

# WISPIRG: Students join nationwide effort to mobilize the youth vote

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Madison, WI — As voter registration numbers [plummet](#) across the country because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, a powerhouse lineup of artists, activists, influencers and elected officials will kick off Democracy Summer 2020 Thursday evening at a [virtual event](#). The effort, led by Rock the Vote in partnership with the StudentPIRGs, Voto Latino Foundation, When We All Vote, March For Our Lives and many more, aims to register and mobilize 200,000 new voters over the summer.

[Young people \(18-29 year-olds\) are the largest and most diverse group of potential voters in the country.](#) But the youth voice is often underrepresented because young people don't vote in enough numbers. With over 884,238 eligible young voters in Wisconsin, this voting bloc has the opportunity to shape the election.

“We are excited to be a part of The Democracy Summer’s nationwide effort to turn out students,” said Rachel Fielkow, WISPIRG intern at UW-Madison, “As college students, we can choose to let other people make decisions that impact our future, or we can vote for a future that works for us. That’s what we are doing with the Student PIRGs — making our voices heard.”

WISPIRG Students New Voters Project has already started the work of mobilizing the youth vote in Wisconsin. So far this year, over 20 students have joined the remote summer internship program, collected over 110 pledges to vote, and have formed partnerships with over 10 administrators and student leaders on Madison campuses.

COVID-19 poses huge challenges to normal voter registration efforts. With many colleges and universities opting for online learning this fall, the typical campus registration drives will need to move online. . The Student PIRGs, Rock the Vote and

campus partners around the country partnered to create [WISStudentVote.org](https://www.wistudentvote.org), a one-stop online voter registration resource for students to register and learn important information about the election. The website has already registered over 100,000 students.

“COVID-19 is changing the way we participate in democracy, and we have to adapt quickly to ensure young voters turn out to vote. Reaching students online is always important, but during a pandemic, it’s necessary,” said Manny Rin, director of Student PIRGs’ New Voters Project. “Whether it’s registering and educating their peers by email, text message, social media — or online tools like [WISStudentVote.org](https://www.wistudentvote.org)— students can and will make their voices heard this year.”

The WISPIRGs’ New Voters Project is working with college campuses, cities, and states to make it easier, safer, and more accessible for students to vote. The Democracy Summer launch is the first step to energize young people around the country to participate in this election.

“This is no ordinary year,” said Carolyn DeWitt, president of Rock the Vote. “Rock the Vote was built to support young people and in this moment when young people are showing their power and demanding action, we are honored to launch Democracy Summer. Artists, influencers, elected officials and activists are joining together to help sustain the fire lit by America’s youth and build a movement to the polls to elect leaders who will take action.”

Organizations joining the Student PIRGs in the coalition include: 88 Rising, The Association of Fraternal Leadership & Values, APIA Vote, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Brady Community Justice Action Fund, Drag Out the Vote, Emerge America, Fair Fight Action, Generation Progress, Get Lit, IGNITE, The Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights, Mississippi Votes, Muslim Public Affairs Council, National Action Network, National Coalition Black Civic Participation, National Congress of American Indians, and People For the American Way.

These groups join a robust coalition of: Rock the Vote, Voto Latino Foundation, When We All Vote and March For Our Lives also includes; ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, American Constitution Society, The Andrew Goodman Foundation, CIRCLE, Generation Citizen, Music Forward Foundation, National Disability Rights Network, Students Learn Students Vote and Student PIRGS.