

# MAKING YOUNG VOTERS

Converting Civic Attitudes  
into Civic Action



JOHN B. HOLBEIN  
D. SUNSHINE HILLYGUS

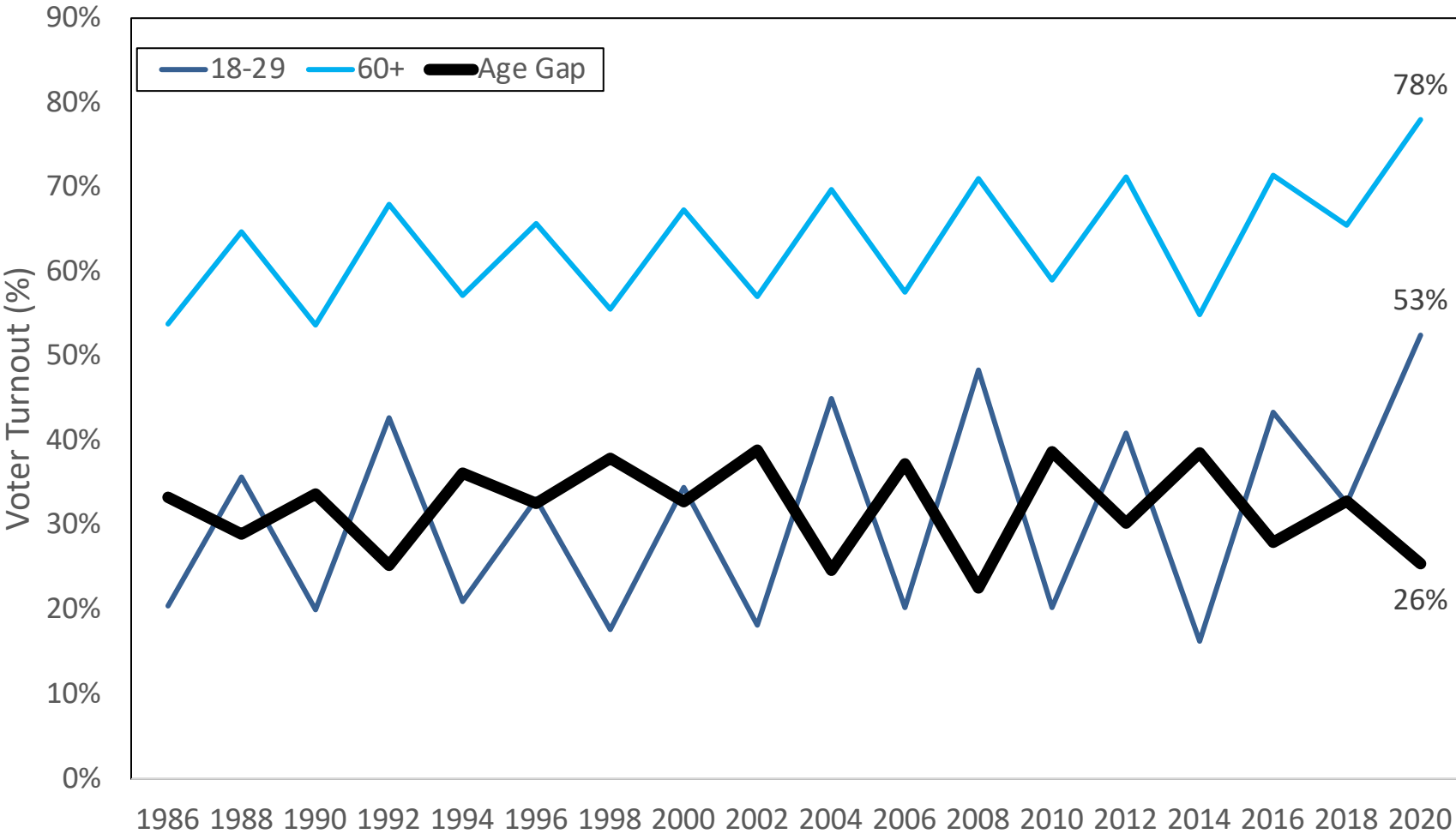
