



# Generation Vote Coalition

## The Youth Agenda

We, Generation Vote, are a national alliance of young people who work on issues that affect our lives and communities. If politicians want our votes, they need to get serious about the issues we face every day.

At the end of the day, what we want is simple: A fair chance to get an education, job and place to live in a safe and sustainable world regardless of sex, race, class, identity or ability. We pay taxes, we vote and we want to live in a country that respects young people and is invested in our success. We're not asking for handouts; we're asking for fairness and smarter priorities.

Jay-Z already summarized the heart of our agenda in three simple words: "Can I live?" We're serious about our rights and we intend to use our votes and voices to build a world in which we can not only survive, but thrive.

### Education

**Can I get a good education?** Can I learn something in school apart from how to study for a test? Can our schools get enough funding for books and qualified teachers? Can I go to college without being in debt for the rest of my life? Can I get the education I was promised when I return from fighting our wars? What are you going to do about the massive racial disparity in our schools?

**We believe every young person in this country has the right to a high-quality, affordable education from pre-school through college.**

### Health Care

**Can I see a doctor?** Can I see a doctor without drowning in debt? What if I'm in a car accident? What if the condom breaks? What if I get HIV? Can I get preventative care, so I don't need to wait until I'm in a crisis? What if I come back from Iraq with PTSD?

**We believe high-quality physical and mental health care, including full reproductive health services and prescription drugs, is a right and must be affordable and accessible to all.**

### Jobs & The Economy

**Can I make a decent living?** Can my job stay in the US? Can I get a job with the opportunity for advancement? Can I even say the word "union" at my job without getting fired? Do I have to come to work sick, or will I get paid sick days? Will you help me get a job when I come back from fighting our wars?

**We believe workers, the backbone of this country, have a right to paid sick days and a living family wage. Workers should have the right to organize without fear. These rights are instrumental in reviving the middle class and alleviating poverty.**

### **Climate & Energy**

**Is the air safe to breathe?** What are you going to do about all the people on my block with asthma and cancer? As the planet warms and the next Katrina hits, how will you avoid a replay of the Superdome fiasco? What's up with these crazy gas prices? How will I pay my energy bills? Will you go to bat for us or for big oil?

**Real talk: It's now or never. Rather than blocking international attempts to halt climate change, we should be a leader in building a clean energy future. This will create millions of new jobs, improve our health and avoid future wars. We need to get serious about switching from dirty coal and nuclear power to wind and solar energy.**

### **Safety in Our Homes and Streets**

**Can I feel safe on my street?** What are you going to do about gun violence in my neighborhood? Will I be a victim of rape or domestic abuse? Can I be safe in my own home? Does locking up non-violent drug offenders, raiding immigrants, and breaking up families really make us safer?

**Building more prisons doesn't make us safer. Instead of spending \$40,000 a year locking someone up, we should invest in job training, education counselors, drug rehab and programs that rehabilitate non-violent offenders. We must take the safety of women seriously, both in our homes and on the streets.**

### **Safety in Our World**

**How does pissing off the entire world make us safer?** Does starting wars all over the world makes us safer? We're told to work out our problems without resorting to violence; why doesn't our government practice what it preaches?

**Real national security comes from being a respected and respectful member of the global community. This means putting an immediate stop to torture and other human rights abuses. It also means ending the war in Iraq and offering strategic humanitarian relief.**

### **Voting Rights & Election Reform**

**Can I vote?** Will my vote be counted? What's up with politicians trying to make it harder for us to vote? Why can't I register and vote on the same day, like my friends in Minnesota and Wisconsin? Can I be sure my vote is counted?

**We believe voting is a right for all citizens whether it be a student attending college out of state, a felon or someone who needs special assistance to participate. We**

**oppose ID requirements and other discriminatory barriers to voting. We support public financing to take corporate money out of politics.**

### **Affordable & Accessible Housing**

**Can I have a place to live?** Between the mortgage crisis and soaring rent, it's getting harder and harder to find a place to live. Will you stand with working families or with the land speculators and investment banks? What will you do to deal with the growing problem of homelessness?

**We believe decent, safe, accessible and affordable housing is a right for all. The government should take on predatory lenders and developers and provide emergency housing for people in crisis.**

### **New Populations**

**Can I be treated with respect (even if I wasn't born here)?** Why am I treated like a criminal for working and paying taxes? Why are black, brown and poor white people pitted against each other for jobs when companies are seeing record profits? Are you going to pick the pesticide-covered strawberries in the blazing sun when my uncle gets deported?

**Immigration policy should not criminalize people for seeking a better life. Such policies are both inhumane and economically disastrous. We are a nation of immigrants and diversity is our strength. We need fair and humane immigration reform that keeps families together, offers pathways to citizenship, fair compensation and basic services like health care and college loans.**