

IMPACT REPORT



LISTEN.
DELIBERATE.
DECIDE.

JULY 8-11, 2026 | WASHINGTON, D.C.





A VITAL TIME FOR DELIBERATION

With our nation celebrating 250 years of American democracy in 2026, the midterm elections represent another pivotal civic moment for a new generation to cast their first ballots and help shape the future of the United States. Will the country surpass the 27% nationwide turnout among 18-29-year-olds in the last midterms? What issues will be most important to young voters? **How will young Americans form their opinions before heading to the polls?**

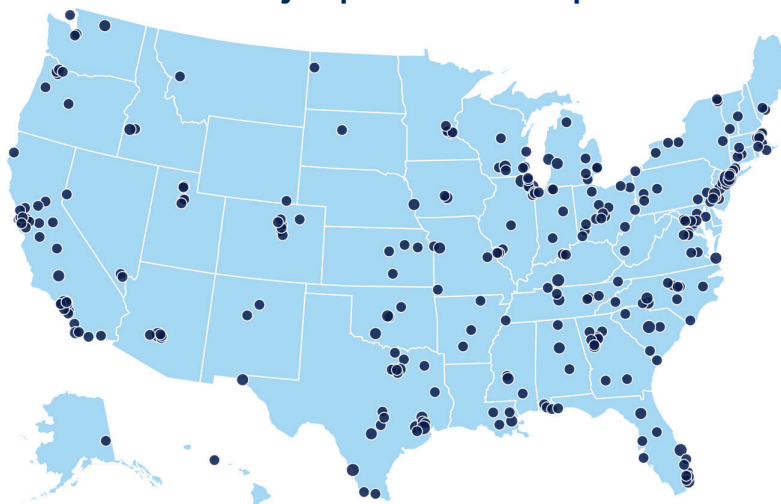
A strong democracy requires active, informed participation by all citizens. Young Americans aged 18-29—10% of eligible voters—will shape our elections and discourse for decades to come, yet they have grown up at a time defined by polarization and fragmented mass media.

AN INNOVATIVE METHOD OF POLLING

In an effort to build deliberative skills among first-time voters and give voice to the priorities of Generation Z, Close Up and our partners joined forces for **NextGen Roundtable: Decision 2026**.

With 55 years of expertise in convening students of all ideologies and backgrounds, Close Up partnered with the Deliberative Democracy Lab at Stanford University (DDL), Generation Lab, and the Center for Revitalizing American Institutions at the Hoover Institution (RAI) to convene **a nationally representative sample of 368 first-time voters** in Washington, D.C., from July 8-11, 2026. Using a method of Deliberative Polling® pioneered by DDL Director James Fishkin and conducted over 150 times in 50+ countries, participants discussed complex policy issues (related to AI and our society, America's role in immigration and around the world, and democracy and elections) and the trade-offs they pose in an environment curated for respectful conversation across party lines. That environment included **balanced and vetted briefing materials, moderated small-group deliberative discussions, and panels of diverse policy experts** whom participants could question in plenary sessions.

Nationally Representative Sample



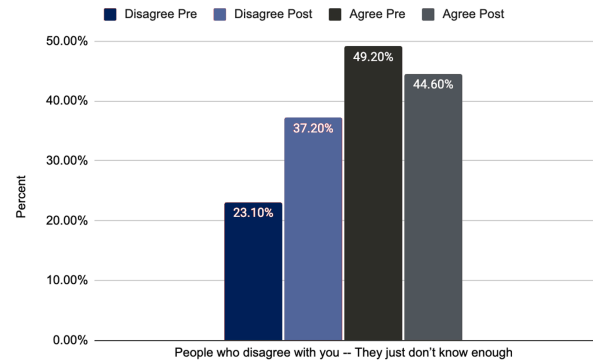
Before and after deliberation, participants completed a survey about the issues, their voting intentions, and their feelings about their peers, their government, and their own political efficacy.

KEY FINDINGS: DELIBERATION

The experience of deliberation had a **clear effect on first-time voters' sense of their political voice and on how they regarded disagreement** with their peers.

- Agreement that **"I have opinions about these issues that are worth listening to"** climbed from 85.9% to 93.2%, while agreement that **"other people's opinions about these issues are worth listening to"** rose from 90.8% to 95.1%.
- **Participants' confidence in their own agency grew.** Agreement with "I have the ability to create change in my community" increased from 84.2% to 91.0%.
- Disagreement with the idea that "people like me don't have any say about what the government does" rose from 44.6% to 63.0%; correspondingly, agreement with that statement fell from 35.3% to 24.2%. In the same vein, agreement that **"public officials care a lot about what people like me think"** rose from 29.9% to 38.3%.
- **Participants showed an increase in their capability of understanding the issues.** Disagreement with the idea that "most public policy issues are so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on" rose from 53.8% to 67.7%, a 14-point gain, while agreement fell from 28.5% to 21.7%.
- **Participants came to see disagreement as reasoned rather than illegitimate.** When considering those with whom they strongly disagree, agreement that opponents "have good reasons; there just are better ones on the other side" jumped from 52.4% to 65.5%. Disagreement with the statement that "it is hopeless to reach an agreement with them" rose from 59.8% to 69.8%.
- **Deliberation moved participants away from the idea that opponents are simply ignorant and toward accepting that they reason from good-faith premises.** Disagreement that opponents "just don't know enough" rose from 23.1% to 37.2%, and disagreement that they "are not thinking clearly" rose from 45.9% to 56.5%. Agreement that opponents "are receiving inaccurate information" fell from 67.1% to 59.8%, with disagreement increasing from 11.1% to 22.6%.
- **Willingness to compromise rose**, with agreement that "I would be willing to compromise to find a solution we both can support" moving from 80.4% to 85.9%.

PEOPLE WHO DISAGREE WITH YOU: They just don't know enough



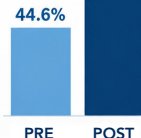
GREATER CONFIDENCE IN CIVIC VOICE

After deliberation, more students felt their voices matter in government

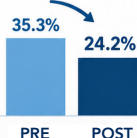


"People like me don't have any say about what the government does."

DISAGREEMENT
(ROSE)

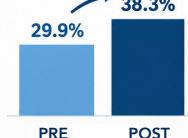


AGREEMENT
(FELL)



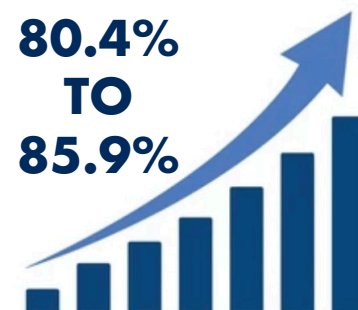
"Public officials care a lot about what people like me think."

AGREEMENT
(ROSE)



WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE INCREASED

with agreement that "I would be willing to compromise to find a solution we both can support"



KEY FINDINGS: THE ISSUES

AI & Our Society

- **Participants showed newfound opposition to unemployment support for those replaced by AI.** Before deliberation, 50.5% of participants agreed that “the federal government should provide \$1,000 per month to adults whose jobs are automated out by robots or AI without retraining or reassignment.” Following deliberation, support dropped by 22 points to 28.5%.
- **Participants showed general support for increased oversight and regulation on AI companies by state and federal governments,** “such as reporting critical safety incidents in a timely manner and establishing guardrails for its users’ safety” (86.4% agreed before deliberation; 78.5% agreed after deliberation).
- **Participants were particularly split on whether “users should be allowed to interact with AI chatbots in any way they desire within legal bounds.”** Neither pre- or post-deliberation support or opposition numbers exceeded 50%.



America’s Role in Immigration & Around the World

- Opinions were overwhelmingly unilateral for many proposals, with **a strong majority of participants generally expressing pro-immigration sentiment.**
- After deliberation, opposition increased—from 46.7% to 67.1%—to the proposal that the federal government should pass legislation preventing municipalities from designating themselves as **sanctuary cities.**
- **There was almost a unilateral opinion for the proposal that the federal government should end birthright citizenship for children of undocumented immigrants.** Opposition stood at 79.9% pre-deliberation but jumped another 10.3% to 90.2% post-deliberation.
- **There was a significant increase in opposition (from 64.9% before deliberation to 84.5% after) to the United States increasing defense spending** “by 42% per year to meet rising global challenges and ensure military readiness.”
- **The idea that the United States “should reduce its roles in international organizations** like the United Nations and the World Health Organization” saw substantial opposition, with over 76% of participants opposing the proposal both pre- and post-deliberation.

Democracy & Elections

- **Deliberation resulted in a significant decrease in support for the proposal requiring “all voters to provide a government-issued photo identification,** obtained with proof of citizenship.” Opposition to the proposal rose from 30.7% before deliberation to 61.1% after.
- **Those favoring states to adopt nonpartisan redistricting commissions to redraw state and federal district boundaries increased by 9.5 points to 66.8%.** A proposal to “prohibit mid-decade redistricting to limit states to one map redraw per census cycle” received 60.1% support post-deliberation, up 6.5 points.
- **There was an overwhelming increase in opposition to having the Senate abolish the filibuster** from indecision prior to deliberation. Before deliberation, 27.4% opposed the proposal; after deliberation, 74.5% did.

DELIBERATION PARTICIPANTS

The deliberants were a nationally representative sample of first-time voters from all 50 states and U.S. territories, rural and urban communities, and different races, genders, and political ideologies.

ALABAMA

Ju Hwan Bae, Birmingham
Evann Patterson, Birmingham
Zqeylynn Barnwell, Elberta
Catherine Parker, Fairhope
Claire Wulff, Madison
Brevia Kibet, Mobile
Effie Lin, Montgomery

ALASKA

Creede Berg, Tok

AMERICAN SAMOA

Thessalonica Lagafuaina, Pago Pago

ARIZONA

Theo Figueroa Saucedo, Buckeye
Tristyn Krout, Chandler
Dominic Stricklin, Mesa
Akeva Antwi, Phoenix
Alexandra Garcia, Phoenix
Brooke Leshor, Phoenix
Graciela Rosales Duran, Phoenix
Joel Vega, Phoenix
Rosalie Stroecker, Scottsdale

ARKANSAS

Landon Newcom, Ash Flat
Ava Kate White, Little Rock
Sawyer Mann, Sparkman

CALIFORNIA

Joshua Le, Alameda
Jovanna Herrera, Arcata
Nathan Thurmon, Auburn
Angel Gallardo Aguilar, Bakersfield
Joshua Simon, Bakersfield
Noah Christian Wisniew Kygar, Boulevard
Serena Koopmans, Burlingame
Josephine Schneider, Carlsbad
Kian Khazei, Corona Del Mar
Christopher Shull, El Cajon
Samantha Corpuz Giron, El Cerrito
Maximiliano Vargas, Imperial
Dillon Robinson, Inglewood
Shreyoshi Kundu, Livermore
Isaac Ayon, Long Beach
Sebastian Clark, Los Angeles
Daniel Montes, Los Angeles
Ethan Moon, Los Angeles
Luna Olivera-Rosales, Los Angeles
Jeffrey Opoku, Los Angeles
Bailey Rogoff, Los Angeles
Madelyn Socop, Los Angeles
Largo Sueiro, Los Angeles
Ariel Alex Penalzoza, Los Banos
Jaiden Leary, Napa
Andres Morales, Novato
Krish Parikh, Oakland

Dylan Chan, Pacifica
Nichelle Walker, Pasadena
Finley Wilke-Hiland, Redwood City
Journey Dotson, Richmond
Thomas Giulian, Ripon
Paula Supremebliss, Sacramento
Naomy Shim, San Diego
Arthur Wang, San Diego
Katherine Worster, San Francisco
Caymin Tran, San Gabriel
Stephen Oshinsky, San Jose
Anushka Kabra, San Ramon
Jimena Romero, Sanger
William Hutchins, Tuolumne
Matilda Vidal, Venice

COLORADO

Duncan Zahradka, Boulder
Geoff Brauchler, Castle Rock
Charlie Murphy, Denver
Emmanuel Mares Duenas, Fort Morgan
Ryan Anderson, Highlands Ranch
Jay Schwartz, Longmont
Gabriel Pereyra, Thornton

CONNECTICUT

Fransadda Metellus, Hartford
Mateus Witczak, Stamford
Fallon Roth Perreault, Terryville
Maximilian Blechinger, Westport

DELAWARE

Rachel McHugh, Wilmington

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Elizabeth Dean, Washington

FLORIDA

Chloe Vesga, Davie
A'yaree Davis, Fort Pierce
Eric Douglas, Fort Pierce
Darius Mzone, Fort Pierce
Fiona Ferrero, Gainesville
Aurora Martins Rocha, Gainesville
Alexa Valverde, Hialeah
Carmen Amar, Hollywood
Amy Yadgar, Hollywood
Jackson Murray, Jupiter
Quincey Watson, Land O'Lakes
Lillian Figueroa, Miami
Gioia Ploy Gentile, Miami
Christina Hamilton, Miami
Venus Gonzalez, Ocoee
Clayton Manning, Pensacola
Youdeline Croissy, Pompano Beach
Alvin Luu, Sarasota
Madison Oliver, Wellington

GEORGIA

Dontrell Martin, Albany
Ashley Clay, Atlanta
Jacobi Edwards, Atlanta
Diego Vasquez D'Paola, Atlanta
Ella King, Brookhaven
Vanessa Hernandez, Buford
Vivian Reyes, Cartersville
Harris Daly, Decatur
Dominic Mimbang, Douglas
Destiny Joy Sagay, Douglasville

HAWAII

Kalamaku Crabbe, Waipahu

IDAHO

Andreas Bronner, Boise
Emily Gasper, Nampa
Amaya Richiusa, Nampa

ILLINOIS

David Bahena, Chicago
Roman Brice, Chicago
Isaac Doi, Chicago
Belen Martinez, Chicago
Jaasai Matias, Chicago
Madison McNamers, Crystal Lake
Issabella Melgar, Crystal Lake
Nicholas Moore, Crystal Lake
Sienna Szymanski, Edwardsville
Jocelyn Martinez, Franklin Park
Rex Morrison, Lake Forest
Dean Martin, Mount Pulaski
Elizabeth Hicks, Steger
Kathrine Soto, Waukegan