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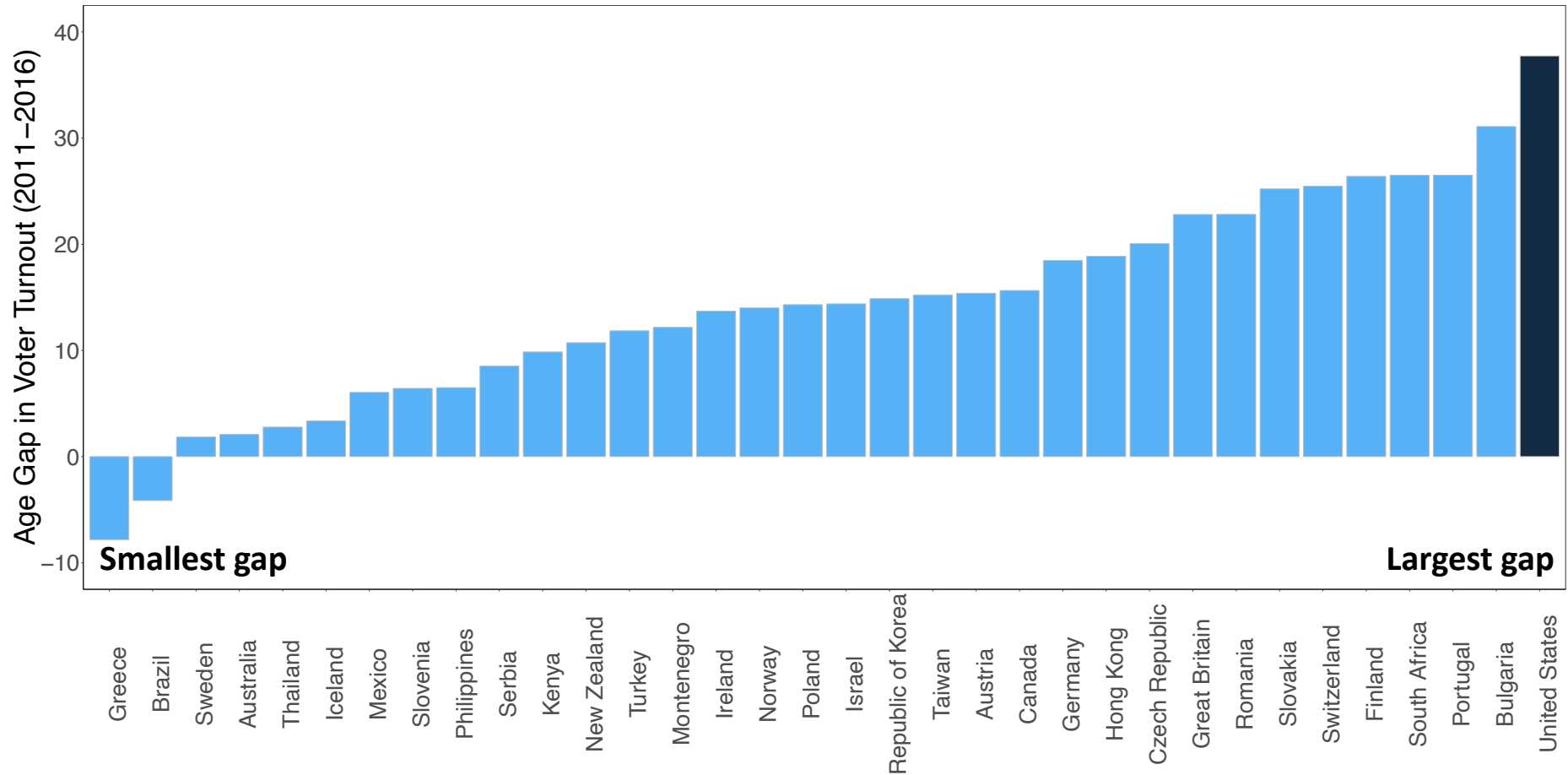
# Young People Are Much Less Likely to Vote



