

Beyond the ballot: students step up in world of politics

by Alyssa Pak



Alex Gjaja

League of Women Voters Emerging Leader

What do you hope to accomplish in the future?

I hope the League can continue rising above other political organizations since it's one of the few nonpartisan ones. We're working to expand voter rights and spread voter information.

What is your role in the organization?

I joined the league when I was 16. As of now, I'm trying to expand the youth base and get a mock election up so people can vote for midterms. Also, because the civics class is a requirement, we're working with Ms. Arado to add to the broad curriculum. Eventually, we'd like to set up some sort of partnership between students and the school board and/or village board, so they can see how the boards are run, as well as issues that are affecting both areas.



Will Thornton

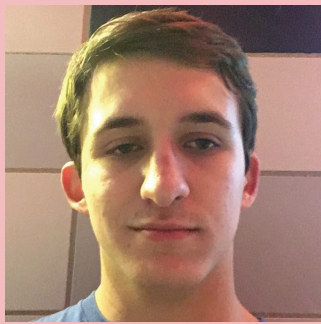
Works to direct donations for JB Pritzker

What inspired you to get politically involved?

I didn't like the way politics seemed to manipulate people to vote off of emotional responses, putting people I didn't like in power. I wanted to get involved in politics in a way that allowed for me to control candidates more than I could control voters, and a super PAC seemed like a great way to do it.

How did you get the opportunity to direct donations?

There are no real barriers to entry for creating a super PAC, and the laws regarding who can create one and what they can do with one are purposely very loose. I got the idea to start my super PAC through the inspiration of one of my friends. With his help, I was able to raise \$100 and fill out the necessary paperwork to register as a super PAC.



Frank Zawrazky

Active member of NT's Republican Club

What do you do as a member of republican Club?

We do a lot of outreach, getting people to join the club. Right now one of our main priorities is making Republican voices part of political life at New Trier by inviting different speakers. In the past we've hosted Barret Davey. Right now we're reaching out to Ben Shapiro and Candace Owens.

What inspired you to get politically involved?

I've had experiences in the past where my political views have not been accepted and have even resulted in lower grades, despite the fact that my argument was well supported. Republican club is a place where students can discuss politics without fear of anticonservative bias that is prevalent in a lot of places here.



Isabella Roselli

Operations Intern for JB Pritzker

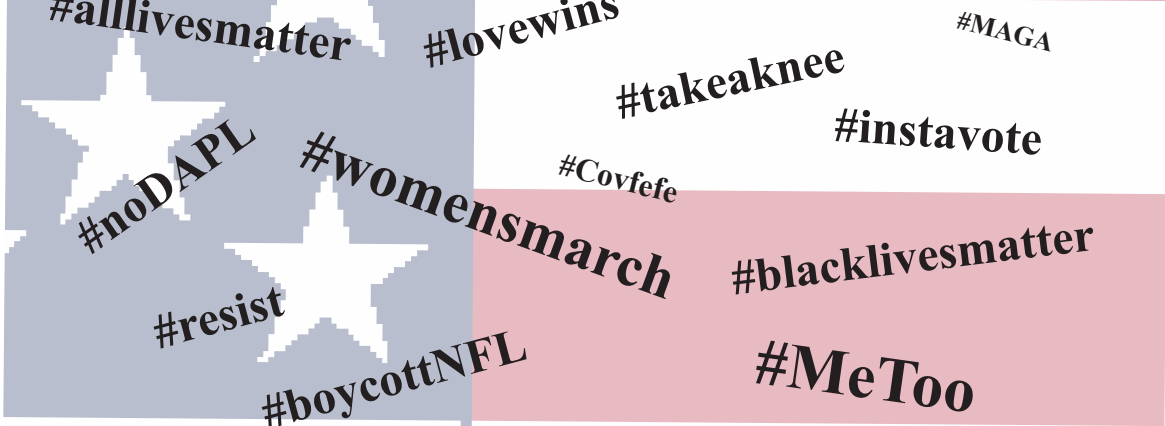
What inspired you to get politically involved?

I've always been very interested in politics, since I write for the New Trier Political Journal, but I really was looking for the hands-on experience involving politics. I also knew that the Illinois governor race was shaping up to be the most expensive race in American history and I wanted to provide my support for the candidate I thought was the best for Illinois.

How did you help JB Pritzker in the election process?

I contacted voters using the public voter files, and I spoke with them about issues. I compiled lists of potential donors and sent mail to them, and answered JB's mail. I was an Operations Intern, so I worked on day-to-day operations of the campaign as well, and I worked the phones when it was needed.

Social media activism is #notenough When voting becomes a privilege, not a right



Political engagement needs to spread past the screen

by Darcie Kim

Being politically woke has become a trend. There's nothing wrong with staying informed about political issues and spreading awareness to promote a movement's popularity. If anything, this should be encouraged.

