization Registration Nation. "If the Democratic Party is the party that is benefiting, that's because they are the ones being viewed as somewhat aligned or doing something about it."

About 1 in 8 voters overall were under 30, and more than half supported Democratic candidates in the midterm elections, according to early exit polling and AP VoteCast. But support for Democrats among young voters, while still running well ahead of their support for Republicans, eroded somewhat from the 2018 midterms.

That might be because Gen Z's allegiance is to issues, not to specific political parties or candidates, said Kenisha Mahajan, a 17-year-old advocate for political and community engagement. Gen Zers are most motivated by candidates who plan to address climate change, gun violence, reproductive rights, racial justice and LGBTQ rights, activists and

candidates say. Mahajan cited as an example the defeat of Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-N.Y.), the chair of the Democratic National Campaign Committee, who, she said, didn't appeal to the youth vote.

"Complacency and the bare minimum is not enough," she said.

Mahajan isn't yet old enough to vote. But she has worked with the advocacy organization YVote since her freshman year of high school, educated herself about topics like the school-to-prison pipeline, and taught other young people about political issues through workshops and social media infographics, she said.

Online, Gen Z members confront political and cultural discourse with humor and satire, a response to the "whiplash-inducing" events of their lifetimes, said John Wihbey, associate professor of media innovation and technology at Northeastern University. "This is a generation that's lived through a huge string of school shootings," Wihbey noted. "... The rise of Trumpism and authoritarian populism, the clear evidence of human-induced climate change pressing down on us — it's been a really rough ride for Gen Z folks."

"These are issues that have been looming for generations without solutions, because corporations have had power over elected officials to stop any progress from happening," said Michele Weindling,

electoral director for the Sunrise Movement, a youth movement centered around climate change.

And so some Gen Z members sought to become elected officials themselves.

Maxwell Alejandro Frost, 25, made history in central Florida on Tuesday as one of the youngest people ever elected to Congress and its first Gen Z member. (Republican Karoline Leavitt, also 25, lost her bid in a New Hampshire swing district to be the first Gen Z congresswoman.)

Frost didn't have political experience, but he had worked as an activist for the American Civil Liberties Union and March for Our Lives, the gun violence prevention group started by Parkland, Fla., school shooting survivors. He campaigned on ending gun violence and pushing for climate reform. "I started organizing at 15 because I didn't want to get shot at my school," Frost said during his victory speech Tuesday night in Orlando. "People are yearning for bold champions who believe in the bold transformational change that we need."

Frost's history-making win came alongside others this week, particularly for Democrats. Wes Moore was elected as Maryland's first Black governor; Maura Healey, in Massachusetts, and Tina Kotek, in Oregon, became the first openly lesbian women elected governors. And Gen Z voters were instrumental in delivering a win for former organizer Summer Lee, the first Black congresswoman elected in Pennsylvania, Weindling said.

Among other motivators at the polls, "the threats against our democracy are ones that young people really have a stake in, because this is the country that we're soon going to be inheriting, and it's in deep trouble," said 25-year-old Joe Vogel, a Democrat who won a state delegate seat for Maryland's 17th District.

Vogel proudly identifies as a gay, Latino, Jewish immigrant. His campaign was also centered on ending gun violence, as well as addressing climate change and other problems that affected young people in Annapolis, such as being priced out of housing or the lack of transportation options.

He didn't accept money from corporate donors, he said, because he didn't want people to worry that he cared more about corporate interests than those of his constituents. It made some voters more inclined to donate to his campaign, he said. "We won this campaign because we stayed focused on what really

mattered, which was listening to people and really connecting with people," Vogel said.

Nabeela Syed, a Democrat who was elected as Illinois's first South Asian woman and youngest person to serve in the state legislature, said she knocked on around 15,000 to 20,000 doors to listen to her community members' concerns.

Older voters gave Syed pats on the back and fist bumps as she came to their doors, she said, and they were touched to know that a young person wanted to hear from them about issues such as property taxes and the prices of prescription drugs. As someone who's been wearing a hijab since high school, Syed said she also wanted to prioritize safety in schools for young people, from bullying and harassment prevention to "common sense gun reform." "It was important for me to make sure that the community that I was born and raised in was being heard," Syed said.

Document 2 - Biden faces a warning sign from younger voters critical to his coalition

By Jeff Zeleny, CNN, Wed November 15, 2023

Atlanta CNN — As Kerry Singleton looks ahead to the next presidential election, he's thinking back to the excitement he felt when President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris visited the historic grounds of Clark Atlanta University and Morehouse College. "I remember the energy that was here on campus that 5 day," said Singleton, a Morehouse senior, who stood in the crowd and applauded the speech on voting rights, democracy and more.

On that crisp winter day in January 2022, the president was closing in on his first year in office and Singleton and others in the audience had high hopes.

10 Since then, voting rights legislation has stalled in Congress. The Supreme Court rejected a student loan forgiveness plan. And high prices – from food to housing – are fueling economic anxieties that Singleton said have come together to dampen his enthusiasm for the possibilities of what the Biden administration could achieve.

