

10 Reasons Young Women Absolutely Need to Vote in the Midterms

1. Young people and unmarried women typically don't vote in large numbers in the midterms, which means if we all did, we'd make a difference. According to [a recent survey by Harvard](#), 23 percent of eligible voters ages 18 to 29 plan to vote in the midterm elections this November. This is consistent with the 2010 midterm election, when 23 percent of voters under 30 showed up to vote. Who is showing up to vote? Mitt Romney supporters. The Harvard study found that 44 percent of those who voted for Romney in 2012 planned to vote November 4, compared to 35 percent of those who voted for President Obama. Unmarried women [helped Obama crush Romney](#) in the 2012 election; in this demographic, he defeated Romney by 36 percentage points. This is proof that when we show up to vote, we make a difference.

2. Your right to an abortion — and in some cases, even birth control — could be at stake. In the three years following the 2010 midterms, more abortion restrictions were passed than in the entire previous decade. In close races in states like Colorado, pro-choice candidates like Mark Udall are fighting to maintain or gain an edge over anti-choice candidates like Cory Gardner, who [backs federal personhood legislation](#) that defines life as beginning at conception, which would make even some forms of birth control and IVF illegal, to say nothing of safe access to abortion. In fact, more than 100 incumbents in the House of Representatives running for reelection are co-sponsors of a [federal personhood bill](#). Though the bill is highly unlikely to pass, it's a good indication of a politician's values when it comes to women's health and rights to make decisions about their own bodies.

3. You can show candidates who claim to be in favor of over-the-counter birth control just how phony they are. Republican candidates like Thom Tillis and Cory Gardner are trying to convince women voters they're in favor of easy access to birth control by talking about how they want to make it available over the counter. However, over-the-counter birth control won't change how these candidates have historically supported anti-choice legislation and legislation (like personhood) that could make birth control illegal. Also, over-the-counter birth control pills do not guarantee women affordable access to safe, highly effective methods of pregnancy prevention like [IUDs](#), which must be administered by a doctor. If Thom Tillis really wanted you to have affordable, easy access to contraception, he wouldn't support the Supreme Court's [Hobby Lobby ruling](#), which allows closely held companies to opt out of covering birth control in health care plans.

4. Some people apparently still think politics is men's work. It was recently revealed that Republican Representative Steve Southerland of Florida held a [men-only fundraiser](#) earlier this year, and the invitation advised attendees to "tell the misses not to wait up." The exclusivity of the gathering is one thing, but it's the display of such old-fashioned sexist values that's really offensive. By showing up at the polls, you can

remind politicians like Southerland that it's past time to abandon the Old Boys' Club mentality.

5. The wage gap hasn't changed in a decade. A woman still earns [77 cents for every dollar](#) a man earns, and yet just this past year, Congress failed to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act. Obama [signed an executive order](#) that requires more transparency about wages and one that prohibits employers from punishing employees who discuss their pay with each other. These acts, however, apply only to federal contractors — it's up to Congress to do more for the country as a whole. Need further convincing that this is a good reason for women to take a close look at candidates' positions and vote? [Watch this clip from John Oliver.](#)

6. The conversation surrounding women in politics is incredibly condescending. It's your chance to show people who see you as ["Beyoncé voters"](#) that you are a serious player in politics and will show up to vote for your rights.

7. Women have a huge economic stake in this election. Forty percent of households with children have [female breadwinners](#), yet women are disproportionately minimum wage earners. This is your opportunity to vote for politicians who want to ensure a livable wage for all Americans.

8. In some states, you're voting for measures that can affect your access to health care. It's not just about the candidates themselves. Ballot initiative can have a profound impact on your rights to make choices about your health, rather than having them dictated by politicians. In North Dakota, there's a ["right to life" amendment](#) on the ballot, and in Colorado voters will vote once again [on personhood](#).

9. Young people are the most diverse generation of Americans ever, but Congress isn't reflective of that diversity. White men only make up 32 percent of the U.S. population, but they make up 79 percent of the Senate and 75 percent of the House. Meanwhile, women make up more than 50 percent of the population but [only 17 percent of Congress](#). Voting is one way to get our voices heard on the issues that affect our lives and matter most to us.

10. The people you elect to Congress are the ones who confirm or block nominations of Supreme Court justices and federal judges. If you don't think this matters, just look at what happened with [Hobby Lobby](#) or what's happening with [abortion restrictions in Texas](#). These judges can make an enormous difference in whether your rights are protected.