Source: Current Population Survey. **Black line** is difference between groups.

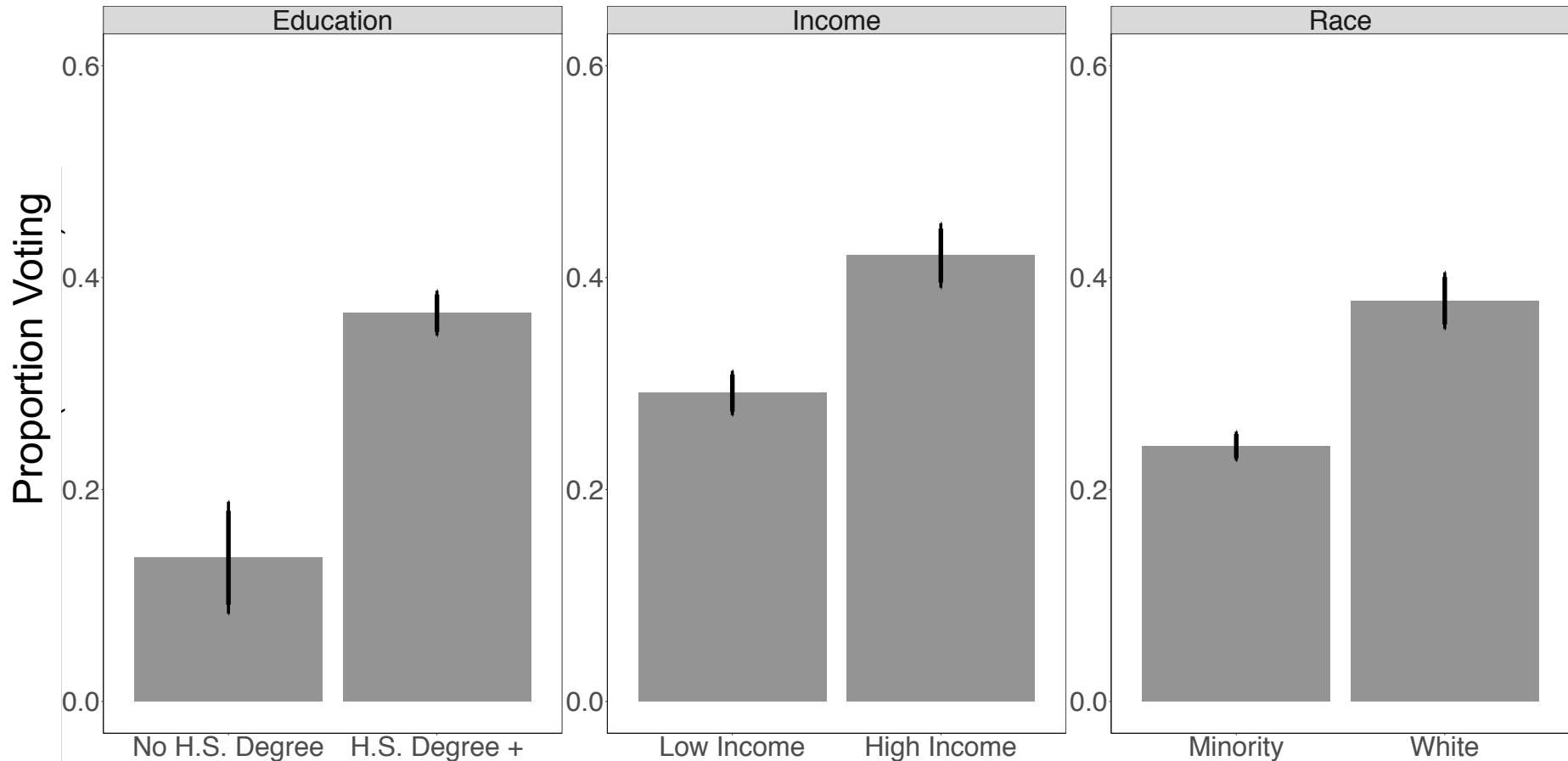
# Youth Turnout in the U.S. is Uniquely Low

Countries' Rank in the Turnout Gap Between Young and Old Voters (Low to High)



Source: Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (Module 4). Voting in the Lower House in the most recent election. As in the figure on the last slide, comparison between 18-29 & 60 +.

# Gaps in voter turnout are already present among youth...



Inequality in voter turnout among young people. Voter turnout. Source: Current Population Survey November Supplement. The bars plot mean levels, the brackets plot the corresponding 95 percent (narrower line) and 90 percent (wider line) confidence intervals.

**Why don't  
more young  
people in the  
U.S. vote?**

# Conventional wisdom

Young people are just apathetic, disinterested, and disengaged.

So, increasing political interest is the best way to increase youth turnout.

MAY 20, 2013

Obama's New Boss / Syria face-off / McCain vs. Brzezinski / **PLUS:** Summer's best movies & more

# TIME

## THE ME ME ME GENERATION

Millennials are lazy, entitled narcissists  
who still live with their parents

Why they'll save us all

BY JOEL STEIN



time.com



millennials are

millennials are **lazy**

millennials are **the worst**

millennials are **also known as**

millennials are **entitled**

Press Enter to search.

