

# Social Media and Voter Turnout among Young Americans

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December 22, 2020

## 1 Introduction

Take one look at any social media platform, and it is not hard to tell when the U.S. election season begins. Snapchat stories have stickers that direct you to voter registration information, and Instagram filters remind you of your state’s registration deadline. Facebook tells you where your closest polling place is. Celebrities and influencers post attractive voter infographics, encouraging their fans to make a plan to vote. Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube—practically every major social media platform—is telling you to vote. But is it working?

Social media “get out the vote” initiatives have become more obvious and ubiquitous, especially since young people are both the most likely demographic to use social media, and the least likely to vote. This critical age demographic has become a desirable voting bloc; politicians on all sides likely see it as a valuable resource of untapped potential. Thus, it seems as if voter turnout efforts have increased on social media platforms, as young people gather more and more information from their lives online.

In this research paper I will study the effect of social media usage on young American voters, particularly between the ages of 18 and 29. My central theory proposes that increased social media use does lead to higher voter turnout. First, I would like to focus on whether or not broad, nonpartisan “get out the vote” campaigns affect voter turnout. These are meant to be site-wide, initiated by the social media platform itself; so by virtue of using the app or site, users are exposed to the campaign. Then, I would like to focus on how political social media usage—engaging with any politically-related material—relates to voter turnout among 18 to 29 year-olds in the 2018 midterm election. The analyses I have conducted indicate that political social media usage is associated with higher voter turnout among young Americans, though social media use in general does not have a significant effect.

## 2 Theory and Previous Literature

It is always difficult to find causal relationships between “thought” (e.g. seeing something on a social media site) and “action” (e.g. going out to vote), especially with something as complex as

the decision-making process to vote. Additionally, the proliferation and ubiquity of social media is a fairly new phenomenon that has only existed for the past decade or so, which means that the previous literature is not extensive.

One fairly recent study, conducted by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University in 2018, is the most related to my topic of interest. The Pre-Election poll asked 2,087 respondents, young people ages 18 to 24, about their involvement in the 2018 election, specifically focusing on the role of social media in hearing about and following the election. For instance, the study found that about 47 percent of respondents heard about the elections from a social media platform, and about 28 percent heard about the elections exclusively from a social media platform. Furthermore, the study found that young people said they were much more likely to vote when hearing about the 2018 election on social media (CIRCLE 2018 Pre-Election Poll). This study also notes how, particularly in 2018, social media platforms like Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook expanded their voter outreach campaigns; this is why I became interested in studying the 2018 midterm elections. However, this study is a pre-election study, so the surveyors could only ask how likely the respondents would vote; these responses are likely to be different from actual measured voter turnout.

Another earlier study, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI) in November 2012 for Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project, studied the role and prevalence of social media in the 2012 general election between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. Unlike the previous study, which focuses on general information about the election, this study focuses on the number of people who used their personal social media to share their vote choice for president; this type of social media use would fall more under political social media use. About 22 percent said that they indicated how they voted on social media, such as Facebook or Twitter. This study also looked at the difference in voting-related social media use between age demographics, and found that 18-29 year olds were among the most likely to share their vote choice and encourage others to vote through social media (PSRAI November 2012 Omnibus Week 1). This study does not attempt to draw any relationship between social media use and voter turnout, and the social media use being studied is very particular (i.e. whether or not someone used their social media to indicate their vote for president).

Although not formal studies, I also found a number of articles which focused on the role of the platform Snapchat in encouraging voter turnout. In 2018, Snapchat reported that about 1.4 million users visited their in-app "Get to the Polls" platform, operated by the voter outreach nonprofit

Democracy Works <sup>1</sup>. Snapchat also used Democracy Works' TurboVote platform to register about 425,000 new voters for the midterm election, according to Snapchat's Public Policy Manager Sofia Gross, and about 57 percent of those who registered through Snapchat went on to actually vote. About half of the newly-registered voters were within the 18 to 24-year range <sup>2</sup>. The numbers are even more astounding in the runup to the 2020 general election: about 1,164,000 Snapchat users were registered to vote <sup>3</sup>. This type of specific data adds to my overall theory that social media platforms themselves can play an active role in voter outreach, and ultimately voter turnout. As previously mentioned, registration to vote is different than actually voting, but it is a good indication of the direct influence of social media platforms.

