

# Why Youth Is Revolting Against Obama (Hint: It's Not Just Obamacare)



*By Nick Gillespie November 20th 2013 5:45 AM*

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**In 2008, he seemed like the coolest cat to hit the national scene in a long time, almost scientifically engineered to appeal to idealistic young Americans. How times have changed.**

It's like totally official, now, bro: Even the young Americans who were central to Barack Obama's election in 2008 and 2012 are sick of the president, with a large and growing majority disapproving of the job he's doing. In this, they're just like their elders.

A new Quinnipiac Poll finds that only 36 percent of voters between the ages of 18 and 29 approve of the job the president is doing while fully 54 percent of the kids give him the thumbs down (10 percent didn't know or care enough to respond to the topic). Back in March 2009, 62 percent of 18 to 29 years approved, compared to just 20 percent disapproving.

Millennials may be young, but they're not stupid. As bad as Obama's time in office has been for older Americans, nobody has taken it on the chin quite as bad as kids under 30, who are more likely to be unemployed, broke, and facing decades of sub-par wages if and when they do finally get a job.

Observers sympathetic to the president and a progressive Democratic agenda chalk the sharp decline up to the clusterfucked rollout of Obamacare. "Because they came of age watching a Republican president fail massively in Iraq, Hurricane Katrina, and the financial crisis, Millennials are predisposed to favor Democrats," writes Peter Beinart, coming up with arguably the most inventive

new variation on the old “blame Bush” meme. Beinart notes that even as Millennials are less trusting of government than Gen Xers and baby boomers had been in their 20s, they were more likely to support both Obama and his health care reform plan. “If Obamacare never gets fixed,” frets Beinart, “it might just sour the single best relationship the Democratic Party has: its love affair with the young.”

Well, then, the Dems are officially on the market for a new love connection. While there’s no question that the launch of Obamacare has been a major disaster, the fact is that the youth revolt against Obama started almost immediately after he moved into the White House. In 2008, Obama won 66 percent of votes cast by 18-29 year olds. In 2012, he racked up just 60 percent. More tellingly, the participation rate among younger voters dropped precipitously between those elections, with Obama pulling 2.4 million fewer votes from 18-29 year olds in 2012. The second time around, he just wasn’t putting young asses in the voting booth anymore.

Who can blame them for not showing up? The abysmal and pathetic launch of healthcare.gov is simply the cherry on top of a shit sundae Obama’s been whipping up for the kids. You can protest that the stimulus should have been bigger, but when you judge its success against what the Obama administration claimed it would do, it was an epic fail. While masquerading as the peace and freedom candidate – easy to do against such hawkish characters as Hillary Clinton in the primaries and John McCain in the general election – Obama prided himself on tripling troop strength in Afghanistan and tried to extend our stays there and in Iraq. But for the vocal pushback from Rand Paul, Justin Amash, and a bunch of younger, non-interventionist Republicans, there’s every reason that the U.S. would have started an unsanctioned war in Syria, just as it did in Libya (where things are working out...how, again?).

The president has been genuinely awful on pot legalization and dragged his feet on gay marriage – issues on which younger voters are in front of the general population – and he spent his first

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copyright laws and outlaw cellphone unlocking via the Trans-Pacific Partnership Treaty aren't helping either.

term deporting more immigrants than George W. Bush managed to in eight years (despite minor reprieves announced in time for the 2012 elections, the deportations keep on happening). The revelations of widespread, Obama-approved drone strikes, the compilation of a presidential kill list, and the data collection of phone logs and internet traffic don't exactly inspire warm and fuzzy feelings from a generation that lives online. His response to the Gulf oil spill was dithering to non-existent and his alt-energy plans have come to naught even as fracking has put the country on a path to something like energy independence. And clandestine attempts to expand onerous

Back in 2008, Barack Obama seemed like the coolest cat to hit the national scene in a long time, almost scientifically engineered to appeal to idealistic young Americans. He was the perfect combination of a dream dad and an older brother who could run you ragged up and down the basketball court, wink and nod about smoking dope, and hip you to some older but still cool music, you know? In 2008, the Pravda of youth culture, Rolling Stone, slathered the future president with praise for being so with it that he even knew how to use...an iPod. We were all pretty sure that his eventual Republican challenger, John McCain, had stopped listening to music when Rudy Vallee went electric or Stephen Foster released his Chris Gaines record or something, but there Obama was, listening to Bob Dylan, Yo-Yo Ma, Sheryl Crow, and even Jay-Z. “I have pretty eclectic tastes,” Obama told Rolling Stone. He even went on to invoke “Maggie’s Farm,” Dylan’s classic song of generational defiance and opting out. “It speaks to me as I listen to some of the political rhetoric,” explained.

Yeah, well, it’s all over now baby blue. Like Bush before him – and in many wars, even worse than Bush before him - Obama has personified the failure of leaders

to speak plainly, honestly and directly and to enact simple, effective, financially responsible policies that speak to Americans' hopes and dreams. The great political continuity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is one of transpartisan failure and the continuing flight from party affiliation by more and more Americans.

Beinart and others like him are right to note that Obama's and the Democrats' decline in popularity is not automatically the Republicans' gain (though get a load of this: Ken Cuccinelli won the 18-24 year-old vote against Terry McAuliffe in the Virginia governor's race). But just as there's no reason to expect the problems with Obamacare to be fixed anytime soon, there's no reason to think that youth disaffection with the president is going to get better over the remainder of his second term. He's failed with younger voters not in spite of his policies but because of them. Along the way, he transmogrified from a hipster dad into a near-total drag whose control is as absolute as his inability to get anything right.

In terms of basic demographics, the future belongs to Millennials because they are young. For good and ill, they will inherit the world their elders made for them. In terms of politics, the future belongs to leaders and parties who not only agree with the record-high percentage of Americans who think the government has too much power but actually propose to give some of it away.