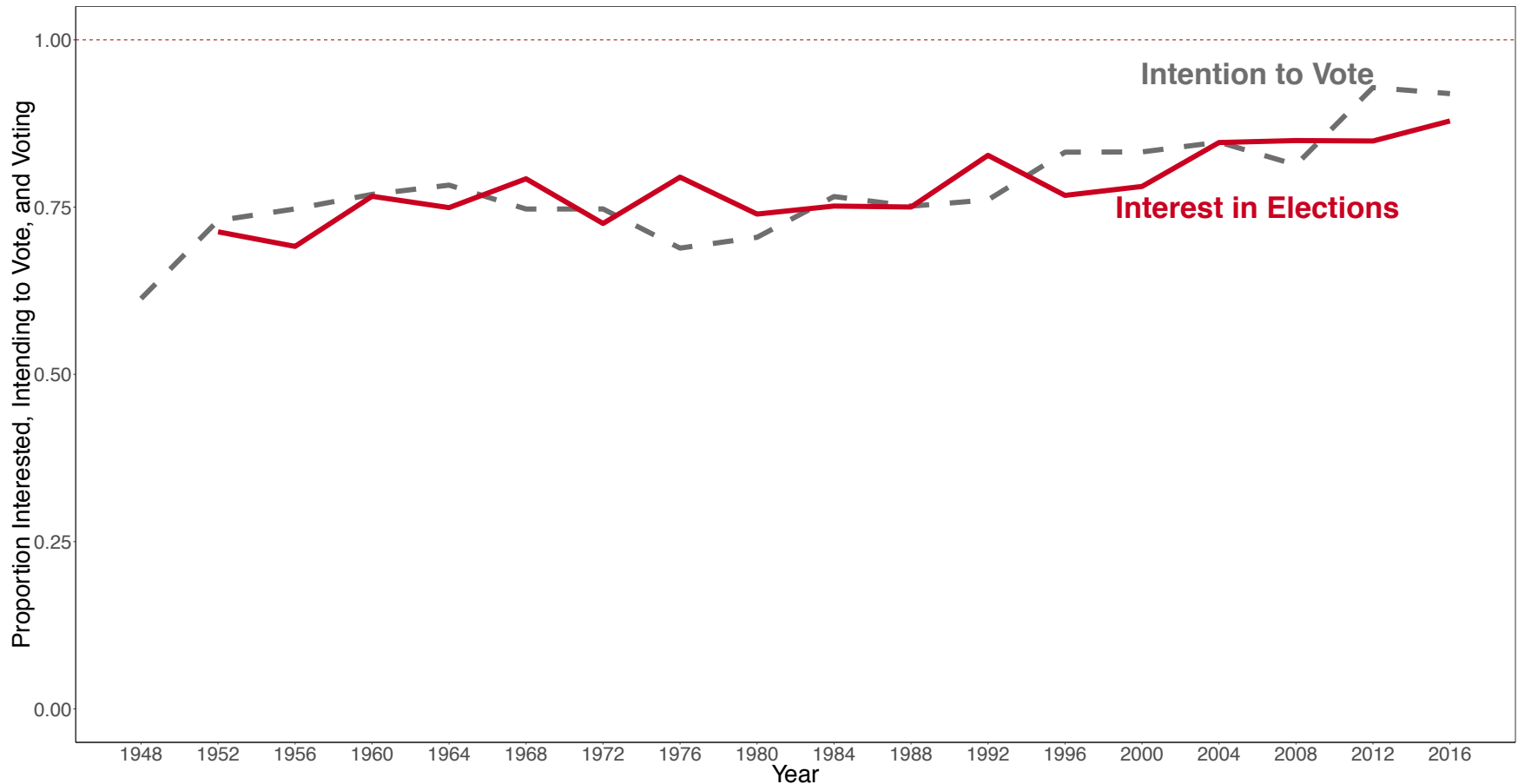
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