



www.serve.net.org



PHOTOCOPY
PERMISSION

Volunteer Today. Vote for Tomorrow.

www.SERVE.net.org

Service Vote 2000 is a project of Youth Service America • Made possible by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts



1101 15th Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005

202.296.2992 • Fax: 202.296.4030

info@ysa.org

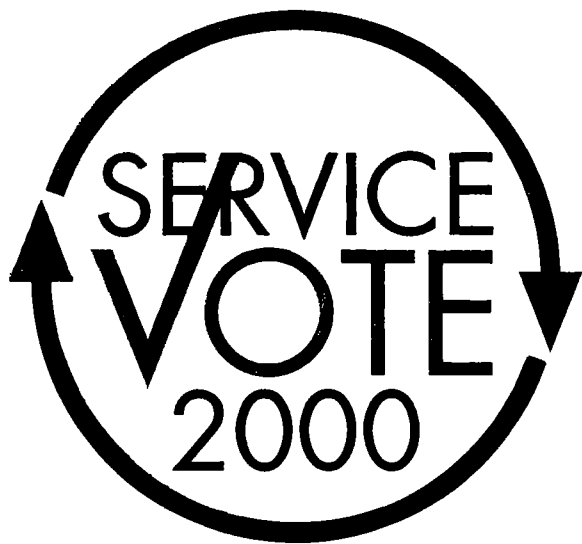
PHOTOCOPY
PERMISSION





ServiceVote 2000 is a project of Youth Service America • Made possible by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts

Volunteer Today. Vote for Tomorrow.
www.SERVEnet.org



ServiceVote 2000 is a project of Youth Service America • Made possible by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts

Volunteer Today. Vote for Tomorrow.
www.SERVEnet.org

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a publication.

Publications have not been scanned in their entirety for the purpose of digitization. To see the full publication please search online or visit the Clinton Presidential Library's Research Room.

[Service vote 2000 Button]



Volunteer Today. Vote for Tomorrow.
www.SERVEnet.org



SERVICE VOTE 2000

Overview

Issue

We live in an era where far too often we hear, "What's wrong with America's youth?" In fact, America's youth are doing what is right — they are volunteering at unprecedented rates. For example, they have tutored more children, cleaned up more rivers, and donated more hours to helping America live up to its promise, than any generation in

Volunteer Today. Vote for Tomorrow. history. Unfortunately, as volunteering is rising, voting is declining among 18 – 24 year olds— from 50% in 1972, to an all-time low of 32% in the 1996 Presidential election. Like volunteer work, the voting booth is a necessary step in the cycle of civic participation. The 2000 Elections provide a unique opportunity for the national and community service field to connect the impact of volunteer service with that of the vote. Youth Service America's ServiceVote 2000 Campaign seeks to expand the energy of youth volunteers from service to full civic engagement.

Vision

To create a society where young adults are fully engaged as active citizens, from volunteering to voting.

Mission

ServiceVote 2000 is a national campaign to encourage the full cycle of civic participation of American youth by forging a tangible connection between their involvement in community service and the political process; and to increase awareness and commitment among candidates to make national and community service a common experience for all young people.

Audience

The ServiceVote 2000 Campaign will mobilize a network of national civic and youth service organizations as partners. The Campaign will target 18 – 24 year old young volunteers, the candidates, and the media.

ServiceVote 2000 Goals

- Bridge the gap between volunteering and voting among young people.
- Educate and engage candidates on issues related to national and community service.
- Raise public awareness about importance of youth involvement as volunteers and voters.

Strategy

Goal 1. Bridge the gap between volunteering and voting among young people.

- **Train Young Volunteers as Local Campaign Coordinators**

Over 300 young volunteers will be trained as Local Campaign Coordinators through its 35+ organizational partnerships, conferences, forums, and the Republican and Democratic conventions. Campaign Coordinators, working closely with ServiceVote 2000 staff, will organize grassroots initiatives in their community that include information fairs, service stops, public forums, voter registration, and “get out the vote” activities.

- **Connect Volunteering and Voting at the Republican and Democratic Conventions**

ServiceVote 2000, will host Service Projects, an educational program – Convention Watch, train local campaign coordinators and promote the “I Volunteer and I Vote” message at the conventions in Philadelphia and Los Angeles.

Service Projects. Working with national and local media, young people will invite candidates to a service project such as painting a school, creating a civic-youth mural, or cleaning up in a neighborhood.

Convention Watch. Is a simple idea to get young people *talking* about the candidates and issues, not just *listening*. In partnership with Debate Watch 2000, youth volunteer focus groups will meet daily during the convention to discuss the conventions and how the issues affect their lives. The opinions of young people, collected through the focus groups will be broadcasted through television, radio and web media. This way young adult volunteers across the nation can influence the broader dialogue on matters of public policy.

Local Campaign Coordinator Trainings. After providing young people an opportunity to serve, to discuss the issue, young people will be armed with the tool to mobilize their own community through trainings.

- **Youth Forums**

ServiceVote 2000 will co-host five large regional forums with its Campaign Partners. The forums will connect young adult volunteers to the candidates at the local, state, and federal levels. The candidates will be encouraged to share their vision for increasing the involvement of young people in national and community service, as well as the political process. The national media coverage will draw attention to candidates and the young adults involved. ServiceVote 2000 Local Campaign Coordinators will initiate and produce forums and fairs around the nation.



Goal 2. Educate and engage candidates on issues related to National and Community Service.

- **Service Events**

Local Campaign Coordinators will organize service events for candidates and their staff. The events, referred to as Service Stops, will be designed to stand alone, or be added on to a youth forum or issues fair. The purpose, to engage candidates in volunteer activities and educate them about the ways in which young people are addressing local needs in their communities.

- **Candidate Youth Service Briefing Packet**

A briefing packet will be available to educate candidates about national and community service, and indicate ways for them to demonstrate public support. The packet will be distributed to all presidential, vice-presidential, senate, gubernatorial candidates, and those in selected congressional districts.