INDIANA

Ishana Senthil, Bloomington
Max Vanderhoof, Floyds Knobs
Cheyenne Burton, Georgetown
Citlali Rosas, Hammond
Lauren Hanson, Highland
Aiden Temple, Jonesboro
David Sorensen, Mishawaka
China Whitehead, Portage
Emma Makinen, South Bend

IOWA

Peighton Harrell, Des Moines
Oluwaseun Toluwalase, Des Moines
Caethen Stocker, Grimes
Loralai Gilmore, Urbandale

KANSAS

Brooklyn Countryman, Manhattan
Trey Griffith, Topeka
Alonzo Dozal, Wichita

KENTUCKY

Jaxon Brunell, Bowling Green
Brady Golliher, Bowling Green
Monica Niang, Bowling Green
Shelby Rios Velasco, Guthrie
Addison Weaver, Louisville

LOUISIANA

Brinkley Bennett, Baton Rouge
Jenna Sturdevant, Madisonville
Jonathan Burge, New Orleans
Laini Ferdinand, New Orleans
Brennan Bourg, Thibodaux

MAINE

Oliver Ames, Portland
Ashlynn Cuthbert, Windham

MARYLAND

Samson Cournane, Baltimore
Vincent Wayne, Bethesda
Charis Moore, Bowie
Gianni Figliozzi, Centreville
Elle Vanzego, Fort Washington
O'Marie Barnes, Temple Hills

MASSACHUSETTS

Anna Samary Marques, Arlington
Hugh Kelley, Beverly
Auren Amster, Brookline
Cristian Rivera, New Bedford
Jakob Thompson, Newton
Adam Mchiti, Peabody
Aarna Prasad, South Easton
Jillian Battles, Westfield
Vienna Dschung, Weston
Cleveland Quezada, Weston

MICHIGAN

Wendylyn Schmit, Ann Arbor
Kiernan Brown, Dundee
Logan Lawler, Genesee
David Wahl, Gaylord
Lilianna Borkowski, Grand Rapids
Caleb Zylstra, Grand Rapids
Gavin Perry, Harper Woods
Austin Freed, Muskegon
Cora McGinn, Muskegon
Lacey Sokol, Saint Clair Shores

MINNESOTA

Alyssa Voigt, Elk River
Alan Naranjo, Maple Grove
Ilyas Alouach, Minneapolis
Jacob Rowell, Minneapolis
Axel Stayko, Minneapolis
Ankita Kumar, Plymouth
Angelina Kabanuk, Saint Paul

MISSISSIPPI

Knighten Bridges, Florence
Neiko Herron, Florence
Khamya Buford, Hattiesburg
Aviyuna Varnell, Jackson

MISSOURI

Katherine Nguyen, Clayton
Chase Neer, Grain Valley
Jax Sundermann, Grain Valley
Hayden Le, Kansas City
Brock Pyle, Neosho
Henry Corley, St. Louis
Augustus Farrell, Union

MONTANA

Claire Westdahl, Clinton

NEBRASKA

Mohammad Yosuf Homayoun,
Omaha
Rosemary Klitz, Omaha

NEVADA

Angelina Santos, Henderson
Daniel Zuehlsdorf, Las Vegas
Victoria Sandoval, Reno

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Jamie Coss, Hanover

NEW JERSEY

Avery Garr, Aberdeen
Liora Corrielus, Berlin
Virge Phillips, Camden
Yahindy Marroquin, Cliffside Park
Miranda De Olden, Lawrenceville
Jillian Upton, Lawrenceville
Sheguyma Bazile, Newark
Avery Luper, Piscataway
David Dedy, West Orange
LaChea Langhorne, West Orange

NEW MEXICO

Miller Millea, Albuquerque
Chloe Aufrichtig, Santa Fe

NEW YORK

Eva Favors, Albany
Braylon Byrd, Bronx
Celine De Aquino, Brooklyn
Stephanie Owusu, Brooklyn
Julia Rockwell, Clyde
Olivia Spanitz, East Aurora
Carlos Del Aguila, New Rochelle
Jordan Bose, New York City
Astrid Brinzer, New York City
Bennett Choi, New York City
Jade Etheridge, New York City
Ellanie Fernandez, New York City
Anjali Gusani, New York City
Zahava Kahn, New York City
Tamrian Kushner, New York City
Cormac Lapolla, New York City
Luana Sharif, New York City
Jasper Burdo, Plattsburgh