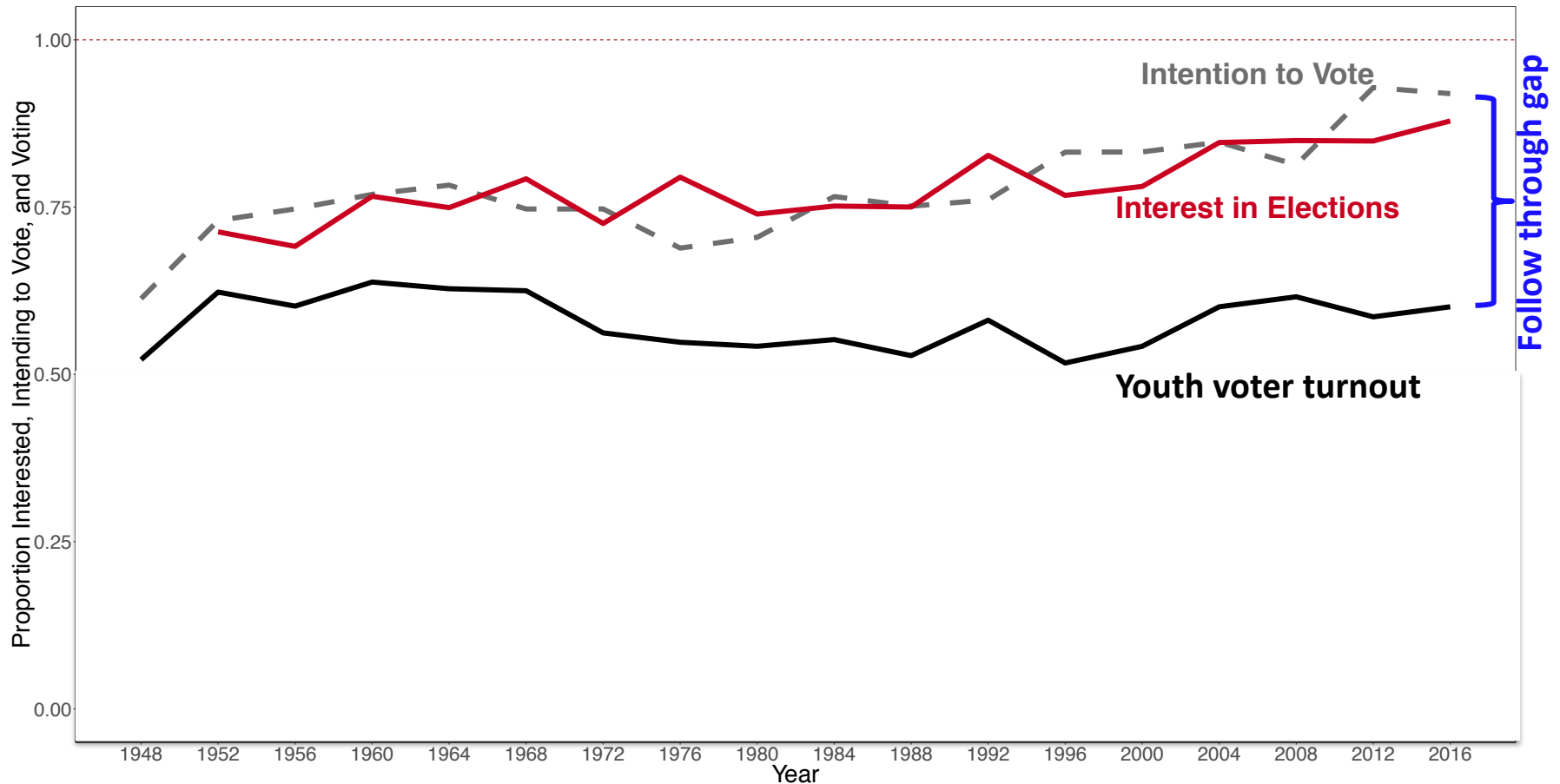