- **Candidate Survey on Youth Service and Political Action**

ServiceVote 2000 will collect information about where the candidates stand on issues around youth service and youth involvement in the civic participation process. Responses will be posted on the ServiceVote 2000 Website, released to the media, and will serve as a preliminary analysis of candidates' perceptions of young people's role as civic participants.

- **Pledge of Service**

The non-partisan Pledge of Service will be an important component of all national and local ServiceVote 2000 Campaign events in which any candidates will be in attendance. It will be used to gain support from candidates for national and community service, and obtain coverage from the media. It will provide a tangible and publicized manner for candidates demonstrate their support for national and community service.

Goal 3. Raise public awareness about importance of youth involvement as volunteers and voters.

- **Media Coverage of all Service Vote 2000 Events**

ServiceVote 2000 will work with its local partners to ensure media coverage of young people engaging political candidates at all ServiceVote 2000 events in local newspapers, television, and radio. ServiceVote 2000 will identify reporters covering issues of youth voting and national and community service. Service Vote 2000 will stage a "made-for-C-SPAN" event, featuring Capitol Hill members speaking out on youth and civic responsibility.

- **National and Local Opinion Editorials and Editorial Boards**

ServiceVote 2000 will submit a national opinion editorial to *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today* and other national media outlets, distribute editorial advisories and call editorial boards at national newspapers and local papers in targeted congressional districts, encouraging them to editorialize on the importance of youth volunteering and voting. In addition, ServiceVote 2000 will attempt to arrange meetings between the Youth Service America leadership and the editorial boards of the aforementioned national newspapers. As election day approaches ServiceVote 2000 will assist the Local Campaign Coordinators in publicizing their activities and opinions in the popular newspapers of that region.



Volunteer Today. Vote for Tomorrow.

- **Grassroots Awareness Campaign: Volunteer Today Vote For Tomorrow**

Local Campaign Coordinators will cover local communities and college campuses with thousands of the "Volunteer Today Vote For Tomorrow" posters, flyers, and handbills, provided in the Campaign Toolbox. Free "Volunteer Today Vote For Tomorrow" postcards will be distributed to youth oriented stores, shops, and restaurants where the five regional youth forums will be held.

- **Release of Findings**

ServiceVote 2000 will work to publicize the successes and findings of the Service Vote 2000 Campaign through national and local media, and the Internet. Polling data and subsequent analyses of service-related surveys also will be distributed and promoted to the media. Service Vote 2000 will work with their partners in their overall efforts to engage youth and promote the work of the partners to the media.



Volunteer Today. Vote for Tomorrow.

Measures of Success

Goal 1. Bridge the gap between volunteering and voting among young people.

Primary Measure → Achieve 100% voter turn-out from Service Vote 2000 participants.

- ✓ Recruit 300 Active Local Campaign Coordinators
- ✓ Involve 25,000 Youth Volunteer Participants in all activities
- ✓ Co-host 5 Regional forums and provide technical assistance to at least 30 others
- ✓ Gather 100,000 commitments from young people pledging to vote

Goal 2. Educate and engage candidates about National and Community Service.

Primary measure → Achieve 75% response from Candidate Surveys.

- ✓ Co-host or support thirty Service Stops
- ✓ Obtain 500 Pledge of Service signatures from candidates
- ✓ Discuss the issues with candidates at five regional forums and support at least twenty others

Goal 3. Raise public awareness about importance of youth involvement as volunteers and voters.

Primary measure → Political commentary after election day includes an analysis of young adult volunteers and their specific role in the political process.

- ✓ National coverage of ServiceVote 2000 launch
- ✓ 50 letters to the editor
- ✓ 5 statewide editorial board meetings
- ✓ 1 national Editorial Board meeting and 1 national editorial
- ✓ Local coverage at the five regional youth forums
- ✓ Local coverage of at least 20 of the local youth forums

Service Vote 2000 Partners — Get Involved

- ☐ Identify and Train Local Campaign Coordinators
- ☐ Co-host a Regional Youth Forum
- ☐ Host a Local Youth Forum
- ☐ Convene an Issues Fair
- ☐ Distribute the Toolkit to Your Network
- ☐ Organize a Service Event
- ☐ Mobilize a Voter Registration Drive
- ☐ Publicize ServiceVote 2000 and its Activities
- ☐ Distribute posters, fliers, and collateral material



Volunteer Today. Vote for Tomorrow.

Calendar of Events

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
6/13	Service Vote 2000 National Press Conference	Washington, DC
6/18 6/21	National Assoc of Service & Conservation Corps Conf	New York, New York
6/19	Hillel Partner Agency Day	Washington, D.C.
6/21 6/27	National Community Service Conference	Orlando, Florida
6/26	Campus Compact Annual Conference	Philadelphia, PA
6/29	Panel Presentation to the National Association of Secretaries State	Baltimore, MD
7/11 7/13	Council for Excellence in Government	
7/31 8/5	Republican National Convention Youth in Action Convention	Philadelphia, PA Philadelphia, PA
8/14 8/17	Democratic National Convention Youth in Action Convention	Los Angeles, CA Los Angeles, CA
Sept	Five Regional Youth Forums To be determined	
9/4	ServiceVote2000 Grassroots Campaign Begins!! Phase one: Recruitment Drive	
9/8 9/22	Local General Interest Meetings	
9/25 10/30	Phase two: Civic Education and Voter Registration	
10/28	Make a Difference Day	
10/26 11/7	Phase three: Get Out the Vote Election Day	
November December	Publicize Activities, Successes and Report Findings	



Volunteer Today. Vote for Tomorrow.

ServiceVote2000 Campaign Partners

20/20 Vision Education Fund
2030 Center
Ad Council
Alliance for Better Campaigns
Alliance for National Renewal
America's Promise
Campus Compact
Campus Outreach Opportunity League
City Year
Close Up Foundation
College Republican National Committee
Council for Excellence in Government
Debate America
Debate Watch
Democracy Compact
Do Something
Foundation for Individual Responsibility and Social Trust
govWorks.com
Hillel
HOBY
Independent Sector
League of Women Voters Education Fund
National 4-H Council
National and Community Service Coalition
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Service and Conservation Corps
National Civic League
National Youth Leadership Council
National Youth Voting Day
Points of Light Foundation
Project Vote Smart
Rock the Vote
Schoolcity.com
United States Student Association
University YMCA
The Washington Center
Voter Foundation
Y2KVote
Young Democrats of America
YouthBuild USA
Youth-e-Vote.com
Youth in Action Campaign
Youth Vote 2000 Coalition

For More Information...

Contact Jennifer Coken, Service Vote 2000 Campaign Director; or Matt Leber, Campaign Manager, at
(202) 296-2992 x.22 or e-mail mleber@ysa.org

A Youth Service America Project sponsored through a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts





Volunteer Today. Vote for Tomorrow.

CANDIDATE SURVEY



QUESTION1

While volunteerism is at an all-time high among young people, the number of young people voting is at an all-time low. How would you propose to address this disconnect between volunteering and voting?

QUESTION2

What is your position on mandatory service requirements through the public school system?

QUESTION3

Where do you stand on the reauthorization of the National and Community Service Trust Act, which provides financial support to AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America programs nationwide?

QUESTION4

What is the one thing that you would say to compel a young person to vote and to vote for you specifically?

QUESTION5

There is a growing dependence on the work of non-profits in local communities, yet their funding is cut year after year. What sources of funding would you propose to help strengthen the ability of youth to be resources in their own communities?

QUESTION6

What message of inspiration would you give to young people to get them more involved in volunteering and more active in influencing public policy?

QUESTION7

What types of community service do you think are most desperately needed and what types of incentives would you support to encourage youth participation in these service fields?

QUESTION8

How do the major issues you are discussing and major initiatives you are supporting affect young people?



BENNETT, PETTS & BLUMENTHAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary on Findings of National Youth Survey Conducted for 20/20 Vision

Views of Government and Ways to Make Change

<i>Most Effective Ways to Make Change</i>	page 2
<i>Elected Officials: Responsive or in the Pockets of Special Interests?</i>	page 2
<i>Little Confidence in American Institutions Like the U.S. Congress and the Media</i>	page 3
<i>Taking Action To Express their Opinions</i>	page 3
<i>Dramatically Increased Internet Access</i>	page 4

The Concerns of Today's Youth

<i>Top Concerns for the Federal Government to Address: Education, Crime and Health Care</i>	page 4
<i>Ranking Government Priorities</i>	page 4
<i>Top Issues When Voting for a Candidate</i>	page 5
<i>Unacceptable Ways to Cut the Federal Budget</i>	page 5

U.S. Role in the World

<i>National Missile Defense</i>	page 6
<i>Knowing that 50% of Discretionary Budget is Spent on Military, Plurality Support Defense Cuts</i>	page 6
<i>Strong Support for U.S. Payment of U.N. Dues</i>	page 6
<i>Greatest Threat to U.S. National Security: Terrorism and Third World Instability</i>	page 7
<i>Do U.S. Actions Make the World Safer or More Dangerous?</i>	page 7
<i>Intervene in Ethnic Cleansing</i>	page 7
<i>What is the Likelihood of Having a Major War?</i>	page 8

Views on Environmental Protection

<i>Voting on the Environment: Important Issue for 76% of Respondents</i>	page 8
<i>Today's Environmental Regulations Are Not Strict Enough, Youth Say</i>	page 8

<u>Conclusion</u>	page 9
-------------------------	--------

<u>Methodology</u>	page 9
--------------------------	--------



BENNETT, PETTS & BLUMENTHAL

Executive Summary on Findings of National Youth Survey **Conducted for 20/20 Vision**

This nationwide survey provides a rich opportunity to learn more about how young people in America view a wide range of important issues, including national security, government and spending priorities, elected officials, the media and civic participation, environmental protection, and the U.S. role in the world. The survey was conducted for 20/20 Vision, a grassroots non-profit organization that works to engage citizen in policy making on peace, environmental and democracy issues. Thanks to the MacArthur Foundation for their generous support.

Overview

This generation of youth is engaged in the world but believes they can have more of an impact close to home than in a larger national arena. They have little faith in their elected officials and believe they respond mostly to special interests and campaign contributions rather than to concerns of constituents. They see the world as an unsettled place, posing a myriad of diverse threats to our national security such as domestic and international terrorism and Third World instability. They place a higher priority on domestic issues such as education, crime and health care than on international issues or on the military. At the same time, they believe the United States should have an active role in the world, paying its U.N. dues and intervening abroad when ethnic cleansing takes place. They are supporters of environmental protection and believe that many of today's environmental laws and regulations are not strong enough, particularly those concerned with protecting our water and air quality, and food safety. This generation thinks carefully about a wide range of issues. At the same, they lack confidence in the news media, the U.S. Congress and large businesses and corporations to "do the right thing for people."

This report is based on findings of a nationwide telephone survey of 500 adults ages 18-29, conducted from September 13-September 27, 1999.

Views of Government and Ways to Make Change

Youth today are highly cynical about major American institutions such as the U.S. Congress and the media. However, this is by no means a "drop out" generation. They believe in making change and they believe that changes can be made by regular people. When these young people want to make a difference, they are far more likely to try to make that change close to home than through national venues.

They are particularly cynical about elected officials and believe they are firmly in the pocket of special interests, acting in the interests of the people who give them campaign contributions rather than in the interests of their constituents. Although today's youth believe that regular people can stay informed on important issues, they are skeptical that elected officials will be responsive if constituents contact them about those issues.

Politicians are not the only ones who have lost the trust of today's youth — they also have almost no faith in news media to do the right thing for people.

Most Effective Ways to Make Change

Respondents believe the most effective way to make change is by "putting your ideals to work in your everyday life." Fully 93% of respondents believe that is an effective way to make change (63% very effective, 30% fairly effective).

In addition, 92% of respondents say that "volunteering locally to help people directly" is an effective way to make change, with 51% saying it is very effective. Clearly, this generation believes that the best way to make a difference is to work close to home, "putting your ideals to work in your everyday life" and "volunteering locally to help people directly."

Interestingly for a group as seemingly disenfranchised from national politics as these youth, a strong majority of them (88%) believe that "voting in elections" is an effective way to make change (57% say very effective, 31% say somewhat effective). Both Democrats (64%) and Republicans (65%) are much more likely than Independents (43%) to say that voting is a very effective way to make change. Clearly there is a connection between choosing a partisan affiliation and believing that voting is an effective way to make a difference.

In sharp contrast, there are several ways that these young people do **not** believe are particularly effective ways to make change:

- Only 18% of respondents believe a very effective way to make change is "expressing your opinion to a newspaper, or a radio or TV show." Even fewer people (15%) believe a very effective way to make change is by "writing a letter to elected officials."
- This perception also contrasts with the common view of Capitol Hill staffers that personal letters (not just form letters or petitions) are a highly effective way to impact Congress.

Elected Officials: Responsive or in the Pockets of Special Interests?

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a series of four statements about elected officials and civic participation by regular people. Their responses illustrate their cynicism about, and lack of faith in, national elected officials.

- Overall, 84% agree that "Members of Congress are more likely to take the side of special interest lobbyists and large campaign contributors than the side of their own constituents" (49% strongly agree, 35% somewhat agree). Only 14% of respondents disagree with this statement.
- In addition, 67% of respondents agree that "Regular people have little or no say in what the government does," with 30% strongly agreeing and 37% somewhat agreeing.
- When asked in an open-ended question about the greatest threat to the nation's national security, fully 15% volunteered responses about our own government and people. A sampling of these volunteered responses is below:

"The politicians – they lie and cheat so much they're a greater threat to the American people than any foreign country."

"Corruption in government, greedy people who are willing to sell out the people for the largest dollar."

"Corruption in politics – there is no honesty in the people who run the country."

"The biggest threat to the national security of this country is ourselves – the people are having less of a say in government regulations – that's why we become violent."

Although 66% of respondents agree that "Elected officials are responsive when voters take the time to express their opinions," there is little enthusiasm in the agreement: only 14% strongly agree with that statement while 51% somewhat agree.

At the same time, 70% of respondents believe that "Regular people can become well informed about what the government does by following the news and talking to other people," with 34% strongly agreeing and 36% somewhat agreeing.

Clearly, these youth do not have a high level of confidence in their elected officials or in the citizen lobbying process.

Little Confidence in American Institutions Like the U.S. Congress and the Media

Respondents have little confidence in either the U.S. Congress, the news media, or in large businesses and corporations to "do the right thing for people." They do, however, have a great deal of confidence in both environmental organizations and in the U.S. military.

When it come to the U.S. Congress, only 6% of youth say they have "tremendous confidence" that they will do the right thing for people, 65% say they have a fair amount of confidence and 28% say they have little or no confidence.

A majority — 53% — say they have "very little" or "no confidence" that large businesses and corporations will do the right thing for people. Only 8% say they have tremendous confidence that businesses and corporations will do the right thing for people, with 38% saying they have a fair amount of confidence.

The news media does equally poorly. Only 8% have tremendous confidence in them and 53% have "very little" or "no confidence" that the news media will do the right thing for people. Republicans are the most skeptical of the media, with fully 62% saying they have very little or no confidence in the media (compared to 51% among Independents and 48% among Democrats).

The two institutions that do well with youth are environmental organizations and the U.S. military. Overall, 80% of respondents say they have confidence in environmental organizations to do the right thing for people (29% have tremendous confidence while 51% have a fair amount of confidence). Only 19% say they have very little or no confidence in environmental organizations.

Fully 86% of respondents say they have confidence in the U.S. military to do the right thing for people (36% have tremendous confidence while 49% have a fair amount of confidence). Only 13% say they have very little or no confidence in the U.S. military.

Taking Action To Express their Opinions

Fully 52% of respondents say they have at some time expressed their opinions or comments to either a business (28%), a newspaper or magazine (27%), an elected official (23%), a radio or television show (18%) or to a government agency (15%).

People who are older and more educated are more likely to have expressed their opinion than younger people and people with less education. When it comes to calling TV or radio shows, or writing to elected officials, Republicans are more likely than Democrats and Independents to have acted.

In an interesting finding reflecting what members of Congress often say about the conservative tilt of their constituent mail, 33% of Republicans say they have contacted an elected official about their views, in contrast to only 21% of Democrats and 17% of Independents.

In another interesting finding which possibly reflects the predominance of conservative and libertarian talk shows on the radio today, 22% of Republicans and 20% of Independents say they have contacted a radio or television show to express their views, while only 12% of Democrats say they have done so.

Dramatically Increased Internet Access

In 1996, 20/20 Vision conducted a similar survey among youth. In a striking reflection of one of our nation's most rapid changes in recent years, only 28% of respondents in 1996 said they had access to the Internet. In this 1999 survey, fully 76% of respondents say they have access to the Internet, while only 24% do not.

The Concerns of Today's Youth

Top Concerns for the Federal Government to Address: Education, Crime and Health Care

At the same time that today's youth have little faith in elected officials to do the right thing, these youth have a wide range of concerns they believe the government should be addressing.

Asked in an open-ended question to name the two most important issues the federal government should address, education stands head and shoulders above other issues as the most important. Fully 35% of respondents volunteer a variety of education issues as their top concern, including more funding, high standards, better school safety, more teachers and smaller classroom sizes.

The next most important issue was crime: fully 21% of respondents volunteered crime-related items, including drugs, gangs, child abuse and the lack of tougher gun control measures. Although not surprising in the wake of the Columbine shootings and other stories of violence receiving national media attention, it is certainly interesting that crime was the number two concern of youth, since crime is often perceived to be a top concern of older people rather than younger ones.

These young people are also concerned about health care's affordability and accessibility (16%), with people increasingly concerned about the issue as they are older: while only 7% of respondents aged 18-21 volunteer health care as a concern, it is volunteered by 16% of those aged 22-25 and by 26% of those aged 26-29.

Ranking Government Priorities

When asked to rate how important it is for the government to address a wide range of priorities, respondents are once again clear: "improving education" is their top priority. On a scale of 0-10 where 10 means the issue is extremely important for the government to address and zero means the issue is not at all important for the government to address, fully 88% of respondents say improving education is very important (rating it 8, 9 or 10) with 60% giving it a rating of "10".

- The next most important issue is "fighting crime and drugs," with 78% saying it is very important and 46% giving it a rating of 10 for extremely important.
- "Making health care more available and affordable" is cited as very important by 74% of youth, with 48% saying it is extremely important.
- Seventy-three percent (73%) of respondents say that "having a strong economy" is very important for the government to address, with 37% saying it is extremely important.
- "Protecting the environment" is considered very important by 67% of respondents, with 33% saying it is extremely important.

- Fifty-six percent (56%) of respondents say that "putting tighter controls on handguns and assault weapons" is very important, with more than a third (36%) saying it is extremely important.

Top Issues When Voting for a Candidate

Respondents were asked to name the single most important issue to them when deciding which candidate to support for office. Overall, education is the most important issue, with 32% saying it is their top issue when selecting a candidate for office. Next is health care (18%), gun control (14%), crime and drugs (10%), a strong economy (9%) and protecting the environment (8%). The least important items for these youth when deciding which candidate to support for office are maintaining a strong national defense (4%) and campaign finance reform (1%).

Unacceptable Ways to Cut the Federal Budget

Another way to assess people's priorities is to ask them to make expenditure decisions about major government programs and initiatives. Once again, education and crime-fighting stand out as top priorities for government spending. Spending for environmental protection is also a top priority for youth: cutting current levels of environmental protection spending is unacceptable to more than two-thirds (70%) of respondents.

- Overall, 95% of youth say that "cutting education funding" is an unacceptable way to reduce federal government spending, with 77% saying it is a completely unacceptable way to reduce spending.
- Ninety-two percent (92%) of youth say that cutting Social Security and Medicare is unacceptable, with 64% saying it is completely unacceptable.
- Eight-four percent (84%) say cutting crime and drug-fighting funds is unacceptable, with 46% saying it is completely unacceptable.
- Seventy percent (70%) say cutting environmental protection funds is unacceptable, with almost a third (29%) saying it is completely unacceptable.
- In sharp contrast, only 47% say that cutting the military budget is unacceptable, with only 26% saying it is completely unacceptable.

U.S. Role in the World

National Missile Defense

Youth are fairly evenly split on the question of whether or not the U.S. should build a national missile defense system. After providing respondents with balanced arguments both for and against building a system, 53% oppose building a system while 45% support it. Clearly the public debate about whether or not the U.S. should invest in building a system has not been won by either side.

Question: Building a National Missile Defense System

“Please tell me which of the following two views is closer to your own: [ROTATE]

Supporters of building a national missile defense system say that the U.S. is currently defenseless against missile attacks by hostile nations or terrorists, so we must build a system so we can destroy incoming missiles before they reach U.S. soil.

Opponents say that the U.S. has already spent billions of dollars trying to develop a missile defense system with no significant technological success. They say the system will probably never work, is too expensive and that the money should be spent on more pressing national needs.

Which view is closer to your own? Do you [ROTATE] SUPPORT or OPPOSE building a national missile defense system?”

OPPOSE SYSTEM/DON'T BUILD IT	53%
SUPPORT SYSTEM/BUILD IT	45%
[DON'T KNOW/REFUSED]	2%

Strong Support for U.S. Payment of U.N. Dues

In addition to supporting U.S. intervention in cases of ethnic cleansing, almost three-quarters (74%) of respondents agree that the U.S. should pay its dues to the United Nations. Please note that this overwhelming majority of people support the U.S. paying its dues despite the fact that the amount owed — a staggering \$1.5 billion — was included in the question when it was asked in the survey.

Question: Support for U.S. Payment of U.N. Dues

“Every country that belongs to the United Nations is required to pay annual dues to the United Nations, also called the U.N. The United States Currently owes the U.N. one and a half billion dollars in dues money that the U.S. had previously agreed to pay.

[ROTATE STATEMENTS]

Some people say that the U.S. should not pay its U.N. dues because the U.N. is not a very effective organization, and because the money could be better spent in other ways.

Other people say that the U.S. should pay its U.N. dues because it is our legal obligation and responsibility, and not paying would hurt peace and humanitarian efforts around the world.

Having heard both sides, do you think the U.S. should [ROTATE]:”

PAY ITS U.N. DUES	74%
NOT PAY ITS U.N. DUES	21%
[OTHER]	1%
[DON'T KNOW/REFUSED]	4%

Knowing that 50% of Discretionary Budget is Spent on Military, Plurality Support Defense Cuts

Respondents were informed that the U.S. spends 50% of its discretionary funds on the military, and asked if, knowing this information, they believe the U.S. should spend more or less on the military, or if the U.S. is spending about the right amount. Having heard this information, only 12% of respondents say we should spend more money on the military, while 47% believe we should spend less.

Greatest Threat to U.S. National Security: Terrorism and Third World Instability

Youth today are far more concerned about the threat of terrorism than about the threat of war. When asked in an open-ended question "What is the greatest threat to the national security of the United States today," 27% cite some kind of terrorism or unrest in other countries, while only 10% cite a risk of war (including biological and nuclear warfare).

Interestingly, more people (15%) cite as the greatest threat to national security problems with our own government and our own people than cite war (10%) as a threat. Comprising this 15% are 4% who say the greatest threat to national security is politicians and people in government; another 4% cite people within our own nation; another 3% cite espionage and leaking information to outsiders; 2% cite President Clinton and 1% cite dishonesty and corruption at the highest levels of government.

Clearly, when young people think about national security threats today, they are thinking about a diverse and diffuse range of dangers, everything from terrorism to Third World instability to political corruption at home, rather than fearing war with clearly identified hostile nations. This view of the dangers to the United States probably shapes their view that the military, while important, is not the highest priority, since military preparedness does not actually address many of the concerns they hold about national security.

Do U.S. Actions Make the World Safer or More Dangerous?

Respondents are mixed on whether recent U.S. actions are making the world a safer or a more dangerous place. When asked if the recent actions of the United States have made the world safer, more dangerous, or not made a difference, 39% say it has made the world safer, 33% say it has made no difference and 24% say more dangerous.

Intervene in Ethnic Cleansing

Overall, youth today seem to support an active role in world affairs for the United States. When presented with balanced arguments both for and against the U.S. intervening when ethnic cleansing occurs elsewhere in the world, a full 60% of youth say that the U.S. should intervene, while only 35% say the U.S. should not intervene.

Question: Intervening in Ethnic Cleansing

"Ethnic cleansing describes when one ethnic group tries to force another ethnic group to leave an area by using violence, threats and discrimination.

[ROTATE STATEMENTS]

Some people say that even though ethnic cleansing is wrong, the U.S. should not intervene when it happens inside a nation's borders, because it is like a civil war and the U.S. should not intervene in other countries' civil wars.

Other people say that ethnic cleansing is so terrible and wrong that the U.S., and other nations should intervene to stop it whenever possible.

Which view is closer to your own?"

DON'T INTERVENE	35%
INTERVENE	60%
[OTHER]	2%
[DON'T KNOW/REFUSED]	3%

What is the Likelihood of Having a Major War?

There has been a tremendous amount of news coverage lately about conflicts around the world, including Kosovo, Korea and other places. We asked respondents if they feel the world is becoming more or less likely to have a major war. Clearly, people still view the world as an unsettled and perhaps dangerous place. Fully 61% percent of respondents say we are more likely (26% much more likely) to have a war, while only 34% say we are less likely to have a war (7% much less likely).

Views on Environmental Protection

Voting on the Environment: Important Issue for 76% of Respondents

When it comes to voting, a candidate's positions on environmental issues are important to 76% of youths, with 25% citing it as one of the most important reasons to vote for a candidate, 2% as the single most important reason, and 50% saying it is important but not one of the top reasons they choose a candidate. Only 22% of youth say that a candidate's position on the environment is not important to them (16% not very important, 6% not important at all). These results demonstrate that young people do consider the environment to be an important issue when deciding whom to support for public office.

Today's Environmental Regulations Are Not Strict Enough, Youth Say

Today's youth believe that many environmental laws and regulations are not strict enough. These findings strongly contradict public statements from some quarters that the American public wants heavy deregulation in the environmental arena. Youth are especially concerned that laws and regulations designed to protect water and air quality are not as strict as they should be.

For different areas of environmental regulation, we asked respondents:

"For each of the following, please tell me whether you think that today's laws and regulations in that area are too strict, about right, or not strict enough."

- When asked about laws and regulations in regards to restricting "the amount of chemicals companies can put into the air, water or ground," fully 68% of respondents say that today's laws and regulations are not strict enough, with only 2% saying they are too strict and 28% that they are about right.
- The next highest area of concern is "laws and regulations that limit pesticides in foods:" fully 53% of youth believe they are not strict enough, with only 4% saying they are too strict and 41% saying they are about right.
- When it comes to "pollution from cars and trucks," 53% overall say that laws and regulations are not strict enough, with 10% saying laws are too strict and 37% saying they are about right.

- Forty-six percent (46%) say that "laws and regulations to combat global warming and climate change" are not strict enough, 11% say they are too strict and 39% say they are about right.

It is noteworthy that people with a high school education are more likely than their more educated counterparts to say certain laws and regulations are not strict enough (in particular, those limiting foods in pesticides and combating global warming/climate change), since environmental concerns are sometimes portrayed as being a concern largely of more educated, wealthier people.

Conclusion

This survey provides a rich opportunity to learn more about how our nation's youth view a wide range of important issues, including national security, government and spending priorities, elected officials, the media and civic participation, environmental protection, and the U.S. role in the world.

Methodology

This report is based on a national telephone survey conducted among 500 adults between the ages of 18 and 29. The survey was conducted from September 13 through September 27, 1999 by trained, professional interviewers following procedures established by Bennett, Petts & Blumenthal. Throughout this report, the term "youth" is used to refer to respondents in this survey who are aged 18 to 29.

The data have been weighted by age, sex, and race to more accurately reflect the current population of people aged 18-29 in the United States, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's July 1, 1999 population estimates.

All surveys are subject to errors caused by interviewing a sample of persons rather than the entire population. For this survey's sample size of 500, in 95 cases out of 100, the results will fall within plus or minus 4.4 percentage points of those that would have been obtained from interviewing the entire population of Americans aged 18 to 29 with phone numbers. The sampling error for subgroups in the survey will be greater.

Dear Ann:

We have all read and heard a great deal about the recent tragedy at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo. Please inform your readers of the importance of youth involvement in community service. It is a fine way to help reduce violent behavior and build healthy communities.

Research shows that young people who are involved in service programs are less likely to be engaged in destructive social behavior. Teens who help others are 50 percent less likely to use drugs, join gangs or get pregnant. Their dropout rate is lower, and they achieve higher grades throughout high school. Youth service is an effective teaching method in thousands of school districts and universities. Through service, students learn tolerance for others as well as an empathy for environmental and social issues.

Young people often say they do not volunteer because they don't know where to go or what to do. Please, Ann, let your readers know they can find or post volunteer opportunities in their area by calling 1-800-VOLUNTEER (1-800-865-8683) or by writing to us at Youth Service America, 1101 15th St. N.W., Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20005-5002 (www.serve.net.org).

What happened at Columbine was a tragedy, but it should not distort the picture of what our young people are like today. The truth is, they are smarter, more religious, more inclined to volunteer and possibly the finest generation of Americans in our history.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve." Isolation and intolerance are a terrible burden for too many adolescents, and every teenager deserves to experience greatness. Please help me point them in the right direction.

*Steven A. Culbertson,
president and CEO, Youth Service America*

Your message is a splendid one, and it comes at a time when we all need to hear it. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share it.

SATURDAY, JULY 10, 1999

The Washington Post

Calling Young Voters

To the Editor:

Re "College Students Not Drawn to Voting or Politics, Poll Shows" (news article, Jan. 12): It is thrilling that this generation of young people is volunteering at historic rates. But when young people see volunteering as an alternative to voting, they are missing a key component of their service experience.

Like volunteer work, the ballot box is a necessary step in the cycle of civic participation. Otherwise, the children of this generation of volunteers will be cleaning the same dirty rivers or supplementing the same unsatisfactory school systems. Voting matters to every volunteer's work to make the world a better place.

STEVEN A. CULBERTSON
President and Chief Executive
Youth Service America
Washington, Jan. 13, 2000

like, well, more distant. I'm one in a million."

The survey was conducted for the Panetta Institute, which is headed by Leon V. Panetta, former congressman and White House chief of staff, and it found that only a quarter of the students said they discussed political issues as often as three or four times a week. A third said government had no influence on their lives.

Mr. Panetta, whose institute in California promotes student involvement in government, said the students' sense of government was unfortunate and mistaken. But he said he was optimistic that if they did involve themselves in careers in education or health, they would become voters once they saw how important government was to those activities.

Mr. Panetta said required volunteer work in high school and college was an important element. "Someone has to push them on stage before they learn they enjoy it," he said.

Many of the students interviewed offered caustic views of politics. Matthew Flaherty, a 19-year-old at Boston University, said, "There is just such a negative connotation to politicians and the whole field of politics that it doesn't interest me much to get involved in such a hypocritical situation."

Sometimes that negative view came from experience. Another Boston University student, Kim Haberlin, said that she had interned at the Massachusetts State House and that "watching the state rep I work with, all he does is talk and have lunch and golf and talk."

But Mark Mellman, head of the organization that polled 800 students by telephone, said the college students were in fact less alienated from government than the population generally. Forty-nine of the students, but 71 percent of the nation's population in 1996, said they believed "government is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves," rather than "for the benefit of all the people."

And 41 percent of the students, compared with 27 percent of the public as whole, said they felt the government in Washington could be trusted to do the right thing at least most of the time. The poll's margin of sampling error was plus or minus four percentage points.

Mr. Mellman, citing the volunteerism and the interest in careers like education, said American college students were "public-spirited and civic-minded" and "less cynical, less alienated than adults."

Actual voting levels are very hard hard to determine, as almost all polls find wildly inflated voting claims. Fifty-seven percent of the students who were old enough to vote in 1996 said they had voted



- Mission and Programs -

YOUTH SERVICE AMERICA (YSA) is a resource center and an alliance of 200 organizations committed to increasing the quantity and quality of opportunities for young Americans to serve locally, nationally, or globally. Founded in 1986, YSA's **mission** is to strengthen the Effectiveness, Sustainability, and Scale of the youth service movement. A strong youth service movement will create healthy communities, and foster citizenship, knowledge, and the personal development of young people. YSA **envisions** a powerful network of organizations committed to making service the common experience and expectation of all young Americans.

THE YOUTH SERVICE INFORMATION NETWORK

The Network provides youth service organizations and the media with key information and research on best practices, resources, and opportunities in the youth service field.

- **NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE AFFILIATES** is the largest network in the U.S. of youth service organizations, representing over 50 million young Americans. The Affiliates program provides its members with the weekly National Service Briefing, service-related information, issue papers, discounts on goods and services, and convenes the field around key issues through the monthly Working Group on National and Community Service. YSA is also organizing **Service Vote 2000**, an initiative to engage more young volunteers in voting, as well as build political support for creating a culture of service.
- **WWW.SERVENET.ORG** is the premier web site on service and volunteering and is the first national database of local volunteer opportunities. Through SERVENet, Affiliates reach potential volunteers by posting opportunities on Volunteer Now!, In addition to posting calendar events, job openings, news, and best practices, Affiliates can find resources and best practices online to improve the sustainability and effectiveness of their programs. YSA's commitment to America's Promise is to have volunteer opportunities on SERVENet for every zip code in America before the year 2001!

THE YOUTH AS ASSETS CAMPAIGN

The Youth as Assets Campaign works to empower young people, highlighting their ongoing contributions to their communities and mobilizing their energy, commitment, and idealism through sustainable service.

- **National Youth Service Day** is the largest service event in the world, engaging millions of young Americans and focusing national attention on the amazing leadership of young people. National Youth Service Day is also an opportunity to recruit the next generation of volunteers and to promote the benefits of youth service to the American public.
- **The President's Student Service Awards** recognize young people ages 5 to 25 who contribute between 50 and 100 hours of service in a year. The awards are a White House initiative sponsored by the Corporation for National Service and administered by Youth Service America with the American Institute for Public Service and the Points of Light Foundation.

THE INSTITUTE FOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The Institute provides personalized training to Affiliates and other partners on key topics that include strategic planning, community mapping, social entrepreneurship, cross-sector partnering and marketing, developing youth voice, integrating technology and service, and evaluation. YSA provides customized assistance as well as leadership programs.

