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NextGen America Launches Black Lives Rising to Increase Black Youth Turnout in Midterm Elections

The campaign will invest in black youth voter contact, activist recruitment, and partnerships with leading organizations Black Futures Lab, Color Of Change PAC, Woke Vote, and NAFEO

San Francisco, CA — Today, NextGen America announced the launch of Black Lives Rising, a program that will dedicate over \$1 million to ensuring that young Black voters, on and off campus, make their voices heard on November 6th. After [a dip in Black youth turnout in 2016](#), the program will engage communities of young Black voters with voter contact, digital ads, mailers, and event partnerships with several leading organizations to ensure increased turnout. Black Lives Rising is part of NextGen Rising, the largest youth organizing effort in American history, and will bridge NextGen's organizing work between campuses and communities to help build youth political power and tip the scale on competitive Congressional districts in November.

"For too long, black youth have been denied a seat at the table, but with the rise of young black leaders like Ayanna Pressley, Andrew Gillum, Mandela Barnes, and Justin Fairfax, a new era of inclusive politics is emerging," said **NextGen America President Tom Steyer**. "Black Lives Rising will engage young black voters on campus and in communities to make their voices heard and their impact undeniable in November and beyond."

"Black Lives Rising is a historic, revolutionary investment in the power of young black voters. That power has been oppressed and undermined throughout American history, and this program is a nod to our ancestors who died from the injustice of a system complicit in racism. I believe that, by going to the polls to demand our respect, we are living out those

ancestors' wildest dreams of black representation and political power," said **Jeremiah Chapman, Creator of Black Lives Rising**.

For over a year, NextGen America has been organizing on 14 HBCUs, including four in Florida. In the Florida primary, where NextGen organized in several majority young black precincts, turnout skyrocketed. In youth-heavy precincts in Tallahassee near Florida A&M, there were five times more votes in the Aug 28th primary than in 2014 primary - and 75% of the vote share went to Gillum. At Florida Memorial University, a HBCU in Miami, turnout was up 150% over 2014 primary levels, and 68% of all voters supported Andrew Gillum.

Black Lives Rising is building on the work that NextGen has been doing on the ground in 13 cities where young black voters could have a decisive impact on competitive elections through increased turnout, including:

- Fayetteville (**NC-09**), Greensboro (**NC-13**), and Salisbury (**NC-13**)
- Charlottesville (**VA-05 + Sen**) and Richmond (**VA-07 + Sen**)
- Lower Oxford (**PA-06, Gov + Sen**), Philadelphia (**Gov + Sen**), Pittsburgh (**Gov + Sen**)
- Tallahassee and Daytona Beach, FL (**FL Gov + Senate**)
- Detroit and Flint, MI (**MI Gov + Senate**)
- Milwaukee, WI (**WI Gov + Senate**)

In addition to voter contact efforts in the thirteen cities, Black Lives Rising will engage young black voters by recruiting over 100 young Black activists, running unique digital ads that highlight the contributions of activists in the community, and collaborating directly with trusted organizations, such as Black Futures Lab, Color Of Change PAC, Woke Vote, PushBlack, AFSCME, and the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO), on canvasses and projects, and with black millennial media outlet Blavity to host voter engagement events. These groups all have deep roots and long histories of involvement in the black community and support for their work is central to Black Lives Rising.

"Black people are coming together like never before to define the future we want and the leaders we need to make that future a reality," said **Alicia Garza, founder of Black to the**

Future. "We look forward to joining the powerful collective of Black Lives Rising to show up and show out at the polls in November. Together we'll send a simple message; the future won't just be red or blue - the future will be Black."

"Black youth have been outspoken about injustice in their communities", said **Arisha Hatch, Director of Color Of Change PAC.** "Our partnership with NextGen and the Black Lives Rising initiative will ensure that young Black voters are prepared to elect leaders who will address the issues they care about and create a more equitable, less hostile world for Black people and all people."

"Woke Vote is excited to partner with NextGen and the Black Lives Rising campaign. As we join forces in Black sacred spaces like HBCUs, churches and Black businesses across the South - this is organizing on another level! Black centered, Black emPOWERed. We are going to save us in November!" said **DeJuana Thompson, creator of Woke Vote.**

"Every HBCU student must vote and participate fully in the electoral process because the vote is the power!" said **Dr. Lezlie Baskerville of NAFEO** "HBCU students must vote in greater numbers in 2018 than they did in 2016 especially during this season of spiraling moral decay in America, divisive politics, executive, regulatory and legislative retrenchment. NAFEO is excited to partner with NextGen to visit HBCU campuses, assist with voter registration, voter education, voter mobilization, and voter participation to keep black lives rising!"

Black Lives Rising builds off the work of NextGen Rising, the largest youth organizing effort in American history. NextGen Rising already includes historic investments in increasing young Black political participation, including reaching one million young Black voters between the age of 18-35 with over \$2 million worth of digital advertisements, sending over 1.5 million pieces of direct mail to young Black voters, hiring and training more than 80 Black activists through the NextGen Rising fellowship program, and employing more than 50 Black organizers working full-time to increase youth turnout on 14 HBCUs in battleground states.

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NextGen America

Founded originally as NextGen Climate by businessperson and philanthropist Tom Steyer

in 2013, NextGen America acts politically to prevent climate disaster, promote prosperity, and protect the fundamental rights of every American.