

Clinton campaign in crisis over plunging support among younger voters

Zaida Green
17 September 2016

The campaign of Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton is responding to poll numbers and other indications of declining support among younger voters by deploying its most prominent surrogates to college campuses.

The moves come a day after two national surveys, one conducted by Quinnipiac University and the other by CBS News and the *New York Times*, found that more than a third of voters under the age of 30 plan to vote for third-party presidential candidates.

Clinton is widely despised, especially by young people. According to the Quinnipiac University poll, Clinton has the support of just 31 percent of voters aged 18-34, with 29 percent for Libertarian Gary Johnson, 25 percent for Republican Donald Trump and 15 percent for Green Party candidate Jill Stein.

Another poll, published in *Bloomberg News*, found that Clinton leads Trump by only 36 to 33 percent among young voters in Ohio, with Johnson drawing the support of 22 percent, contributing heavily to her overall five-point deficit to Trump in the state.

Press reports suggest that the Democratic Party was planning to refocus its efforts to reach young people by attacking Johnson and Stein and warning that any vote for one of these third-party candidates would help elect Trump as president. Former Vice President Al Gore, Senator Elizabeth Warren and Senator Bernie Sanders all made appearances in different venues on Friday to insist that young people must back Clinton.

The *New York Times* wrote, referring to younger voters, that they “recoil at Mr. Trump, her Republican opponent, but now favor the Libertarian nominee, Gary Johnson, or the Green Party candidate, Jill Stein.”

The *Wall Street Journal* reported, “Hillary Clinton’s once-commanding lead among young voters has nearly collapsed, several polls show, a factor making the

presidential race much closer in recent weeks and prompting the Clinton campaign to move quickly to keep a core Democratic constituency in the fold.

“In its most visible response, the campaign has begun sending the party’s most popular stars to college campuses to urge students not to sit out the election or back third-party candidates, who are drawing support from young voters.”

In Ohio, one of the most important “battleground” states, the Clinton campaign has deployed the two most prominent “left” figures in the US Senate, Clinton’s principal challenger for the nomination Sanders and Warren, to speak at major Ohio college campuses in order to corral young voters behind the Democrats.

Sanders speaks at the University of Akron and Kent State University this weekend, while Warren will appear at Ohio State University in Columbus and at Cleveland State University.

Michelle Obama kicked off the weekend campus blitz with an appearance Friday night at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

Ohio is one of a number of “Rust Belt” states that have been devastated by decades of deindustrialization, and further ruined by the 2008 financial crisis. Facing a dearth of jobs, the only “viable” futures presented to young people are: enlist in the armed forces or attend college in the hope that employment prospects will be better after graduating with a degree—along with thousands of dollars in debt. According to the state’s Development Services Agency, half a million youth aged 18-34 live in poverty.

In sending Sanders and Warren to the heavily contested state, the Clinton campaign is attempting to pull one of the most disaffected demographics in the electorate back into the campaign of the Democratic Party.

Sanders has worked for decades within the orbit of the Democratic Party. During the primaries he won some 13 million voters, including large numbers of young people. The senator's "political revolution" now consists of trying to convince his supporters to back the favored candidates of the "millionaires and billionaires" he used to denounce. He has refused to criticize the Obama administration's bailout of Wall Street banks and has remained silent on the US's escalating drive to world war.

Warren's "progressive" credentials are based on her academic publications detailing the economic hardship of middle-income families, and her subsequent roles in advisory and regulatory bodies, including the Congressional Oversight Panel. She has defended the Obama administration's assault on working conditions while spouting empty criticisms of Wall Street.

According to the campaign's official announcement, Sanders and Warren "will emphasize Clinton's plans to make free community college and debt-free college available to all Americans, protect access to health care for Americans, reform our immigration system ... raise the minimum wage and protect our climate."

These are all empty gestures. Clinton is pledged to continue the policy of the Obama administration, which has overseen a massive transfer of wealth from the working class to the super-rich.

Not on the agenda for discussion at these campus meetings are Clinton's plans for war. Clinton's political record as a war hawk stretches back more than 20 years, longer than the entire life span of many of the young voters her campaign is striving to ensnare. As First Lady to President Bill Clinton, she actively supported the bombing campaigns in Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq.

Clinton has consistently acted as one of the most hawkish figures in the American political establishment. Since supporting the criminal invasion of Iraq in 2003, she has consistently voted against troop withdrawals and for the continued funding of a war that, to date, has killed more than a million people over the course of thirteen years. As head of the Department of State from 2009 to 2013, she played a pivotal role in prosecuting the wars in Afghanistan, Syria and Libya.

The Clinton campaign's attacks on Republican rival Donald Trump have been based on the right-wing assertions that Trump is a puppet of Russian interests

and "unqualified" to be Commander-in-Chief—that is, "unqualified" to lead the military-intelligence establishment. Her bid for the presidency has the formal endorsement of 95 retired generals and admirals.

The author also recommends:

Clinton and Trump bow to the military

[08 September 2016]

As Clinton escalates war threats, Sanders begins campaigning for Democratic nominee

[03 September 2016]



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact