



be an elec

If the word election makes you instantly zone out, give yourself a shake and start listening.



You've got opinions on pretty much everything. Why should the election be any different? *Seventeen's* Electionistas have been paying close attention to this year's presidential candidates, and have already decided where they stand on the issues that affect girls the most—women's rights, health care, jobs. They know what they want from their future president, and they want you to help them make it happen!

So what do *you* want? Are you most stressed about finding a job? Paying for college? Having easy access to birth control? This is your time to do something about it! Your vote matters more than you might guess. In the 2008 election, women stepped up in a *major* way—10 million more voted than men, and more girls ages 18–24 voted than in any recent election! So if you'll be 18 by Election Day, November 6, turn the page to find out what you need to know to make your vote count. And if you're not old enough to vote yet, learn how to make your POV heard by the folks in power. Watch out, Washington—the electionistas are ready to make their mark!



tionista!

These passionate chicks are on a crusade to make every girl care about politics! **by ashley mateo**

i'm voting...

"... for my right to do what I want with my body!"

At the middle and high schools I went to in Texas, it was required to teach abstinence-only sex ed, so my classmates and I were taught *nothing* about safe sex. Some people I knew even got STDs and had unplanned pregnancies. I thought, This has to change!

This election has brought tons of attention to sex ed, birth control, and abortion. A lot of Republicans in office support laws that threaten

a woman's ability to make the decisions she thinks are best for her and her health. I should be able to make decisions with my own doctor about birth control now, or pregnancy in the future, without a politician telling me what to do. Plus, \$30 a month for the Pill is expensive! With President Obama's Affordable Care Act, birth control is free for anyone with health insurance. If he gets re-elected, I know he'll support policies that keep *me* in charge of my body.

MACKENZIE MASSEY, 21

*President of the Texas Freedom Network Student Chapter UT Austin, which protects the separation of church and state
Austin, TX*

"...to uphold conservative values."

My mom had me when she was 16—and for the first part of my life, she raised me by herself and supported us with government assistance. I always wanted more for myself, and I used to tell her, "I'm going to be the first African-American female president!" Now, as a third-year law student, I'm the supervisor of Soil and Water Conservation in Jacksonville—the youngest elected female official in this city!

A lot of my values are at stake in this election: I think marriage should only be between a man and a woman. I'm also pro-life; my mom could have aborted me, but she didn't. If someone wants to take birth control, that's her right, but church-affiliated schools and hospitals shouldn't have to provide free coverage for it—this is about religious freedoms. I want the president of this country to represent the values I live by.

CHELSEI P. HENRY, 24

*Chief of Staff at the National and Florida Assemblies of Black Republicans
Jacksonville, FL*

"...for a stronger economy!"

I'm a college junior, and when I graduate, I want to know I'll be able to chase my goals, just like my parents did when they were my age! My generation is facing a rough reality: Right as we're getting ready to step out into the real world, our country is going into more and more debt. Plus, we're paying for things like

social security benefits that may run out before we can even use them. As the cofounder of a financial company, Mitt Romney could get our country's finances in order!

I don't think the current administration has done enough for us. Luckily every four years, we are given the opportunity to tell the president if we think he's doing a good job and have the power to vote for someone new.

ADITI GHAI, 20

*Romney Campaign Staffer
Irvine, CA*

"THE ISSUE I CARE ABOUT MOST IS ..."

"... reproductive rights. The debate on this topic weighs heavily on girls!"

—MIRANDA COSGROVE

"... having the freedom to be who you are and love who you love."

—ASHLEY RICKARDS

"... equality for all Americans, regardless of sex, race, sexual preference, or religion!"

—ARIANA GRANDE

MAIN PHOTOS: CHRIS ECKERT/STUDIO D. SENIOR FASHION EDITOR: ANNEBET DUVAL. HAIR: MICHAEL MORENO FOR ORBE. MAKEUP: CHRIS NEWBURG AT FORD ARTISTS MIAMI FOR DIOR BEAUTY. ON MACKENZIE: TOP, LILY WHITE; SHORTS, EARRINGS, AND NECKLACE, HER OWN; BOOTS, NINE WEST; ON ADITI: JACKET, RAINBOW; TANK, REBECCA TAYLOR; JEANS, LEVITS; BELT, LULU'S; OXFORDS, URBANOG. ON KATE: SWEATER, CHINTI AND PARKER; SHIRT, MANGO; JEANS, EARRINGS, BELT, WATCH, HER OWN. ON ADITI: BLAZER, JEANS, EARRINGS, AND BRACELETS, HER OWN; TANK, HUTCH; NECKLACE, FREEDOM AT TOPSHOP; RING, THE 2 BANDITS; SNEAKERS, CONVERSE. ON REBECCA: JACKET, MANGO; DRESS, H&M; EARRINGS, HER OWN; BELT, STREETS AHEAD; SNEAKERS, VANS. ON CHELSEI: SWEATER, ROCK & REPUBLIC AT VOHL'S; SHIRT, HURLEY; JEANS AND EARRINGS, HER OWN; BELT, BRAVE LEATHER; BOOTS, URBANOG. RICKARDS: PAUL ARCHULETA/FILMMAGIC. COSGROVE: CHELSEA LAUREN/WIREIMAGE. GRANDE: MICHAEL SIMON/STARTRAKSPHOTO.COM.

“...for better access to health care!”

When I was in second grade, my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her health insurance covered only the basics, but she wasn't eligible for federal health coverage that would pay for the more serious treatments she needed. We eventually ended up moving to Vermont, where she could get cheaper care. But it wasn't enough—she passed away when I was 16. I can't help thinking that if there had been better benefits available, she could still be a part of my life.

In college, I started working with the American Association of University Women, an organization that supports laws and helps elect officials who represent women's interests. The most important issue to me is access to better health care, like President Obama is offering under Obamacare. I want people to know what benefits are available to them and how they can get it, so no other girls have to go through what I did. It's important for girls to know how to speak up. There are a lot of us out there, and our collective voice can have a big impact!

REBECCA RUTENBERG, 21

Massachusetts Campaign Organizer for the American Association of University Women
Boston, MA



“...for equality and opportunity!”

My dad has worked at General Motors for 27 years. But in 2008, the economy crashed and the car companies—which almost everyone in my Detroit suburb works for—were laying off tons of people to save money. We were anxious . . . until President Obama passed a financial rescue package for the biggest US automakers. If he hadn't, my dad would have lost his job and it might have been tough for me to afford college. I have a future because Obama fights for everyday people.

And his mission extends beyond class lines. Obama has also been a huge proponent of jobs for women. He's talked about how being a parent of two daughters has motivated him to make sure women have equal opportunities at work. He's appointed two women to the Supreme Court, which, to a future law student, is so inspiring. I've always wanted to get involved in politics, and he's opening more and more doors for me. His presidency has showed me neither class nor gender can hold you back from the career you want!

PAVITRA ABRAHAM, 18

Field Organizer with President Obama's re-election campaign
Farmington Hills, MI



“... for jobs!”

In this election, I want to vote for someone who will create jobs for young people, so I can keep supporting myself while paying off my student loans. Now that I'm finally working (I got a job at a nonprofit), I want the same for my friends! That's why I started volunteering with the DC Young Republicans—I know too many people who went to grad school, hoping the job market would get better, and now they're stuck with unpaid internships and huge loans.

Governor Romney is all about cutting taxes for business owners so that they can afford to hire recent grads like me and my friends. We're the future of this country, and we can help give the economy the boost it needs starting right now!

KATIE TODD, 25

Chairman of the DC Young Republicans
Washington, DC



NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

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THE
VOTE

HUFFPOST
TEEN

POWER OF
12

✓ **register to vote!** Go to seventeen.com/electionista to fill out the Rock the Vote voter registration form. It takes only a sec, and we'll even tell you the nearest place to drop it off.

✓ **learn the issues!** Hear more from Seventeen's Electionistas at seventeen.com, and read about the topics that matter most to them and hundreds of other teen bloggers at huffingtonpost.com/teenelection.

✓ **watch girls decide!** Follow other election rookies, including Maci Bookout from *Teen Mom*, at MTV's powerof12.org. You'll see her chat with friends about the big issues and choose who she wants to see in office!

✓ **cast your ballot!** Tell us who you're voting for now at seventeen.com/yourvote. Then mark your calendar for November 6 to cast your official ballot!