Edwin Zheng, Rochester
Loghan Strickland, West Chazy

NORTH CAROLINA

Aniya Campbell, Carrboro
Taylor Tate, Cary
Mae Jambe, Charlotte
Brodie MacNeil, Charlotte
Ryan Stephan, Cornelius
Ethan Tomko, Cornelius
Julia Wells, Clyde
Jayden Howard, Gastonia
Gracie Moore, Grimesland
Chloe Solum, Haw River
Georgia Marshall, Raleigh
Charlotte Guy, Shallotte
Deshelle Henderson, Spring Lake

NORTH DAKOTA

Manguilewe Bodoombossou,
Williston

OHIO

Samuel Perdue, Belpre
Justin Rosebrook, Cincinnati
Daniel Tewolde, Grove City
George Baldree, Kettering
Julia Mullins, London
Lake Mitchell, Marion
Oluwaseyi Adesanya, Mason
Griffin Beach, Mount Vernon
Rutendo Mukumba, Reynoldsburg
William Wagner, Solon
Dante Deuley, Warren
Jakobi Turner, Wayne
Olivia Stevens, Westerville

OKLAHOMA

Jose Penaloza, Bethany
Kim Tran, Bethany
Kira Keyes, Cushing
Callie Gachot, Lawton
Danielle Tomah, Lawton
Christopher Moses, Oklahoma City

OREGON

Lucy Muilenburg, Beaverton
Hailey Crum, Bend
Christopher Blackburne, Corvallis
John Farrell, Lake Oswego
Ben Zahn, Lake Oswego

PENNSYLVANIA

Heavenlily Angeline Trelease,
Fairview
Mickey Romano, Glenside
Shiloh Somerville, Glenside
Gabrielle McCall, Philadelphia
Mariel Rodriguez, Philadelphia
Angelina Jones, Pittsburgh
Lyndi Leonard, Pottstown
Reagan Houk, Punxsutawney
Sophia Gombos, Renfrew
Caitlin Small, Ridley Park
Shahil Rihad, Upper Darby

PUERTO RICO

Marcos Rojas, Isabela

RHODE ISLAND

Zoe Lyle, Lincoln

SOUTH CAROLINA

Benjamin Palmer, Bluffton
Rose Miller, Columbia
Kyndall Riley, Columbia
Alyssa Walker, Columbia
Ana Isaula, Greenville
Maddox Padgett, Luray
Lucy Gore, Sumter

SOUTH DAKOTA

Mercedes Dupris, Eagle Butte

TENNESSEE

Alyvia Bitterly, Harriman
Liam Hancock, Hendersonville
Emery Corpstein, Kingsport
Alexei Kalinin, Knoxville
Micah Anderson, Memphis
Aaron Summerall, Rockwood
Lindsey Carcamo, Smyrna
Nathaniel Jemal, Smyrna

TEXAS

Anuoluwa Ayandiji, Arlington
Robert Fletcher, Arlington
Aminat Ogunbiyi, Arlington
Maxwell Davila, Austin
Calen Johnson, Cedar Hill
Brenna Beauchene, Conroe
Gilbert Ray Pruneda, Conroe
Maddox Maggio, Dallas
Javier Murillo, Dallas
Nehemiah Adebowale, Edinburg
Valeria Arellano, El Paso
Isabelle Labrado, El Paso
Ethan Smart, Fort Worth
Cayland Beam, Gainesville
Alexis Lopez Benitez, Grand Prairie
Kajuan Hall, Humble
Kristal Ocampo, Houston
Marshall Romero, Houston
Kelan Spess, Houston
Shangchen Wei, Houston
Gabriella Galvin, Katy
Nahaar Mirza, Katy
Stephen Tucci, Katy
Gael Esquivel, Laredo
Joe Mendez, Laredo
Alberto Vargas, Laredo
Aiden Cary, Leander
Carson Hines, Melissa
JaBrandon Chatman,
Nacogdoches
Samirah Chowdhury, Richmond
Miguel De La Garza,
Rio Grande City
John Cuellar Marin,
San Antonio
Asa Weighmann, San Antonio

Aldo Huebner, San Marcos
Darlene Garcia, Spring
Caitlyn Ybarra, Winnsboro

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Daryl Griffith II, Kingshill

UTAH

Rordan Takacs, Clinton
Luis Ortega Sanchez, Draper
Parker Andersen, Eagle Mountain
Jackson Pugmire, South Jordan
Mia Sakamoto, West Haven

VERMONT

Justason Lahue, Manchester
Center

VIRGINIA

Arjun Gupta, Ashburn
Henry Erda, Charles City
Lynn Jones, Chesterfield
Jonathan Amaya, Fredericksburg
Sarina Virmani, Leesburg
Dillon Mills, Locust Grove
Winifred Adeika, Stafford
Karrington Bourgeois, Virginia
Beach
Cifei He, Virginia Beach