15 "We're not expecting them to make change overnight," Singleton said in an interview this week. "But I do think that everyone is willing to hold the administration accountable for some of those promises that were made. If they don't happen, I think it's going to be a scary election."

For all of the warning signs facing the president a year before the election, apathy and skepticism from young voters is high on the list. A spokesman for the Biden campaign called the election "deeply consequential for young people," and pledged to build on a strong turnout from younger voters in the 2022 midterm elections.

20 Yet a respectful resistance toward the president comes alive in one conversation after another, with the deepest concerns touching on his age – he turns 81 next week – the economy and the Israel-Hamas war.

"If they can fund a war, they can find the money to pay off our student loans," said Rachael Carroll, who cast her first vote for president for Biden. "The cost of living is way too high right now. I don't think the economy really caters to young people."

25 Carroll said she doesn't regret her vote for Biden or Harris, particularly given the alternative of Donald Trump, but finds herself disappointed by some White House priorities.

"They made a lot of promises going into office and a lot of those have not been met," said Carroll, who graduated last year and works for a nonprofit advocacy group. She said she intends to vote for Biden again, but worries about a lack of enthusiasm she sees among people her age.

30 "It is for Biden, however, it's against Trump in the same breath," Carroll said. "A lot of times we're voting, unfortunately, for the lesser of two evils."

Kevin Munoz, a spokesman for the Biden campaign, said the election would offer a stark choice and a clear contrast next November. "We are working hard to highlight how an extreme MAGA agenda would devastate the financial security, safety, and freedom of young people," Munoz told CNN, adding: "As 35 Democrats did in 2020 and 2022, we will meet younger Americans where they are and earn their votes."

Indeed, young voters were a critical component of the president's victory – particularly here in Georgia, where Biden defeated Trump by only 11,779 votes out of nearly 5 million cast.

Exit polls in 2020 showed that voters 18 to 29 made up 20% of the Georgia electorate – the only state of the top six battlegrounds where the percentage of young voters exceeded the national share of 17%.

40 Then, Biden won young Georgia voters by 13 points, according to exit polls. But now, a year before the election, surveys show a far closer race, with voters under the age of 30 here split 46% for Trump and 44% for Biden, according to a New York Times/Siena College poll.

"You've got to vote for something," said Georgia state Sen. Nabilah Islam Parkes, a Democrat, who organized voters in 2020 to help build Biden's winning coalition.

45 "The first time around, we fired Donald Trump. This time around, if voters want to rehire Joe Biden, they want to see policies, they want to feel like the issues they're concerned about are being heard."

Islam Parkes, a Muslim American who last fall became the youngest woman elected to the Georgia Senate, said rebuilding that Democratic coalition has become more complicated given the anger many

50 younger voters have expressed over the administration’s financial support for Israel in the aftermath of the October 7 massacre of Israeli civilians by Hamas terrorists. “They don’t want to feel complicit in the funding of an ongoing war,” Islam Parkes said. “I think that young voters recognize you can’t bomb your way to peace and security.” (...)

Paul Sprowl, a senior at Morehouse College, said he “would like to see Biden pass the baton.” He said too many American politicians are reluctant to retire, which feeds mistrust in the system.

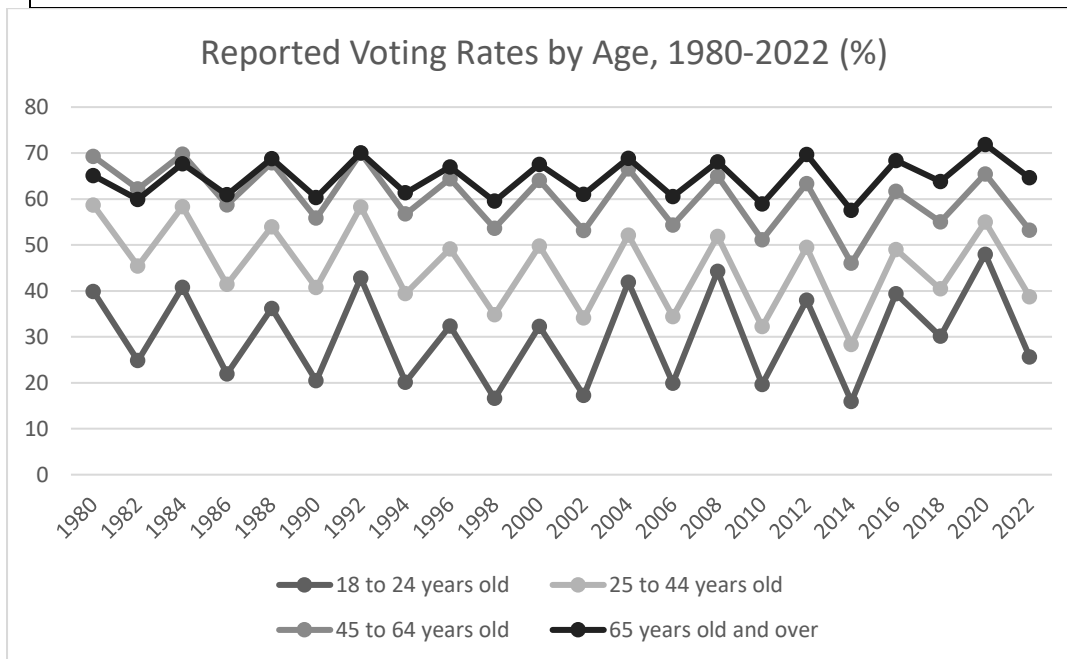
55 “My generation tries not to play into ageism, but there are some really valid concerns,” Sprowl said of Biden, who will be 82 if he wins reelection next year. (Trump would be 78 next year.) “It’s like why would you even want to work when you reach a certain age? I would be enjoying the final years of my life in peace. I think that brings a lot of mistrust.”