- **The Fund for Social Entrepreneurs** recruits, trains, and supports visionary young entrepreneurs who are launching new youth service organizations. The Fund incubates these organizations by providing seed capital, training, and technical assistance as well as building partnerships with business and other service organizations.

Facts and Figures on Youth and Volunteering

Youth are constantly told that they are the hope of tomorrow. At Youth Service America we believe that youth are the hope of today. They have amazing energy, commitment, idealism, and creativity. There is every reason for them to address the problems facing their communities today, not tomorrow.

-- Steven A. Culbertson, President and CEO, Youth Service America

Youth Service at Record Highs!

- **Volunteering is up 12 percent over the last 10 years:** 74.2 percent of college freshman volunteered their last year of high school in 1998, versus 62 percent in 1989. Only 21.3 percent reported service-learning graduation requirements. (*UCLA / Higher Education Research Institute Annual Freshmen Survey, 1999*)
- Out of 13.3 million teenagers aged 12-17, 59.3% volunteer, versus 49% of the adult population over the same time period. Teens say they volunteer an average of 3.5 hours per week versus the adult average of 4.2 hours. (*Independent Sector/Gallup, 1996*)
- **70 percent of young people ages 15-21 have participated in activities to help strengthen their community at some point in their lives.** (*Do Something / Princeton Survey Research, 1998*)
- The number of school districts with community service requirements for students has doubled over the past fifteen years from 13% to 30%. (*USDED, 1999*)
- The number of students involved in school-related service programs has increased from 900,000 to 12,600,000 (1,400%) over the past fifteen years. (*USDED, 1999*)

Dismal Facts

- Only 37% of American adults believe today's children, once grown, will make the world a better place. The majority of American adults (61%) are convinced that today's youth face a crisis in their values and morals, look at teenagers with misgiving and trepidation, and view them as undisciplined, disrespectful, and unfriendly. Even younger children are widely viewed as spoiled, out of control, and neither engaging nor helpful. (*Public Agenda Survey for the Ad Council and Ronald McDonald House Charities, 1997*)
- **Only 20% of young people perceive that adults in the community value youth.** (*Search Institute Survey of Youth 6th to 12th Graders, 1997*)
- An overwhelming majority (93%) of America's 60 million young people believe they can make a difference in their communities, but fewer than one in five civic organizations across the nation are involving young people extensively in their work. (*Do Something Young People's Involvement Survey / Princeton Survey Research, 1998*)

Five Proven Ways to Measurably Increase Teen Volunteering

- Ask them to volunteer;
- Encourage children to get involved in volunteering at an early age;
- Encourage participation by children in youth groups, voluntary organizations, religious organizations, student government, and schools;
- Give young people a positive self-image so that they are able to help others and contribute to their communities; and
- Provide young people with opportunities to take courses that include and even require community service. (*Independent Sector / Gallup, 1996*)

The Impact of Youth Service

- Teenagers volunteer 2.4 billion hours annually -- worth \$ 34.3 billion to the US economy. (*Independent Sector/Gallup, 1996, and 1999 hourly value*)
- **The value of service carried out on National Youth Service Day exceeds \$ 171 million.** (*Youth Service America estimates based on Independent Sector value of service, 1999*)
- Youth who volunteer are **more likely** to do well in school, graduate, vote, and be philanthropic. (*UCLA / Higher Education Research Institute, 1991*)
- Youth who volunteer just one hour or more a week are **50% less likely to abuse drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, or engage in other destructive behavior.** (*Search Institute, 1995*)
- 81% of Americans who have volunteer experiences when they are young give to charitable organizations as adults. (*Independent Sector / Gallup, 1996*)
- **Youth service makes adult volunteering three times more likely**, creating a critical pipeline. Youth and adult service is worth \$255 billion to the US economy. (*Independent Sector / Gallup, 1996*)
- Teens say the benefits received from volunteering are: learning to respect others; learning to be helpful and kind; learning to understand people who differ from them; developing leadership skills, becoming more patient, and gaining a better understanding of good citizenship. (*Independent Sector / Gallup, 1996*)

Why Do Youth Volunteer?

- **73% of young people think their efforts can have a positive impact on their communities.** (*Do Something Young People's Involvement Survey / Princeton Survey Research, 1998*)
- Major reasons cited by teens for choosing to volunteer are: they feel compassion for people in need; they can do something for a cause they believe in; they believe if they help others that others will help them. (*Independent Sector / Gallup, 1996*)
- **Teens rank volunteering, along with helping the environment and eating healthy, as one of the top three issues they consider "cool."** (*Teenage Marketing and Lifestyle Study, 1998*)
- Teens are nearly four times more likely to volunteer if they are asked. (*Independent Sector / Gallup, 1996*)
- Many more young people would become involved in their communities if their teachers, coaches, friends, and family members helped them learn about possibilities for getting involved. Young people who learn from someone they know about community-based organizations are three times as likely as other young people to volunteer. (*Do Something Young People's Involvement Survey / Princeton Survey Research, 1998*)

Volunteering and the US Economy

- The volunteer workforce represents the equivalent of over 9 million full-time employees at a value of \$255 billion; the assigned hourly value (for 1998) was \$14.30. 56% of adults volunteered a total of 19.9 billion hours -- a 13.7% increase from the 1996 study. (*Independent Sector, 1999*)
- Contributing households with a volunteer gave over 2 and a half times more on average than those without a volunteer. In fact, 84% of all charitable contributions were given by households where there was at least one volunteer. (*Independent Sector, 1999*)
- In a recent survey of corporations, **three out of four employees said they participate when corporate-sponsored volunteer projects are offered (half of all companies do so).** Volunteering can be a way of learning new management skills in a low-risk setting, according to Professor James Austin of the Harvard Business School. (*Wall Street Journal, 1998*)