Overall, previous literature on the subject does explore some type of positive connection between social media use and voter turnout, though the relationship is never explicitly analyzed. Again, it is very difficult to define causality in a process as multifaceted as voting. Nevertheless, through my analysis, I would like to explore this relationship in further detail. After looking through previous research and data, I am more confident in my theory that increased social media use will lead to greater voter turnout. My central reasoning is that if someone is longer exposed to election and voting information on their social media, I expect them to be more likely to "click the link" or "click the banner to learn more." A higher level of political engagement online, such as finding a recommended viral video about an upcoming election or encouraging a social media friend to vote for a candidate (like in the PSRAI 2012 study), could also lead to greater likelihood of voting based on social pressure or support.

### 3 Data

The dataset I am using is the "2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Study" (CCES) by Brian Schaffner, Stephen Ansolabehere, and Sam Luks <sup>4</sup>. This study is a large survey, both pre- and post-election, of a nationally-representative sample of 60,000 American adults during the 2018 congressional election cycle. It asks a comprehensive range of questions about voting, political issues, Congress, demographic information, and media use. Of particular importance to my analysis, the

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<sup>1</sup>Kraus, Rachel. "The Midterms Had Record Voter Turnout. Should Snapchat Get Credit?" Mashable, 21 Nov. 2018, [mashable.com/article/snapchat-voting-social-media-elections/](https://mashable.com/article/snapchat-voting-social-media-elections/).

<sup>2</sup>Aziz, Afdhel. "Election Update: How Snapchat Has Helped Register Over 1 Million Young People To Vote." Forbes, Forbes Magazine, 8 Oct. 2020, [www.forbes.com/sites/afdhelaziz/2020/10/07/election-update-how-snapchat-has-registered-over-1-million-young-people-to-vote/?sh=229c2d9661cb](https://www.forbes.com/sites/afdhelaziz/2020/10/07/election-update-how-snapchat-has-registered-over-1-million-young-people-to-vote/?sh=229c2d9661cb).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Brian Schaffner; Stephen Ansolabehere; Sam Luks, 2019, "CCES Common Content, 2018," <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/ZSBZ7K>, Harvard Dataverse, V6, UNF:6:hFVU8vQ/SLTMUXPgmUw3JQ== [fileUNF]

CCES conducts vote validation, which means that the researchers use the Catalist database of registered voters to match respondents with their vote; this is important because I can measure actual voter turnout, rather than only relying on self-reported responses or intentions to vote. Also helpful for my analysis, the CCES has such a large sample that I can narrow the dataset to 18 to 29 year-olds and still have a substantial number of observations.

In order to narrow down the dataset to 18 to 29 year-olds, I took the variable of birth year (“birthyr”) and limited the range of years from 1989 to 2000, which encompasses those respondents who were between 18 to 29 years old in 2018. I chose to exclude the year of 1988, so some 29 year-olds born in late November (post-election day) or December could be left out. There are 12,071 observations remaining.

### 3.1 Key Dependent and Independent Variables

For my key dependent variable, I used the variable “CC18\_401”, which asked respondents what best describes them: whether they “did not vote in the election this November”, “thought about voting this time—but didn’t”, “usually vote, but didn’t this time”, “attempted to vote but did not or could not”, or “definitely voted in the Midterm Election on November 6th”. Since voter turnout is necessarily a binary (i.e. either you voted or you did not vote), and since the respondents who chose the first four options did not vote, I created a dummy variable “vote” which equals one if the respondent said they voted, and zero if the respondent said they did not vote. Again, due to vote validation, the people who self-reported their vote were matched to their actual voting record, which makes their response more reliable; the original variable was coded missing if their voting record could not be validated or matched. I kept these missing variables as missing, even though this takes out about 5,600 observations (about half) for young people; since their vote is not validated, their response is unreliable.

