

r 🖈 Students make voices heard in election 🖈

By Jordan Watkins and Rachel Reko

In six days, Barack Obama and Mitt Romney will compete in the most important race in America. About 23 million voters under age 24 will help pick the winner.

According to Pew Research Center, young voters (ages 18-24) are expected to make up 17 to 18 percent of the vote.

That statistic will include some Maize students who will head to the polls to cast a ballot for the first time.

One of these students is senior Ali Latimer, who says she will vote for Romney because she disagrees with Obama's health care policies.

Latimer said students should get involved in politics and vote if they can.

"It involves your future and you should care," she said.

Senior Cooper Downs agrees. He said he educates himself on candidates and the issues by watching debates and paying attention in government class.

"It's our country," he said. "We owe it to each other to help choose our leader."

Although senior Cameron Tredway is not old enough to vote, he supports Obama because of his policies and plans for education. He said better education not only helps the individual but also the nation's economy.

"Education and the economy go hand in hand," he said. "Everything [Obama's] done so far has helped provide a more affordable college experience." He said that a higher college attendance rate translates to more people having access to high-paying jobs.

Tredway said students who are too young to vote should still get involved and educate themselves on the candidates. "It prepares them for when they can vote and makes them more experienced."

Senior Michaeli Hennessy, who serves as mayor of Wichita's Mayor's Youth Council, agrees that student involvement is important. She loves seeing enthusiasm about politics in students.

"It's great to see all the fights that go on over Twitter," she said. Hennessy said that students being involved

and forming opinions at a young age will benefit them in the future.

"Even what doesn't affect us now will affect us later on," she said. "You have to be prepared. If you don't get involved now, how will you ever?"

Special-education para Tori Eck, who is a politicalscience major at Wichita State, said students who are old enough to vote have a civic duty to head to the polls.

"It's your only real way to make your voice heard and implement change in the nation," she said. "Even if you're not old enough to vote, you need to get involved."

Although Eck's political opinions formed from her family and the values she was raised on, she said it's important that students form their own opinions on political issues.

"My parents sat me down when I was 10 years old and told me about the issues," she said. "I formed my opinions and they haven't changed."

Eck said that what's important to students may be different than what's important to their parents.

"We have to make decisions on what's best for the nation, not just ourselves. It's very important that people form their own opinions on those issues," she said. "When we just blindly vote like our parents, we're not doing that."

Social studies teacher Skeeter Rankins agrees.

"There are people who vote because they think they are Republican or Democrat, but they don't really know what they mean," he said. "They're voting on ignorance."

Rankins said it's important that students learn about the candidates they support.

"If you don't know basic policies of who you're voting for, that's a problem," he said. "Ignorance is not bliss when it comes to voting."

Rankins said students should "get involved and get educated." He said getting involved gives students a better understanding of their country and will help them be prepared for their future.



IERE THEY STAND



BARACK OBAMA

MITT ROMNEY



Repeal Bush tax cuts for wealthy; stimulus spending and tax cuts for short term economy growth; cut spending and raise taxes on wealthy to reduce debt long term

Make Bush tax cuts for households making more than \$250,000 permanent; cut taxes and regulations to encourage business; cut discretionary spending by 5% to reduce national debt



Heath care

Patient protections from insurance companies; policies require everyone to have health insurance

Repeal Affordable Care Act; proposes encouraging individuals to purchase their own health insurance rather than via employers; allowing insurance across state lines



Environment

Supports cap-and-trade system to reduce carbon emissions; delayed decision on northern leg of Keystone XL pipe running oil from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico due to environmental issues

Opposes cap-and-trade legislation; supports Keystone XL pipeline; \$20 billion package for energy research and new car technology



Gay rights

Supports same-sex marriage; pushed Congress to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell, allowing gays to serve openly in the military

Opposes same-sex marriage but supports legal unions; supports Don't Ask, Don't Tell but favors openly serving in the military; supported ENDA to ban anti-gay employer discrimination



Supports Roe vs. Wade; criticized Supreme Court decision that upheld ban on partial-birth abortions

Opposes Roe vs. Wade; believes states should be allowed to ban abortion



Wants to uphold second amendment rights but wants to pass laws that ideally keep guns out of the hands of criminals; pushes for common sense gun safety measures

Does not support adding new laws restricting gun control; supports expanding rights of gun owners (yet fully punishing those who abuse the power)



Iraq Opposed invasion from the beginning; opposed troop increase; ended operations in Iraq **Iran** Engage in direct diplomacy; military option not off the table; pressures Iran to prove nuclear aspirations are peaceful; doesn't support sending troops; wants diplomacy

Iraq Says keeping the US in Iraq is the best option for minimizing casualties and maintaining democracy in Iraq

Iran Supports sending more troops back to surrounding nations to pressure Iran into giving up its nuclear aspirations

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