



THE **18-30**
VIP

(VOTER ISSUES PAPER)

QUESTIONS EVERY CANDIDATE SHOULD ANSWER



THE 18-30 VIP

During the 2004 election year, The 18-30 VIP was designed as a tool to improve the dialogue among voters ages 18 to 30, candidates for elected office and their political parties.

It worked. The 2004 elections experienced the greatest turnout of 18-30 year old Americans since the voting age was lowered from 21 to 18. More than 21 million 18-30 year olds turned out to vote in 2004, surpassing all expectations.

To maintain the momentum of this historic level of civic participation, it's now up to our elected leaders to address the issues that are important to younger voters.

Our Message To Voters 18-30 Years Old: *You are a VIP (Very Important Player) in America, but only if you make your voice heard.* Here are questions that can get you started talking to your elected officials to hold them accountable to addressing the issues important to you. If the issues and questions important to you aren't here, then add questions to personalize the VIP to reflect your interests. Ask your questions, demand answers, insist your elected representatives pursue solutions now, and become an active participant in your democracy and your community.

Our Message To Elected Officials and Political Parties: Talk to young voters about their concerns on their turf – on campus, in school, at the mall, or at the local volunteer center. Most important, be genuine. They want to know who you are, how you feel about their issues and what actions you plan on taking to address their concerns. Show the young voters of America that you care about their concerns and that you are interested in representing their interests. If you do, you will get their support. And we think it's now clear that they will vote!

ISSUE: THE ECONOMY

Young people ranked the economy as the No. 1 issue in the last election. For young people, that means the creation of jobs that pay well, the ability to get out of debt while making ends meet, and the opportunity to save for the future, including retirement. With all of these financial hurdles, saving for emergencies or the future is difficult, if not impossible.

Questions:

In the current job market, young people perceive that desirable jobs are scarcer than in years past. What specific legislation are you going to undertake to promote the creation of jobs for people starting out in their careers that pay well, and to keep the economy strong?

What policies and legislation will you promote to help 18-30 year olds achieve greater financial planning and security, and to help those who are living paycheck to paycheck to get out of that cycle?

With the senior population doubling over the next 30 years, how are seniors' health and retirement going to be addressed in the future without overburdening today's younger workers to fund these programs?



ISSUE: IRAQ AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Second only to the economic concerns, the war in Iraq and safety from terrorism ranked as the most important issues young people considered when deciding which candidates to support in 2004. With 70 percent of enlisted personnel aged 30 or younger, and a majority of them leaving spouses behind, U.S. military decisions significantly affect young adults.

Questions:

What should America's long-term role be in Iraq?

What long-term plan do you support to fight the war on terrorism?

What recruitment and retention measures do you support to ensure our military maintains adequate levels of personnel?

How will you balance the costs of America's foreign policy agenda with the costs of domestic policy needs?

What is your plan for protecting America from terrorism, and what changes, if any, will you pursue in our current policies?

What will you do to safeguard our civil liberties and promote tolerance in America while protecting our homeland?

ISSUE: EDUCATION

Another issue that young people remain concerned about is access to affordable higher education. College costs continue to increase, resulting in a greater reliance on student loans (and even credit cards) and an accumulation of unmanageable debt. The debt burden becomes substantially greater for those continuing to graduate school.

Questions:

What role do you believe the government should play in making higher education more accessible and affordable?

In light of the struggle to pay for college, what will you do to make it easier for young adults to attend college or graduate school without accumulating unmanageable debt?

What policies will you promote to help better prepare high school students for college or for entering the workforce?



ISSUE: HEALTH CARE

Health Care is rapidly becoming an important issue for young adults, ranking among the top four issues for 18-30 year olds. Approximately one-third of young adults are uninsured, the largest percentage of uninsured across any age group. A majority of these young adults want health insurance, but cite issues, such as prohibitive costs and access to care, as barriers. An overwhelming majority of young adults, 70 percent, say that health insurance is a key factor in taking a job, and 70 percent of employed 18-30 year olds accept insurance when offered by their employer.

Questions:

How will you tackle the challenge of providing all young adults with access to affordable health care?

What can be done to provide young adults with the opportunity to obtain health care coverage that they can afford?

Do you foresee significant changes in Medicare to ensure similar benefits for today's young adults when they retire?

What responsibility do employers have to assist in addressing the current health care dilemma for 18-30 year olds, particularly for young adults who are hired as long-term temp workers as they start their careers?

ISSUE: MOTIVATION AND VISION

Most young people believe that the political system in this country is unresponsive to the genuine needs of the public. Young voters do not feel represented by their political leaders. They believe that politicians lose touch with the people very quickly. Some believe politicians are more guided by special interests and their own self-aggrandizement than the wishes of the people who elect them to office. It seems that too often, they see politics as part of the problem and not a viable solution for making a difference in their country and in their communities.

Questions:

What values and motivations are at the center of your drive to run for elected office?

How will you restore confidence in the political process for young people?

What do you intend to do during your campaign to address the concerns of 18-to-30-year-olds?

If you are elected to political office, what will you do to make sure the voices of 18-to-30-year-olds are heard and represented?



ADD YOUR QUESTIONS HERE!

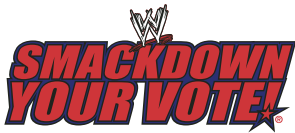
Don't see the questions that address your issues?
Add them here for future reference.

Go to 18to35.org for background information on the VIP issues, and for info on the poll research used in the development of The 18-30 VIP.

The 18-30 VIP references the following polls and sources: Congressional Budget Office, 2005; Declare Yourself, November 2004; Harvard Institute of Politics Fall 2004; MTV/CIRCLE, September 2004; National Election Poll, National Exit Poll, November 2004; National Youth Survey, January 2004; Current Population Survey, 2004; Commonwealth Fund, 2004; Department of Defense, 2003; College Board, 2003; Nellie Mae, 2002.

Thanks to World Wrestling Entertainment for taking the lead in creation of the VIP and for subsidizing its printing.

Want to know which WWE Superstars are VIPs?
Go to smackdownyourvote.com to find out.



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