However sharing politically charged posts on social media without partaking in any form of civil engagement has become the norm, not the exception.

Without a doubt, advertising a political movement on social media can yield universal effects. The #MeToo movement grew when women spoke up about their stories on social media, creating a global web of interconnected experiences and stories.

#BlackLivesMatter became a widely known phrase, promoting protests against police brutality and racial bias.

"Because of what people post on social media, I've become so much more aware of different political statements. People can share their ideas across a broad platform and reach an audience that isn't limited to their close friends and family," said senior Justin Gorodetsky.

Following an especially controversial issue, such as the confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh or the shooting at Parkland High School, many students have taken to social media to share their opinions.

Despite publicly announcing personal thoughts on a particular subject, it's rare that that same person will act to instigate change. This pattern persists at New Trier, and senior Hannah Kadin noted that many students only seem interested in the topics that are relevant to them and "postable."

"People got really riled up over the walkout last year to protest gun violence but it was basically just one day of people acting like they cared about something. Nobody ever talked about or pretended to care about it again," said Kadin.

It's understandable that certain hot-button topics may attract more awareness. Although these topics are perhaps some of the most significant it's important not just to post about them to merely seem cool and knowledgeable in front of your friends.

Senior Josie Ewing said that although she doesn't blame people for becoming more outspoken after certain events trigger widespread debate, "Only talking about political events when they are popular commodifies political activism."

The types of issues that are usually the subjects of Instagram

stories are also an indication of how politics in social media has become a trend.

Kadin noticed that when Kavanaugh was confirmed, nearly every girl she knew posted something on social media.

But following the shooting of Laquan McDonald by a police officer that prompted protests all over Chicago towards the end of summer, there were hardly, if any, social media posts by NT students.

"People choose easy movements to latch on to. It's easy to dislike a supreme court justice who sexually assaulted somebody, but when it comes to other things where the victims are either not the people posting about it or not as easy to sympathize with, people don't focus their attentions on it," said Ewing.

Considering that we live in a country that takes pride in its democracy and is brimming with critical political issues to discuss, the need for civil engagement in our society is incredibly relevant.

Engagement can be as simple as registering to vote or as involved as volunteering for a campaign and attending a protest.

"There are so many ways for people to become politically involved, and even though I think it's great that people are sharing political issues over social media, they should also do something more than just posting a story on Instagram," said Gorodetsky.

Identification laws disproportionately affect people of color

by Danielle Kurensky

Democracy is the fundamental cornerstone of the United States. It is what this nation was built on: the notion that the general population has a say in the government.

Throughout history, amendments have been passed to ensure that everyone, no matter their sex or race, could vote.

But, according to The Washington Post, 43 percent of eligible voters did not vote in the 2016 presidential election. This caused the winner to be decided by a little more than half of eligible voters.

While it's certain that some voters did not cast a ballot in the 2016 election because they weren't satisfied with the candidates, there is another factor stopping people from voting: voter suppression.

Voter suppression is an attempt to influence an election by prohibiting certain groups of people from voting.

The Jim Crow literacy tests were a prime example of voter suppression, and while that might seem like a historical anecdote, voter suppression is alive and well today.

Voter suppression is turning the Georgian gubernatorial race into a national issue. The Republican candidate Brian Kemp is currently the Georgian Secretary of State and is running against Stacey Abrams, who hopes to be the first black female governor in the United States.

Recently the Associated Press released that Kemp's office has placed 53,000 voter registrations on hold due to an inconsistency between the registration and the Georgia Department of Driver Services or the Social Security Administration.

While there should be consistency, a missing hyphen could

cause someone to be placed on hold. In information released by the Associated Press they found that 70 percent of the voters placed on hold are black, a number disproportionate to Georgia's 32 percent black population, according to the current census.

Restrictions like these disproportionately affect people of color and are not democratic. Nor are they unique to Georgia.

In North Dakota, the Supreme Court recently upheld a voter identification law that requires voters to have a residential address. It's making national headlines due to North Dakota's Native American population, many of whom live on reservations and use a post office box as their address.

The voter identification law says post office boxes are not sufficient, thus hindering many Native Americans from voting.

While there are ways for Native Americans in North Dakota or Georgians with their registration placed on hold to vote, it requires them to go through a tedious and time consuming process that isn't well publicized.

People of color should not have to go through extra loopholes to exercise their right to vote.

Proponents argue that a stricter voter registration process decreases voter fraud. Yet despite the President creating the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity, there is no evidence of widespread voter fraud.

Voting is an integral part of the American identity and has been since our founding. Currently the system is not reflective of the ideals the country was founded on; silencing those with different viewpoints is not democracy.

It is time for an updated Voting Rights Act that ensures equal access to voting, for all citizens, regardless of race.