60 Christopher Lambry, a Morehouse freshman, said he was concerned at the softening of support for Biden among many younger Black voters, particularly men. He feared a disinformation campaign was at work that may have undermined Biden’s standing, but he also believed voters were eager for inspiration. “A lot of the lack of response from younger generations,” Lambry said, “comes because we want to see that there is still hope in the glimpse of darkness.”

65 Some of the biggest accomplishments of the Biden administration – from infrastructure funding to the lowering of prescription drug prices – don’t resonate as loudly in interviews with younger voters. Child care, affordable housing and abortion rights were expressed as far bigger priorities.

With Biden at the top of the ticket, potentially facing a rematch of the 2020 race, young voters say the burden rests on him to deliver on his promises and stir excitement about his candidacy – not take their support for granted.

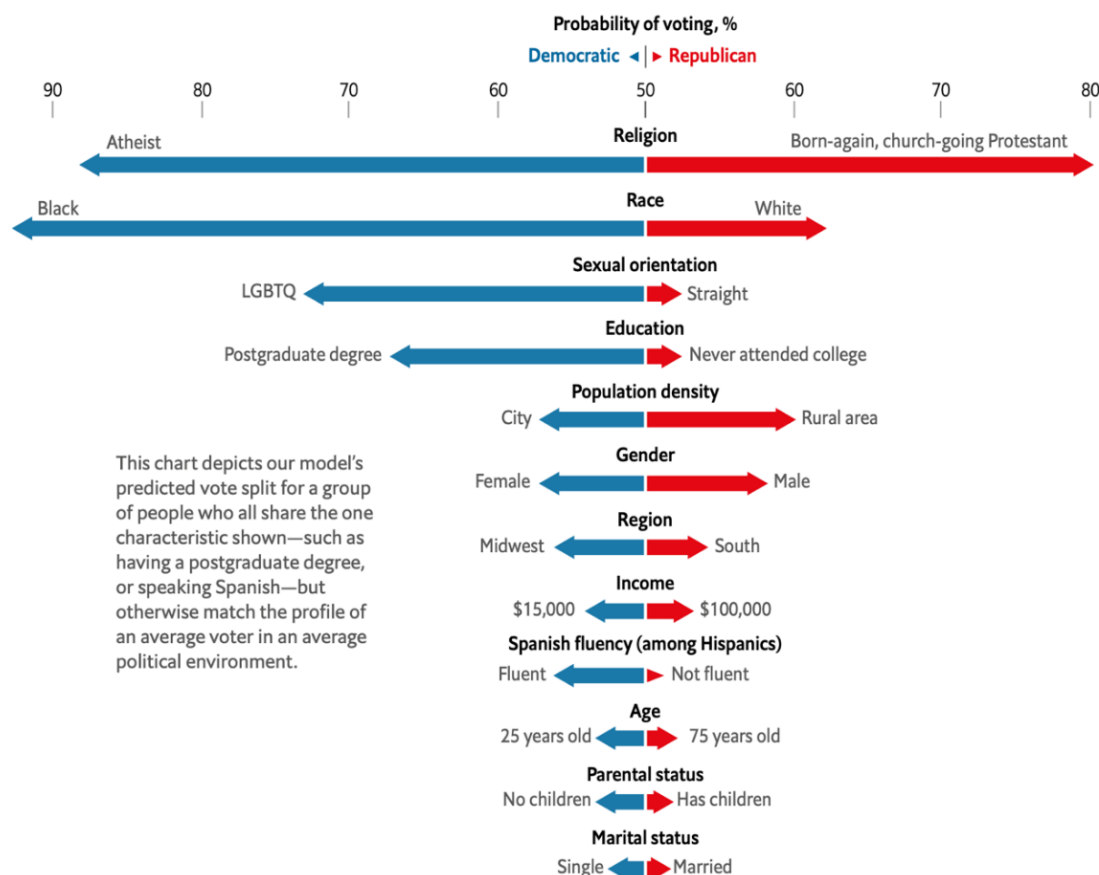
DOCUMENTS 3A and 3B



Source of the data: US Census Bureau, “Reported Voting Rates by Age, 1980-2022”, 2023.

What has the biggest effect on congressional voting intention?