# But Youth Are Already Very Interested in Politics!



Note: figure plots intention to vote (from the ANES; VCF0713—"Do you intend to vote for a candidate for President?") in **dashed-grey**, political interest (from the ANES; VCF0310 "would you say that you have been interested in the political campaigns (so far) this year?") in **red**, and validated voter turnout rates (from the U.S. Elections Project) in **black** among all voting age adults in U.S. Presidential Elections 1948-2016. Reference line at the top is the maximal value.

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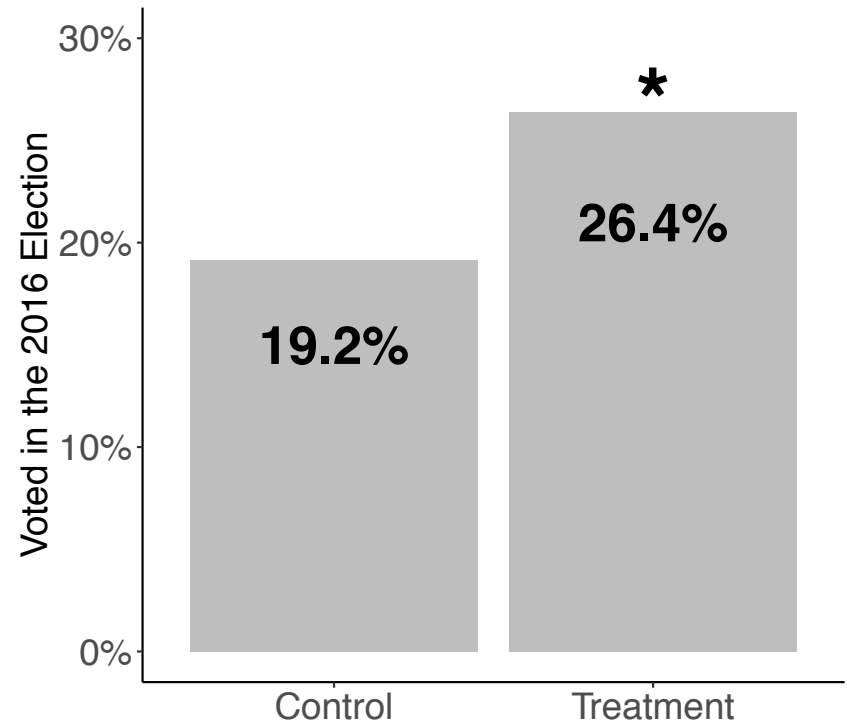
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# How can we change these patterns?

1. Rethink Civics Education
2. Make registering and voting easier

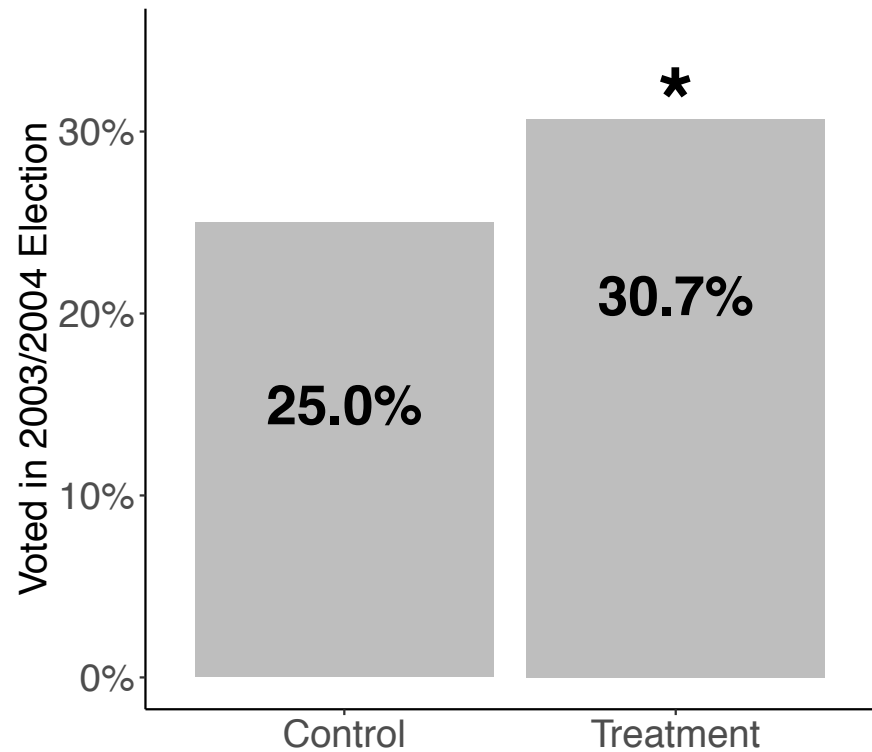
# 1. What Schools Can Do: Active Learning

DEMOCRACY PREP  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Effect of Democracy Prep admittance on youth voter turnout. Comparison is between lottery winners and lottery losers. Effect estimates are intention-to-treat (ITT). \*  $p < 0.05$ . Voter turnout from a match of Democracy Prep student files to Catalist records for the 2016 general election.  $N = 1,060$ . Recreated from Gill et al. (2018)

# 1. What Schools Can Do: Register Youth!



Effect of First-Time Voter Program on youth voter turnout, Comparison is between those randomly assigned to the program and those randomly assigned to the control group. \*  $p < 0.05$ .  $N = 840$ . Recreated from Addonizio (2011).

**Many youth get tripped up on voter registration.**

**Making registration easier works:** Online registration, preregistration, and same-day registration increase youth participation.

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# Thanks!

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