WASHINGTON

Rylee Drew, Friday Harbor
Cecilia Rocha, Mercer Island
Anyia Mehta, Redmond
Christian Garcia, Vancouver
Jacob Larzalere, Washougal
Alexander Ramsay George,
Winthrop
William Kiefer, Winthrop

WEST VIRGINIA

Kaylee Miller, Madison
Ella Landini, Wheeling

WISCONSIN

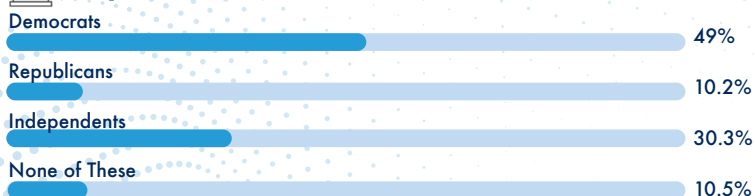
Andrew Formo, Blue Mounds
Timothy Grice, Brooklyn
Andrew Fictum, Greenfield
Patrick Feagan, Madison
Sianna Obel, Madison
Addison Reddick, Muskego
Sarah Servais, Sheboygan Falls
Megan Yang, Stevens Point

WYOMING

David Wiggam, Cheyenne

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

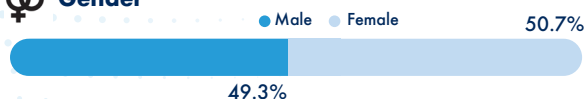
Party Identification



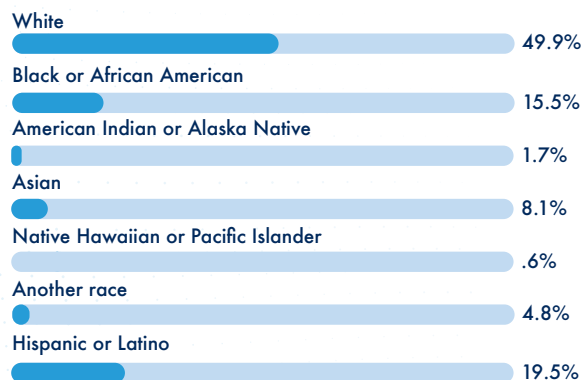
Urbanicity



Gender



Race



NEXTGEN STORYTELLER CHALLENGE

Throughout the program, a group of participants served as **NextGen Storytellers—16 first-time voters who documented their experience through social media.** Through the NextGen Storyteller Challenge, we recognized three Audience Award winners who amassed the most social media engagement and one Jury Award winner who best captured the spirit and mission of NextGen Roundtable.

JURY AWARD WINNER
BROCK PYLE

AUDIENCE AWARD WINNERS
AARON SUMMERALL AVA KATE WHITE VIENNA DSCHUNG

SCAN TO VIEW VIDEOS



ACADEMIC ADVISORS, MODERATORS & EXPERT PANELISTS

We sincerely thank the academic advisors, deliberation moderators, and expert panelists who helped make NextGen Roundtable: Decision 2026 possible.

ACADEMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Working hand in hand with Close Up, DDL, Generation Lab, and RAI, the Academic Advisory Committee vetted participants' nonpartisan briefing materials and helped ensure the academic rigor of the program.

Graham Bullock

Associate Professor of Political Science
Faculty Director of the Deliberative
Citizenship Initiative
Davidson College

Irasema Coronado

Director and Professor
School of Transborder Studies
Arizona State University

Amy Dacey

Executive Director
Sine Institute of Policy & Politics
American University

Mark Engberg

Senior Director
Litowitz Center
Northwestern University

Bruce W. Jentleson

William Preston Few Professor of Public
Policy and Professor of Political Science
Duke University

Tracy Navichoque

Program Manager for AI and Society
Stanford University Human-Centered
Artificial Intelligence

Pete Peterson

Braun Family Dean's Chair
School of Public Policy
Pepperdine University

Tom Schnaubelt

Executive Director
Center for Revitalizing American Institutions
Hoover Institution
Stanford University

Anne Wicks

Don Evans Family Managing Director of
Opportunity and Democracy
George W. Bush Institute

DELIBERATION MODERATORS

Each deliberant was part of a small group of 12-14 peers with whom they met during each issue session to discuss a variety of policy proposals and share their perspectives. Guiding each small group was a neutral moderator whose role was to draw out participant thinking, keep the conversation moving, and create a respectful climate for deliberation. In addition to Close Up staff, the following university students trained and served as moderators:

Autumn Ballard

American University
Washington College of Law

Aidan Bryant

Trinity University

Joseph Cole*

University of North Carolina

Avery Field

American University

John Paul Goodwin

Duke University

Christine Johnson

Johnson C. Smith University

Katie Jung

Davidson College

Will Kohn

Emory University

Chase Leonard

University of Miami

Bolling Lewis

Davidson College

Viveka Mehrotra*

Duke University

Sadie Nichols

Georgetown University

Aaron Pryear

University of Miami

Caleb Sacatero

Southwestern Indian
Polytechnic Institute

Casey Scheiner

Davidson College

Thav Sindhvani*

The George Washington
University

Zully Villeda Calderon

University of Maryland

Caroline Zhang

Stanford University

*Close Up alumnus



EXPERT PANELISTS

Following each small-group deliberation, participants gathered for a plenary session to question and engage with a panel of policy experts representing a range of viewpoints and expertise on the topics of AI & Our Society, America's Role in Immigration & Around the World, and Democracy & Elections.

