

NextGen Wisconsin: Efforts in the 2018 midterm elections by the numbers

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To: NextGen Wisconsin Allies and Supporters
From: George Olufosoye, State Youth Director
Date: November 1, 2018
Re: NextGen Wisconsin's Efforts in the 2018 Midterm Elections

"Young people tend to vote for Democrats, but they also tend to stay away during midterm elections. It's a perennial frustration for the party — one they are trying to overcome as they seek to take control of Congress. NextGen America, formed by billionaire activist Tom Steyer, hopes to be a game changer. Steyer is investing more than \$30 million in what's believed to be the largest voter engagement effort of its kind in U.S. history."

— "[\\$30 million poured into effort to energize young voters](#)" Associated Press, September 3, 2018

NEXTGEN WISCONSIN 2018: BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL SPEND: **\$2.9 million**
TOTAL STAFF ON THE GROUND: **66**
TOTAL VOLUNTEERS: **1,488**
TOTAL CAMPUSES WITH PROGRAM: **32**
TOTAL YOUNG VOTERS REGISTERED: **8,349**

TOTAL PLEDGE TO VOTE CARDS COLLECTED: **50,836**
TOTAL YOUNG VOTERS REACHED WITH DIGITAL ADS: **584,369**
TOTAL DOORS KNOCKED: **121,568**
TOTAL TEXTS SENT: **98,683**
TOTAL PIECES OF DIRECT MAIL SENT: **528,259**
TARGETED RACES: **WI-Gov, WI-Lt Gov, WI-Sen, WI-01, WI-06**

On Tuesday, November 6, Wisconsin voters will head to the polls to vote in the most important midterm election in recent history — and NextGen Wisconsin played a central role in organizing and turning out young voters on campus, in their communities, and online. Young people are the largest eligible voting bloc in the the country, and they are overwhelmingly progressive. NextGenAmerica has organized young people since 2013, and we know that when they turn out, Democrats win.

In Wisconsin, young people have led the fight against Scott Walker and Donald Trump's destructive agenda. Over the last year, they marched [50 miles](#) from Madison to Janesville to demand gun reform from Paul Ryan, occupied [school administration offices](#) to protest Scott Walker's cuts to university funding, and rallied against Donald Trump's [family separation policy](#) at the border. Young people are taking the lead across Wisconsin, inspired by young, diverse, progressive candidates like Mandela Barnes.

But for most young people in Wisconsin, their anger at Scott Walker and Wisconsin Republicans dates back to 2011. When Walker [cut more funding to public schools](#) than any other Governor in the nation, they were the ones who felt the negative effects in their classrooms. They may have been too young to vote at the time, but they are old enough now to hold Walker accountable for attacking their schools and their future.

Now, two years after Donald Trump's surprise victory in Wisconsin, young progressives are ready to take back their state on Tuesday.

NEXTGEN RISING

In 2018, NextGen America is running the largest youth organizing program in American history, investing \$33 million across 11 states to elect progressive candidates up and down the ballot. The youth organizing program — NextGen Rising — launched in August 2017 to register and turnout young voters (between the ages of 18 and 35) for progressive candidates in Virginia's state elections. NextGen helped turnout young voters [in record numbers](#) in Virginia,

propelling a Democratic wave and setting the stage for an even larger effort in 2018.

With a [\\$2.9 million investment](#), NextGen Wisconsin is working to register, engage, and organize young voters across the state to defeat Scott Walker, re-elect Tammy Baldwin, and flip the First and Sixth Congressional districts. With 66 staff and fellows on the ground, NextGen is organizing on 32 campuses in Wisconsin. NextGen has organizers and fellows on 26 of those campuses, and is partnering with local grassroots organization Leaders Igniting Transformation Action Fund (LIT AF) and running a robust mail and digital program to reach students on the other six. Across the state, NextGen [has pledged](#) over 50,000 young Wisconsinites to vote this year.

This year, young Wisconsinites are more fired up to vote than ever before. In the Supreme Court election this spring, where NextGen Wisconsin helped mobilize students to the polls by knocking on thousands of doors and pledging 4,825 students to vote, young voter turnout [surged](#) in University of Wisconsin-Madison wards compared to 2014. Madison Ward 53 saw an increase of 950 votes, while turnout quadrupled in Ward 49. Later in the spring, organizers knocked doors and made calls helping [flip Wisconsin's First Senate District](#) in a special election.

NextGen Wisconsin worked diligently to mobilize and turn out young Black voters for the midterm elections. Through the Black Lives Rising program, NextGen Wisconsin partnered with local grassroots organizations to host events and rally young Black voters in Milwaukee.

DIGITAL & MAIL

To reach young voters on and off campus, NextGen sent 528,259 pieces of direct mail and spent over \$747,368 on cutting-edge digital ads to target 584,369 young Wisconsinites. Running on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube, these ads, "[Power in Numbers](#)" and "[Last Chance](#)," stressed the stakes of this election and the power in numbers that young voters wield in Wisconsin. As voters began to tune into the races in August and September, NextGen Wisconsin released a series of voter guide digital ads designed to educate young voters on key races for Governor and Congress in Wisconsin and compare the platforms of [Tony Evers with Scott Walker](#) and [Randy Bryce with Bryan Steil](#) on issues like health care, education, and reproductive rights.

In the final five days, NextGen Wisconsin's get out the vote efforts includes

knocking on 28,000 doors, sending 90,000 text messages, and helping students navigate Wisconsin's same-day registration and voter ID laws. Organizers will also be on campus to host engaging events, like carnivals and petting zoos, and provide students with the information they need to cast their ballot on Election Day.

OUR LIVES, OUR VOTE

Following the tragedy in Parkland, Florida in February, NextGen partnered with Giffords, Everytown for Gun Safety, and ACRONYM to launch the [Our Lives, Our Vote](#) program. The \$1.75 million program set out to empower high school students to make their voices heard this November, and vote out politicians beholden to the NRA. In Wisconsin, Our Lives, Our Vote partnered with National School Walkout and 50 Miles More to register 3,713 high school students to vote in person, online, and through mail ahead of the November election.

FOR OUR FUTURE

To fight for the rights of working families, NextGen America partnered with national labor unions to create For Our Future (FOF), the largest independent field operation for the progressive movement in the 2016 election. This year, For Our Future Wisconsin organizers will have knocked on 884,324 doors by Election Day to turnout voters for candidates who support working Wisconsinites. For Our Future's canvass efforts include a project called the "Feedback Loop," in which canvassers can compile the top issues of concern from voters who they talk to. In Wisconsin, the Feedback Loop found that top issues amongst sporadic voters include insufficient education funding and a general disapproval of the Trump presidency.

GIVEGREEN

GiveGreen, a fundraising partnership between NextGen America, the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) Victory Fund, and NRDC Action Fund PAC, raised over \$20 million for progressive candidates across the country. In Wisconsin, GiveGreen raised \$779,939.16 for Tammy Baldwin, Tony Evers, Randy Bryce, Mandela Barnes and Josh Kaul, among others.

"Tom Steyer believes the millennials are our future. So he's spending tens of millions of dollars to organize them, and let them lead the way."

— ["Tom Steyer group to spend \\$2.5 million mobilizing young Wisconsin voters, targeting Republicans,"](#) *Cap Times*, March 13, 2018