

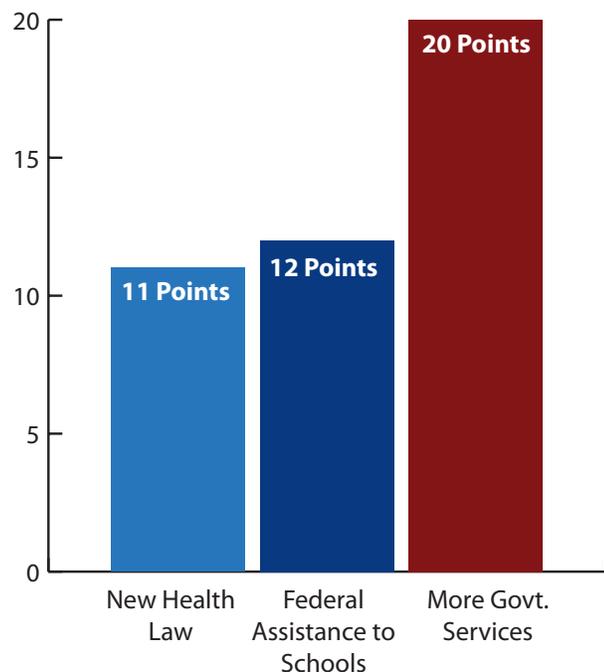
WHO VOTES MATTERS

Until recently, conventional wisdom held that those who vote on a regular basis and those who don't have similar views on most issues. However, new research shows that "nonvoters" – those who don't vote regularly or at all, and who are disproportionately lower income, younger, and new citizensⁱ – differ markedly on issues like the role of government and addressing inequality. The absence of nonvoters in elections has implications for public policy and many of the issues nonprofits care about.

Research conducted before the 2010 midterm electionsⁱⁱ found that, when compared to frequent voters, nonvoters:

- Favored health care reform by a margin of 11 points.

Favorability Margin: Nonvoters over Voters



“Given evidence that elected officials do respond more to voters than nonvoters, it is important to repudiate conventional wisdom that who votes does not matter.”

—Janet Leighley and Jonathan Nagler,
Who Votes Now

- Favored restrictions on gun ownership by a margin of 15 points.
- Favored increased government services by a margin of 20 points.

More recent researchⁱⁱⁱ found that, when compared to frequent voters, nonvoters:

- Favored government jobs programs by a margin of 10 points.
- Favored providing more federal assistance to schools by a margin of 12 points.
- Favored increasing the minimum wage by a margin of 8 points.

Nonprofits serve and engage vulnerable populations, but our impact is diminished if the people we serve aren't voting or being heard by candidates. Because of our audience and mission, nonprofits have the opportunity to create a more representative electorate and support a more robust debate on a range of public policy issues.

ⁱ Learn more about the disparities in voting between members of different demographic groups in “America Goes to the Polls: Voter Participation Gaps in the 2012 Presidential Election” available at www.nonprofitvote.org.

ⁱⁱ Pew Research Center on the People & the Press. “The Party of Nonvoters.” October 29th, 2010.

ⁱⁱⁱ Leighley, Jan E., and Jonathan Nagler. *Who Votes Now? Demographics, Issues, Inequality, and Turnout in the United States*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2014. Print.