Eddy Acevedo

Vice President for Policy and Government Relations
National Endowment for Democracy

Peter Chandler*

Executive Director
Internet Works

Helena Coric

Assistant Vice President of Business Engagement &
Inclusion Programs
National Immigration Forum

Amari J. Fennoy

National Director for Mobilization
NAACP

John Fortier*

Senior Fellow
American Enterprise Institute

David Griffith

National Research Director
Thomas B. Fordham Institute

Paul Lekas*

Executive Vice President for Global
Public Policy & Government Affairs
Software & Information Industry Association

Jake Morabito

Senior Director of Policy
American Legislative Exchange Council

Walter Olson

Senior Fellow
Cato Institute

Diana Pliego Padilla

Senior Strategist
National Immigration Law Center

Carolyn Smith

Southern Region Director
Working America

Helder Toste*

Government Affairs Liaison
The LIBRE Initiative

Patrice Willoughby

Vice President, Policy and Legislative Affairs
NAACP

Zaid Zaid

Senior Advisor
Orange Court Strategies

*Close Up alumnus

"Definitely the most helpful takeaway would be hearing other people's viewpoints and being open-minded. At the end of the day, we're all looking for the same thing: We all want to help out our families and friends."

Thomas Giulian, First-Time Voter, California

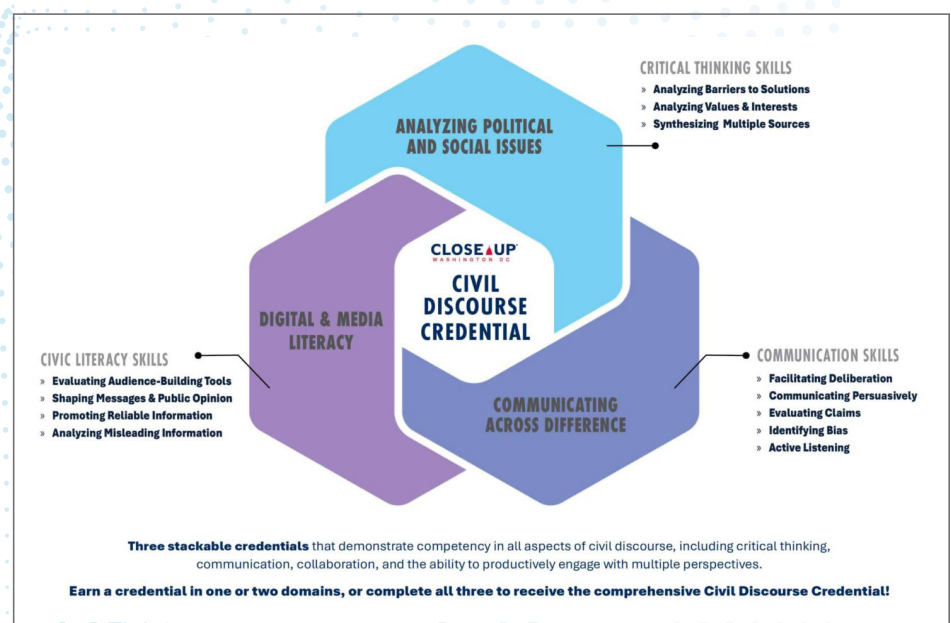
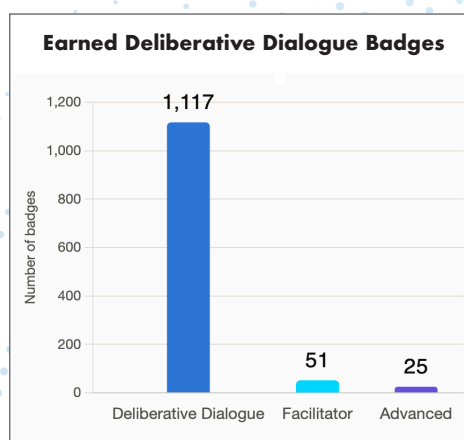




THE FUTURE OF DELIBERATION

Both before and after Election Day, the skills of deliberation are essential—to understanding public policy issues from multiple perspectives and to making informed decisions about how to resolve those issues. Together, Close Up and our partners are striving to embed a culture of deliberative dialogue in schools across the country.

