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## NAEP Study Shows Need to Improve Civics Education in our High Schools

*Rock the Vote President Heather Smith calls for creative solutions that will teach students how to exercise their right to vote*

Washington, D.C. – Rock the Vote President Heather Smith issued the following statement regarding troubling statistics about the decline in civics education in high schools that were recently released in the National Assessment of Educational Progress Civics 2010 Report Card. In 2010, about 30 percent of twelfth graders were not taught about elections and voting, and the average score for the nation's twelfth graders fell slightly since the test was last administered in 2006.

“We want to see thriving civics education programs in our high schools, and this research shows that with continued budget cuts to civics education at the state and federal levels, many of our nation's young people are not learning about what it means and how to participate as a voting citizen in our democracy. This is not only a disservice to those young people, but also to our country.

Almost 13,000 young people turn 18 every day, and by 2012, the Millennial generation will make up 24 percent of the voting age population, based on U.S. Census data. There is no systematic way to ensure they are learning about the elections process and getting registered to vote, and, as a result, the most common reason they don't participate is that they don't know enough. We must start these conversations in our civics programs at all levels of schooling and prepare our nation's youth to be informed and active citizens. Research continues to prove that civic education and early participation in elections creates a habit of ongoing engagement.

To help support continued civic learning in our nation's school systems, Rock the Vote launched Democracy Class – a one-class-period civic education lesson taught using music, pop culture and video that works to engage young people in a way that's relevant to their lives. Along with our partners, volunteers and educators nationwide, we are teaching Democracy Class in more than 1,000 classrooms in all 50 states to encourage young people to exercise their right to vote when they turn 18. The program's curriculum is available to educators for free and can be taught at any school or community center.



We hope our work with Democracy Class will help to reinforce the efforts of countless civic education professionals who want our students to have a voice in their country.”

For interviews, please contact [maegan@rockthevote.com](mailto:maegan@rockthevote.com)

### **About Rock the Vote**

**[www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com)**

*Rock the Vote's mission is to engage and build political power for young people in our country. Using music, popular culture, new technologies and grassroots organizing for more than 20 years, Rock the Vote has registered more than 5 million young people, including a record-shattering 2.5 million registration downloads in the historic 2008 election. In 2010, Rock the Vote logged more than 300,000 voter registration downloads as part of the largest midterm election outreach strategy in our organization's history. As the tidal wave of Millennial generation voters continues to establish its power at the polls, Rock the Vote will register millions more young people and make their voices heard. In 2011, Rock the Vote will lead the charge toward making our electoral process more accesible to young people through our high school civics program, Democracy Class, by rallying young people to stop unfair registration laws, and educating prospective 2012 candidates on how to incorporate young people in their campaigns.*

### **About Democracy Class**

**[www.democracyclass.com](http://www.democracyclass.com)**

*Rock the Vote's Democracy Class program is designed to educate and excite high school students about voting, elections and governance. This non-partisan lesson plan uses music, pop culture, video, classroom discussion and a mock election to teach young people the skills to navigate the elections process and engage as active citizens. In 2011, which marks the 40th anniversary of the 26th Amendment that gave 18-year-olds the right to vote, Rock the Vote is working with national and local partners to announce Democracy Day asking educators and organizations to bring Democracy Class to students. For more information visit [democracyclass.com](http://democracyclass.com) or [democracyday.com](http://democracyday.com).*