



To: Lily Rothman, Mike Lux, Office of the Presidential Transition Team
From: Michael Connery, Executive Director, Future Majority
Subject: White House Youth Liaison
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This November, the American public got its first taste of what many of us in the youth community have known for years; today's young people – the Millennial Generation – are the most civically engaged generation in decades. During the last five years, Millennials have demonstrated a willingness to take the initiative and change our country. They created new organizations to engage their peers at the ballot box and participated in service projects in our communities. They organized online and marched in the streets to support immigrant and LGBT rights and a smarter, cleaner energy policy.

Even as the Millennial generation has emerged as a force at the ballot box and a leader on key issues, we have had few allies in government or within the Democratic Party. Young people (18 – 29 years old) are one of the most under-represented age demographics at the policy table, where we are often overlooked in favor of programs that benefit the (politically popular) very young, or the (politically savvy) very old.

It is not enough to ask about the particular issues in which young people are uniquely suited to assist the administration. Young people are *already* leading on a wide variety of issues, and our concerns stretch well beyond the single-issue silos (college affordability, service programs) that are so often pegged to our demographic. It is time that we have an administration that recognizes those contributions and helps Millennials realize the change for which we have been fighting on *all* issues.

What is now required is a strong, independent advocate and ally to support the youth community within the White House. Operating out of the Office of the Public Liaison, this advocate would:

- Open doors to the administration and connect young advocates to the policy process above and beyond traditional “youth” issues like national service and college affordability.
- Fight for the inclusion of the perspective of the Millennial Generation in administration materials – talking points, speeches, etc.
- Publicize the contributions that Millennials and Millennial advocacy organizations make to solve the challenges we face as a nation (bill signing ceremonies, photo ops, etc.).

The Youth Liaison should also act as a strong advocate for young voters within the Democratic Party. President-Elect Obama secured his victory in large part through outreach to young voters, laying the foundation for a generational shift in party alignment. Despite that, Obama for America's youth outreach remains an anomaly, not the norm, within the Democratic Party. A strong advocate within the administration arguing on behalf of a young-voter strategy could shift thinking within the DNC, the DCCC, the DSCC, and the state parties as to the value of young voter outreach. Such a shift in strategic thinking could solidify political realignment that brought many of our candidates to power in recent elections.

Above all, the White House Youth Liaison must be someone who is intimately familiar with the many organizations and activists within the youth community. We face great challenges as a nation, and finding solutions to those challenges will require coordinated efforts among many organizations, citizens, policy makers, and legislators. The youth community will most effectively contribute to those efforts if we are able to hit the ground running on day one. A strong, independent advocate in the White House, familiar with the different facets of our movement and holding a position of real authority, is the surest way to make that a reality.