- **Regional Deliberations:** We are expanding our work with schools and university partners nationwide to host free regional deliberations for high school students, which have already brought us to Dallas, Miami, New York City, Washington, D.C., and Fairfax, Virginia, in 2026.
- **Civil Discourse in Schools:** Close Up is working with educators to pilot our Civil Discourse Framework and Credential in 18 states, helping students to develop durable skills and competencies in communication and critical thinking. Our multi-day Civil Discourse Lab professional development institute gathered educators from seven states during NextGen Roundtable: Decision 2026 to train on the framework and observe deliberation in action.
- **Deliberative Dialogue Badge:** All NextGen Roundtable participants earn Close Up's Deliberative Dialogue Badge for their resume and are encouraged to pursue an Advanced Deliberative Dialogue Badge by hosting their own deliberation with peers on a topic of their choosing.





CIVIL DISCOURSE LAB PARTICIPANTS

The teachers and administrators who attended the Civil Discourse Lab came to us from public and private schools in seven states and the District of Columbia.

ARIZONA

John Lovell, Brophy College Preparatory

CALIFORNIA

Talia DiManno, The Branson School
Kelly Jackson, Marlborough School
Daniel Lynch, Marlborough School

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Shelina Warren, Paul Laurence Dunbar Senior High School

MARYLAND

Jessica Cuning, Chesapeake Math and IT Academy North High School
Alyssa MacMeekin, Indian Creek School

MASSACHUSETTS

Jason Kelly, Deerfield Academy
Leigh Carroll, Thayer Academy
Julian Braxton, The Winsor School
Caroline Burke, The Winsor School
Eve Elizondo, The Winsor School
Gillian Sjoblom, The Winsor School

NEW YORK

Timothy Redmond, East High
Virginia Dillon, Poly Prep Country Day School
Nathaniel Elijah Sivin, Poly Prep Country Day School
Tim Northrop, Saratoga Springs High School

NORTH CAROLINA

Roderick Fludd, Greensboro Day School

VIRGINIA

Meeyoung Tawerilmal, Alexandria City Public Schools
Louis Smith, Episcopal High School
Sean Wetmore, Episcopal High School
Dan Blanchet, James Madison High School
Eliot Waxman, Oakton High School





"Young people want to see change. It was so refreshing to see a lot of people in my deliberation were really knowledgeable. It was refreshing to see how passionate we were and how much overlap in ideas we had."

Duncan Zahradka, First-Time Voter, Colorado

DONORS

Our deepest thanks go out to our donors for their generous contributions to NextGen Roundtable: Decision 2026 and to the future of civil discourse. If you are interested in supporting Close Up's mission and future opportunities for deliberative dialogue, please contact us at support@closeup.org.

BF Saul

Charlie McBride

The Deliberative Democracy Lab
at Stanford University

Department of Education

Department of the Interior

The Hersh Foundation

The Hoover Institution at Stanford
University

Janet Hale

Johnson & Johnson

Josh Frey

Meghan Peck

Michael Mandel and Sherry Haber

Paul DeMarco, Book My Group

Utah Jazz

Close Up is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, civic education organization that informs, inspires, and empowers young people to become active citizens. For over 50 years, we have delivered experiential learning programs, professional development, curriculum design and consulting, and other civic education opportunities to more than one million students and educators nationwide. We connect what students learn in class to the real world around them, helping them to articulate their own views, listen to those of others, and engage with people of different backgrounds with tolerance and understanding. To learn more about opportunities to support and partner with Close Up, please contact us at support@closeup.org.

The Stanford University Deliberative Democracy Lab is devoted to research about democracy and public opinion obtained through Deliberative Polling®. The method of Deliberative Polling has been used in over 50 countries around the world through over 150 projects, at varying levels of government and society. To learn more, visit <https://deliberation.stanford.edu/>.

Generation Lab is a data intelligence company studying young people and the trends that shape the future. Generation Lab translates youth views and behavior for media, academia, businesses, government, and the American public. Whether through a one-day snapshot poll or a multi-year longitudinal study, the organization pursues youth truth for clients and the American public. To learn more, visit generationlab.org.

From its founding, America has developed an array of institutions to preserve and advance our nation's liberty and prosperity. Yet today, many citizens have lost confidence in those institutions, challenging their legitimacy and compromising their missions. In an objective, nonpartisan spirit, the **Center for Revitalizing American Institutions** will draw on the Hoover Institution's scholarship, government experience, and convening power to study the reasons behind the crisis in trust facing American institutions, analyze how they are operating in practice, and consider policy recommendations to rebuild trust and increase their effectiveness. To learn more, visit <https://www.hoover.org/research-teams/center-revitalizing-american-institutions>.

