

# WISPIRG Students: Part of nationwide effort to mobilize the youth vote and help register thousands in Wisconsin

Posted on Thursday, Jun 25, 2020

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Madison, WI- As the [nation's largest and most diverse group](#) of potential voters, young people will have the opportunity to shape the upcoming election. However, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic presents challenges to registering new voters. To that end, the Student PIRGs launched the [New Voters Project](#) Wednesday, a nationwide effort to help register and mobilize the youth vote to turn out in November. The kickoff featured a live streamed panel of student leaders and elected officials, including Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman and Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum.

More than 300 student interns and volunteers will join the Student PIRGs' New Voters Project this summer, working in more than 15 states with college campuses, cities and states to make it easier and safer for their peers to vote in November during COVID-19. WISPIRG Students are excited to make Wisconsin schools major leaders in this effort.

"While young people have varying interests, concerns and passions, making our voices heard this November is something we all can agree on," said Sofia Miller, WISPIRG Intern at UW-Madison, "We are excited to work with a diverse group of student groups that represents our campus."

The New Voters Project is working with a diverse coalition of campus groups to turn out the vote — from the Alexander Hamilton Society, to the Club Ultimate Frisbee Team, to the Athletic Department's Big 10 Voting Challenge at UW-Madison. With

COVID-19, the efforts will be mostly online and will emphasize safe voting practices, like vote-by-mail.

The panel of speakers, that included Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman, Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum and Michigan Assistant Secretary of State Heaster Wheeler, talked about the importance of voting safely this election.

“In Michigan, we just passed no excuse absentee, now you have the right to say you want an absentee ballot no matter what.” said Heaster Wheeler, Michigan Assistant Secretary of State, “That’s a game changer. It’s essential we educate and mobilize voters around vote-by-mail.”

“Vote by Mail is what we do — we want to make sure everyone who wants to vote can vote.” said Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum.

COVID-19 poses huge challenges to normal voter registration efforts. With many colleges and universities opting for online learning this fall due to COVID-19, young people have an opportunity to reach their peers in new and creative ways online. This summer, we are making announcements in virtual summer classes, creating Tik Toks to promote [WISStudentVote.org](http://WISStudentVote.org) and upcoming voter registration deadlines in Wisconsin, and are creating an online voter care package for students in Wisconsin to have everything they need for the upcoming elections.

“At UW-Madison, we want to reach every student online, that means building a buzz through social media like instagram and tiktok and also reaching them directly through phone and text message,” said Christina Zordani, WISPIRG intern at UW-Madison “We know that students are more likely to turn out when another student asks them to, that’s how we will make sure our voices count.”

WISPIRG’s interns and volunteers will organize virtual events for upcoming primaries, work with other campus groups to prepare registration drives when school starts, and call on election officials to make voting safe during the pandemic. Later in the fall, they will organize large virtual trainings, panels and events around National Voter Registration Day, Vote Early Day and other key registration deadlines.

The Student PIRGs New Voters Project is partnering with the [Democracy Summer](#), led by Rock the Vote, an effort that aims to register and mobilize 200,000 new voters over the summer.

Despite young people historically turning out in fewer numbers, Manny Rin, director of Student PIRGs' New Voters Project, is excited to change that in 2020.

“Right now, young people are fired up — going to protests and signing petitions. But we need to make sure we make our voices heard on Election Day as well,” said Rin, “In an online world, young people are uniquely set up to organize others. It’s time we show the country that we are America’s largest generation, and we vote!”