Strongest predictors by demographic category



“How to forecast an American’s vote”, *The Economist*, 3 November 2018

Document 4 - Why Donald Trump is gaining ground with young voters

The Economist, 20 December 2023 (abridged)

As tastemakers, the two previous American presidents could not present a sharper contrast. Barack Obama, with his elegance and irony, still issues year-end lists of the best music, movies and books, each a triumph of accessible urbanity that blends in just enough Lizzo and “Top Gun: Maverick” to help the Abdulrazak Gurnah go down. To Mr Obama’s mix-mastery Donald Trump counterposed a signature style of ostentatious kitsch. His braggadocio, his combativeness, his gilded lairs, his manner of associating with women: all these led a New Yorker writer, Jelani Cobb, to note as far back as 2015, “in all the ways that matter, save actual performing, Donald Trump is not a politician—he’s a rapper.”

And yet, as president, Joe Biden has found a way to stand apart from both the DJ and the rapper, and from all other presidents of the modern era: he is leaving almost no cultural imprint whatsoever. John Kennedy may have altered the course of men’s fashion by not wearing a hat during his inauguration, but Mr Biden failed to spark a revival of The Staple Singers by including their music on his inauguration playlist. Aviator glasses and ice cream cones, maybe a ride in Delaware on a bicycle, are the pop signifiers, to date, of the Biden presidency.

It would, of course, be patronising to suggest that Mr Biden’s lack of engagement with the broader culture, rather than his handling of weighty affairs such as the war in Gaza, is behind his struggle to connect with young Americans. But it cannot be helping. What is clear is that he has a problem, one that encapsulates his overall challenge headed into his re-election campaign. Young voters, who were key to his win in 2020, are just not into him.

No Republican candidate for president has won most voters under the age of 30 since 1988. But a poll by the New York Times and Siena College published on December 19th found Donald Trump leading Mr Biden by

20 49% to 43% among voters aged 18 to 29. That is a swing in this poll to Mr Trump of ten points since July. According to the Pew Research Centre, in 2020 Mr Biden won that age group by 24 points, 59% to 35%.

The polling has been so dismal for Mr Biden, and also so erratic, and confidence in polling has been so shaken in recent years, that a debate has broken out among political obsessives over whether to trust the numbers. Within national polls, subgroups such as young voters comprise smaller samples and so yield larger margins of error. To control for this, a group called Split Ticket in early December aggregated subgroups across numerous national polls. The results showed Mr Biden leading Mr Trump by a diminished but still substantial margin of 16 points among voters under 30, yet by only three points when young voters were defined as those under 34. That is a sign both that there is static in the numbers, and that the danger to Mr Biden's re-election is real.

30 Republicans sense an opportunity. Joe Mitchell, a former Iowa state representative who runs a group called Run GenZ that recruits young conservative candidates, says what he hears most is that "we had more money in our pockets when Donald Trump was president". But he argues that Mr Trump's cultural heft is an advantage as it has not been since 2016. Mr Biden, he says, has passed more progressive legislation than Mr Obama but is less admired by progressives because he lacks Mr Obama's cachet. By contrast, the indictments of Mr Trump have restored his celebrity gleam. "People were displaying his mugshot in a positive way," says Mr Mitchell, who is 35 26. "He's up with the Tupacs of the world."

The Republican National Committee has created a "youth advisory council", and it staged its first primary debate in concert with a group for young conservatives. But Republicans have problems of their own. When a college student at that debate asked how the candidates would calm "fears that the Republican Party doesn't care about climate change", most of them ducked for cover. And in mid-December, five of the 16 members of the youth advisory committee quit, citing a problem evocative of the Trump years: a lack of organisation, goals and vision.

40 The latest iteration of the Harvard Youth Poll found that Americans under 30 did not much trust either probable nominee. But they trusted Mr Trump more on the economy, national security, the Israel-Hamas war, crime, immigration and strengthening the working class. They trusted Mr Biden more on such issues as climate change, abortion, gun violence and protecting democracy.

[...]

DOCUMENT 5 (on Cahier de Prépa) - Video

CBS Pittsburgh, "New data suggests Taylor Swift boosts voter registration, especially among young voters", 25 September 2023.

Document 6 – Republicans are trying harder than ever to suppress the youth vote

Victor SHI, **MSNBC**, December 10, 2023 (abridged)

As recent elections have shown, Republicans are struggling on the national, state and local levels. In 2020, Donald Trump became the first incumbent president who lost re-election since 1992. The "red wave" so many Republicans predicted for the 2022 midterm elections never materialized. This year, including November's off-year elections, Republicans faced more defeats up and down the ballot — even in states and districts historically thought of as favoring Republicans.

5 The youth vote continues to play a major role in Democrats' electoral success. A recent analysis found that Democrats maintain a 21-point advantage over Republicans with young voters. The GOP understands this problem well: As former Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker admitted earlier this year on Fox News, "Young people are the problem," and Republicans must "turn it around if [they] are going to win again."

10 But Republicans are not "turning it around." Despite holding the majority in the House, the GOP isn't doing anything to address young people's most specific concerns — whether it's gun violence, climate change or student loans. Instead, the party — often behind closed doors — is taking a page out of the anti-democracy playbook.

That is, Republicans are currently waging a sustained, intense and targeted war to disenfranchise young people in 2024.

15 Voter suppression is of course a well-trodden strategy for the GOP. The party continues to target racial and ethnic minorities like Black and Hispanic Americans through tactics like gerrymandering, enacting stricter voter ID requirements, and restricting early voting options. So it's no surprise that as young voters turn out at robust levels, Republicans are doing more than ever to block me and my fellow students from casting our ballots in 2024.

20 One chilling instance that highlights the depth of the GOP's commitment came from Cleta Mitchell, a conservative lawyer who helped Donald Trump in his efforts to overturn the 2020 election. At a large Republican donor retreat earlier this year, Mitchell not only decried the ease of voting on college campuses, but detailed an elaborate, 50-page plan to establish "election integrity task forces" across the country to make it harder for young people to vote.

25 Mitchell's plans are being reflected in legislation across the country. A study from the Voting Rights Lab reveals that at least 15 states have introduced or enacted legislation that would make it harder — or even illegal — for students to use their college ID to vote in elections. As Republicans know better than anyone else, elections are won on the margin. If they can keep one young voter from voting, they know it can make or break the election. And as Republicans have demonstrated, they will not back down from their sustained attacks on voting rights — whether they're on Black voters or on young voters — because that is the only way for them to win elections. 30 They will, quite literally, do anything to achieve and maintain power, even if it means undermining the fabric of democracy: the ability to vote.

Against this backdrop, it is critical for voters not to become apathetic or tap out. Instead, organizers, activists and the media must highlight how Republicans are undermining voting rights for racial and ethnic groups and young people. Put simply, 2024 will be a binary choice between a party that believes in democracy and a party 35 that does not believe in democracy — and voters and the media must feel that threat and act with the urgency that this moment demands.

And it's equally crucial to support efforts to register young people to vote. When those who do not vote are asked why, many young people cite how confusing the political process is. Luckily, every parent and every person who knows a young person in their life can make a difference by helping them register, make time to vote and 40 navigate the complex electoral realities of not just national elections, but state and local elections too. As my government teacher often told me and my peers, young people should embrace the "civics lifestyle" — and that happens by talking to young people and showing them how they too can make a difference.

Republicans know they are losing — which is exactly why they are engaging in a concerted effort to suppress one of the most important voting groups in 2024: young people. But we must not be deterred by their efforts. We 45 must push back, expose their blatantly anti-democratic actions, and start building the democracy we all want to live in. If we don't, not only will Republicans win — but it may well be the beginning of the end of democracy as we know it.

Victor Shi is a rising senior at UCLA, co-host of the iGen Politics Podcast and strategy director for Voters of Tomorrow.

DOCUMENT 7 (on Cahier de Prépas) – AUDIO document
--

NPR, "What young voters want in 2024", 26 November 2023.

Document 8 - With TikTok and Lawsuits, Gen Z Takes on Climate Change

As Kaliko Teruya was coming home from her hula lesson on August 8, her father called. The apartment in Lahaina was gone, he said, and he was running for his life.

He was trying to escape the deadliest American wildfire in more than a century, an inferno in Hawaii fueled by powerful winds from a faraway hurricane and barely hindered by the state's weak defenses against natural disasters.

Her father survived. But for Kaliko, 13, the destruction of the past week has reinforced her commitment to a cause that is coming to define her generation. "The fire was made so much worse due to climate change," she said. "How many more natural disasters have to happen before grown-ups realize the urgency?"

Like a growing number of young people, Kaliko is engaged in efforts to raise awareness about global warming and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, last year she and 13 other young people, age 9 to 18, sued their home state, Hawaii, over its use of fossil fuels.

With active lawsuits in five states, TikTok videos that mix humor and outrage, and marches in the streets, it's a movement that is seeking to shape policy, sway elections and shift a narrative that its proponents say too often emphasizes climate catastrophes instead of the need to make the planet healthier and cleaner.

Young climate activists in the United States have not yet had the same impact of their counterparts in Europe, where Greta Thunberg has galvanized a generation. But during a summer of record heat, choking wildfire smoke and now a hurricane bearing down on Los Angeles, American teenagers and twenty-somethings concerned about the planet are increasingly being taken seriously.

"We see what's happening with climate change, and how it affects everything else," said Elise Joshi, 21, the executive director of Gen-Z for Change, an organization she joined while she was in college. "We're experiencing a mix of anger and fear, and we're finally channeling it into hope into the form of collective action."

The youth vote's mounting frustration with the Biden administration's climate agenda is a wild card factor in next year's presidential race. They are particularly livid that President Biden, who pledged "no more drilling on federal lands, period," during his campaign, has failed to make good on that promise.

Young people are helping organize a climate march in New York next month, during the United Nations

General Assembly. And their force is being felt even in deep-red states like Montana, where a judge on Monday handed the movement its biggest victory to date, ruling in favor of 16 young people who had sued the state over its support for the fossil fuel industry.

In that case, a lengthy fight resulted in a surprise victory that means, at least for now, that the state must consider potential climate damage when approving energy projects.

"The fact that kids are taking this action is incredible," said Badge Busse, 15, one of the plaintiffs in the Montana case. "But it's sad that it had to come to us. We're the last resort."

That mix of pride and exasperation is not uncommon among young climate activists. Many are energized by what they see as the fight of their lives, but also resentful that adults haven't seriously confronted a problem that has been well understood for decades now.

"Do you think I really want to be on a stand saying, like, 'I don't have a future,'" said Mesina DiGrazia-Roberts, 16, another of the plaintiffs in the Hawaii case, who lives on Oahu. "As a 16-year-old who just wants to live my life and hang out with my friends and eat good food, I don't want to be doing that. And yet I am, because I care about this world. I care about the Earth and care about my family. I care about my future children."

In the Hawaii case, the youths have sued the state's Department of Transportation over its use of fossil fuels, arguing that it violates their "right to a clean and healthful environment," which is enshrined in the state Constitution. The state filed two motions to dismiss the case, but this month a judge set a trial date for next year.

A nonprofit legal organization called Our Children's Trust is behind the Montana and Hawaii cases, as well as active litigation in three other states. A similar case it brought in federal court, *Juliana v. United States*, was thrown out by an appeals court in 2020, days before it was set to go to trial. But in June, a different judge ruled the case could once again proceed toward trial. (...)

Climate change is a growing political priority for young people. It was one of the top issues among a third of young voters in the 2020 presidential election, according to Tufts University.

But while the Biden administration has passed sweeping laws, including the Inflation Reduction Act, designed to speed the development of clean energy, it has also angered young environmental activists by approving new fossil fuel projects. (...)

Across the movement, there is an effort to combat “climate nihilism,” the fatalistic acceptance that nothing can stop runaway global warming. That sentiment, captured in the phrase “OK Doomer,” contributes to the slow pace of progress, they maintain. (...)

Enthusiasm for the climate movement is spreading in surprising ways. A group of young techno optimists who shun doomerism have embraced the label of “Decarb Bros.” And among Republicans, millennials and members of Gen Z are far more likely than their elders to believe that humans are warming the planet and support efforts to reduce emissions, according to the

Pew Research Center. Overall, about 62 percent of young voters support phasing out fossil fuels entirely, according to Pew.

On Maui, Kaliko and her family were trying to recover from the second natural disaster in five years. In 2018, flash flooding from Hurricane Olivia destroyed their home on the northern tip of the island. Now, the fire.

“We really need adults to wake up,” she said. “If we don’t fix this now, there’s not going to be a future.” (1017 words)

Document 9 – AUDIO – Judge ruling in Montana

NPR, All things considered, August 14, 2023 Judge rules in favor of young activists in Montana climate change trial

KH – Anglais LV1 & LV2– DM3 – Type ELVi

Durée : 4 heures

1. COMPRÉHENSION : RÉSUMÉ ANALYTIQUE COMPARATIF

According to Documents 1 and 2, should there be a mandatory retirement age for elected officials?

Answer the question in your own words (350 words $\pm 10\%$).

2. EXPRESSION PERSONNELLE : RÉDACTION ARGUMENTÉE

The Constitution requires candidates for the House of Representatives to be at least 25 years old and those for the Senate to be at least 30 years old. In your opinion, should these age limits be changed?

Elaborate your personal position on this issue in your own words (500 words $\pm 10\%$), supported by evidence and references drawn from Documents 1-5 and at least two other relevant examples from the English-speaking world.

3. TRADUCTION DU FRANÇAIS EN ANGLAIS

Translate into English the excerpt of Document 3 from “*Kamala Harris a déjà été présidente...*” to “*... Biden en 2020.*” (l. 1-12).

CONTENTS

Document 1 – “Battle of the ages: how America’s gerontocracy is a challenge for democracy”, *Financial Times*, 17 September 2023.

Document 2 – Jeffrey J. Matthews, “America’s gerontocracy dilemma”, *The Seattle Times*, October 6, 2023.

Document 3 – Marie Terrier, « Présidentielle américaine 2024 : Kamala Harris joue la succession de Joe Biden », *Le Huffington Post*, 6 juillet 2023.

Document 4 – Graph released by the Pew Research Center, October 4, 2023.

Document 5 – Illustration by Barry Blitt entitled “The Race for Office” used for the cover of an issue of *The New Yorker*, October 2, 2023.

DOCUMENT 1

Battle of the ages: how America's gerontocracy is a challenge for democracy

Financial Times, 17 September 2023

When Nancy Pelosi announced last week that she would seek another term in the House of Representatives, the news was met with some incredulity.

Though some Democrats relished the prospect of two more years working alongside an experienced stateswoman — and a formidable fundraiser — many other political observers were less enthused.

5 This is largely because the former Speaker will be 84 when the next US elections take place and her decision comes at a time when ageing candidates have become a major issue in American politics.

The US is an outlier even in a world where the majority of lawmakers are much older than the broader populace. [...]

10 This trend has prompted calls for maximum term limits, mandatory retirement and even compulsory mental competency tests for those over 75. Last week, Republican congressman John James introduced legislation to bar those who would be 75 or older during their term from running for president, vice-president or a member of Congress.

15 "For democracy in general, it's good to have turnover [of leaders]," says Daniel Stockemer, a University of Ottawa political studies professor who has researched age representation around the world, including the US.

That does not mean older members have to be excluded, he argues, but space should be freed up for new entrants instead of allowing "the same people running the show". [...]

Yet unease over America's gerontocracy is two-fold: while there are concerns over physical fitness and mental competency, a political class dominated by older people has other consequences.

20 Similar to other minority groups, the severe underrepresentation of young people likely means their interests are not being adequately addressed by policymakers, argue social scientists, which could contribute to political apathy among youth. [...]

Age is emerging as a new political faultline that can sometimes even trump party allegiance.

25 Simply being a Democrat or a Republican does not decide a person's views. "It would matter if you have a young or an old Democrat, or a young or an old Republican," says Jon Fiva, a Norwegian Business School professor who has studied how age, gender, class background and urban-rural representation in Norway's parliament affects policy discussions.

30 For example, a 2021 survey by Pew Research Center found that Generation Z adults — those born after 1996 — were more interested in addressing climate change than older generations. Even among Republicans, younger adults were less inclined to support more use of fossil fuels, with 44 per cent of the Gen Z cohort saying they supported more fracking compared to 74 per cent of baby boomers and older Republicans.

Another poll found that Gen Z Republicans diverge from their older counterparts on other issues too, such as acknowledging racial injustice and favouring more government involvement to solve issues rather than leaving them to businesses and individuals. [...]

35 Many challenges block younger would-be lawmakers from entering office: the lack of political connections and endorsements, limited fundraising power, and statutory minimum age restrictions. To help young people surmount those obstacles, groups like Run for Something have recently popped up to offer training, mentorship and funding.

40 "Our government today is run like a gerontocracy," says Juan Ramiro Sarmiento, 29, a spokesperson at Run For Something, which helps progressive candidates under 40 run for state and local elections. "So it is no surprise that the public policy that comes out of there benefits them."

That means older politicians are not going to pass laws that prevent them from re-election, he says. Instead, a “critical mass” of young politicians is needed to bring change.

Brandon Sakbun, 27, who is running for mayor in Terre Haute, Indiana, after winning the Democratic nomination earlier this year, is optimistic that more voters will start to embrace younger candidates as they look for fresh ideas and solutions outside of the status quo.

“We’re faced with a different set of challenges that folks weren’t faced with [previously],” he says, adding that people from both parties can get behind the idea of “passing the baton to a new generation”.

DOCUMENT 2

America’s gerontocracy dilemma

Jeffrey J. Matthews, *The Seattle Times*, October 6, 2023

Hubris. Arrogance. Greed. How else does one account for America’s gerontocracy?

Joe Biden, 80, and Donald Trump, 77, are clearly not the country’s best 2024 presidential candidates, yet they cling tightly to power in their respective parties. Similarly, despite health problems and concerns about her mental acuity, California Sen. Dianne Feinstein refused to resign from office. She died on Sept. 28 at the age of 90, hours after casting her final Senate vote. Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, 90, recently won reelection to a seat he has held since 1980 and if he survives, he will be 95 years old when his current term expires. He might run again.

The gerontocracy dilemma also extends to the federal judiciary. Just because the judges and justices are granted lifetime appointments, that does not mean they should serve until they die. Case in point: Ruth Bader Ginsburg. During the final years of the Obama administration, there were public and private appeals for the justice to voluntarily retire, allowing someone younger and healthier to be appointed. At the time “the notorious RBG” was in her early 80s and had suffered through bouts of cancer. Ginsburg refused to step down from the bench and died at 87, allowing the Trump administration to select her successor. Today, the court’s elders are Clarence Thomas, 75, and Samuel Alito, 73.

Should there be compulsory retirements for senior government leaders?

Forced retirements are generally unlawful in the United States, however, there are many notable exceptions. National Park Service rangers and federal law enforcement officers must retire at 57. Air traffic controllers must retire at 61. American generals and admirals face involuntary retirement at 64 years old. Moreover, dozens of state governments compel their elderly judges to retire, most at the age of 70 or 75. [...]

The fundamental rationale for compulsory retirement is that adults become less able as they age. Their ability to problem solve and make wise decisions often deteriorates. This argument contends that certain occupations are so important that they demand youthful levels of physical vitality and cognitive capability. Why else do we force state judges, military officers, and park rangers into retirement?

But here is the conundrum: Chronological age is not necessarily indicative of one’s competency. It is difficult to see how involuntary retirement for a highly capable older person is not discriminatory.

For example, Sen. Grassley appears healthy and capable despite his age. He still can run two miles and during his reelection campaign, he relished doing pushups in front of his constituents. Moreover, it does not appear that his work performance is suffering. Feinstein, on the other hand, was hospitalized and her absences from the senate hindered her party’s ability to confirm judicial nominees. There were also credible reports that Feinstein’s memory had deteriorated significantly and that she was overly reliant on her staff to fulfill her responsibilities.

To avoid both ageism and the problem of impaired senior leadership, it seems that checks and balances are in order. Let’s take the simple example of driver’s license renewals. Most states require senior citizens to

35 take more frequent eye examinations than younger people. Two states, Illinois and New Hampshire, require
people over 75 to retake road tests. In other words, if a 100-year-old passes the test, they may continue to
drive. If they fail the test, they can't. Seems fair, seems logical. [...]

One might think this is foolish thinking, that our aged leaders will willingly give up their power and
perks. But I point to the very recent example set by Mitt Romney. The 76-year old senator from Utah
announced in September that he will not seek reelection despite the fact that he appears quite healthy and
40 mentally astute. In his announcement, Romney said, "I have spent my last 25 years in public service of one
kind or another. At the end of another term, I'd be in my mid-80s. Frankly, it's time for a new generation of
leaders. They're the ones that need to make the decision that will shape the world they will be living in."

There is zero chance that former President Donald Trump will follow Romney's example, but will President
Joe Biden?

DOCUMENT 3

Présidentielle américaine 2024 : Kamala Harris joue la succession de Joe Biden

Marie Terrier, *Le Huffington Post*, 6 juillet 2023

Kamala Harris a déjà été présidente des États-Unis. C'était le 19 novembre 2021, lorsque Joe Biden a subi une
opération. Elle est sortie de l'ombre de la vice-présidence pendant 1h25 avant de redonner les rênes du
pouvoir au président. Mais avec l'officialisation de la candidature de Joe Biden pour 2024, qui l'a encore
choisie comme colistière, Kamala Harris va de nouveau attirer la lumière des projecteurs.

5 Car à l'aube de l'élection présidentielle, l'âge de Joe Biden interroge. À 80 ans, il est déjà le plus vieux
président des États-Unis en exercice. Il aura 86 ans en 2028, fin de son potentiel second mandat, ce qui ne
manque pas d'être pointé du doigt par l'opposition républicaine et de poser question chez les démocrates.

« On nous a toujours dit que les électeurs votaient pour le candidat à la présidentielle, pas pour le vice-
président. Mais parce que Biden aura 86 ans à la fin du second mandat – et que les chances que sa santé
10 décline ne sont pas minces – on demandera aux gens de voter autant pour la vice-présidente que pour lui »,
souligne dans un édito le journaliste du *New York Times* Thomas L. Friedmann, qui revendique avoir voté
Biden en 2020.

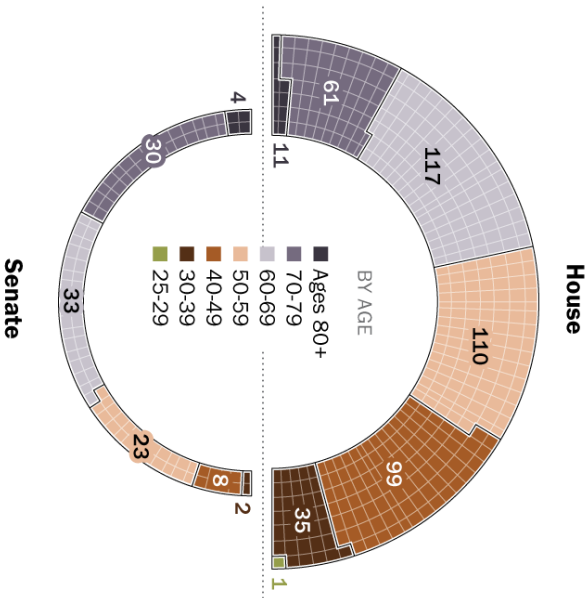
Le président américain le sait, et ce n'est pas un hasard si Kamala Harris, 58 ans, apparaît plus d'une
dizaine de fois dans la vidéo où il annonce sa candidature. Elle doit attirer les jeunes électeurs, assumer sa
15 place de vice-présidente après deux années en demi-teinte, et prouver qu'elle mérite d'accompagner Joe
Biden à nouveau. Elle doit aussi faire imprimer son visage, car dans l'hypothèse où le président se retrouve
incapable de diriger ou s'il meurt en cours de mandat, c'est elle qui le remplacera, comme le veut la
Constitution. [...]

Le chemin semble néanmoins encore long pour Kamala Harris, a souligné le journaliste Alexis Buisson,
20 auteur d'une biographie sur la vice-présidente : « On a quand même du mal à identifier les sujets qui
l'animent ou qui la motivent. Si elle espère gagner une élection un jour, il faut qu'elle parvienne à articuler
ou à exprimer une vision pour les États-Unis qui soit différente aussi de celle de Joe Biden. »

DOCUMENT 4

The age breakdown of the U.S. House and Senate at the beginning of the 118th Congress

Number of voting members of the 118th Congress in each age group



Note: This analysis reflects the ages of the 534 voting members of the 118th Congress as of Jan. 3, 2023.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of birthdate data from the Biographical Directory of the United States Congress and other published sources.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

DOCUMENT 5