My key independent variables are social media use in general, as well as political social media use. For general social media use, I used the variable “CC18\_300\_5”, which indicates whether the respondent used social media “in the past 24 hours” or not. I created a dummy variable “socialmedia” for this one, so that it equals one if the respondent did use social media, and zero if they did not within the past 24 hours. Although “the past 24 hours” does not give a complete picture of social media use (e.g. a respondent is a frequent user of social media but did not use it within the 24 hours prior to the interview), but I think it still gives a pretty good indication of the frequency of social media use. I, for example, usually check social media at least once per day. Additionally, the

pre-election interviews were taken in the immediate run-up to the 2018 election (around September to early November), which was when social media “get out the vote” initiatives were at their height. It is thus almost certain that in the past 24 hours before the interview, a respondent who checked their social media would be exposed to these initiatives.

The next key independent variable, political social media use, takes social media use one step further. It is actually conditional on the previous variable “socialmedia”, since the respondent had to select that they did use social media in the past 24 hours to respond to the questions about how they used their social media. I constructed a composite variable “socmed” from the five variables “CC18\_300d\_1”, “CC18\_300d\_2”, “CC18\_300d\_3”, “CC18\_300d\_4”, and “CC18\_300d\_5.” Respectively, the questions ask if within the past 24 hours, the respondent: “Posted a story, photo, video or link about politics”, “Posted a comment about politics”, “Read a story or watched a video about politics”, “Followed a political event”, and/or “Forwarded a story, photo, video or link about politics to friends”. I coded responses to each of these questions as dummy variables, which equal one if the respondent did the activity, and zero if the respondent did not do the activity. The only missing values for these questions are for those who did not use social media in the past 24 hours. Then, I took the sum for each respondent, which should be a number between zero and five. Thus, my variable “socmed” takes on an integer value between 0 and 5, where 0 is equal to no political social media use, and 5 is equal to the most political social media use.

### 3.2 Control Variables

For control variables, I expect that partisanship is the most important variable to control for in an election, especially in 2018. Given that younger people are most likely to identify as Democrat, and the 2018 midterm election was in the middle of President Trump’s term, voter turnout could have been increased by partisanship; for instance, more young people went to vote because they felt strongly against Trump and a Republican-led Congress. Furthermore, Democrats are probably more likely to use social media, since many social media companies tend to promote more liberal content, and Republicans are generally distrustful of “Big Tech” like Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube. So, I conjecture that Democrats are more likely to vote and more likely to use social media as well. I used the variable “pid7”, which uses the 7 point Party ID scale to ask if the respondent is a 1) Strong Democrat, 2) Not very strong Democrat, 3) Lean Democrat, 4) Independent, 5) Lean Republican, 6) Not very strong Republican, or 7) Strong Republican. To create a “party” variable, I coded responses 1 through 3 as “Democrat”, 4 as “Independent”, and 5 through 7 as “Republican”. I

included response 8, “Not sure”, rather than coding it as missing, because many people were unsure of their partisan identity. The reference group is “Democrat”.

Another important control variable is political interest—that is, how much someone knows about and follows politics. If young people are more interested in following politics in the first place, then they are probably more likely use social media to keep informed and go out to vote; also, they will probably use social media to engage with political content more often. So, I conjecture that young people who are more interested in politics are more likely to vote and use social media. I used the variable “newsint”, which asks, “Some people seem to follow what’s going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there’s an election going on or not. Others aren’t that interested. Would you say you follow what’s going on in government and public affairs: 1) Most of the time, 2) Some of the time, 3) Only now and then, 4) Hardly at all, or 7) Don’t know”. I coded 1 and 2 as “Interested”, 3 and 4 as “Not Interested”, and left 7 as “Not sure” so as not to drop too many observations. The reference group is “Interested”.

Next, I controlled for whether a respondent was male or female. Historically, women have had a higher voter turnout than men, so this probably holds for young women ages 18 to 29 as well. Particularly in 2018, it could be that women were more encouraged to vote because there was an unprecedented number of women candidates for Congress. I also think that young females are the most likely to use social media often, especially since platforms like Instagram or Snapchat seem to tailor their platforms more to females; females also usually rank higher in extroversion and agreeableness, which could lead to a more socially-oriented personality. So, I conjecture that females are more likely to vote and more likely to use social media. I used the variable “gender” and recoded it as a dummy variable, which equals one if the respondent is male and zero if the respondent is female. There were no missing variables.

Finally, I controlled for a respondent’s income. I expect that those with middle and higher incomes are more likely able to vote than those with lower incomes. Someone with a higher-paying salaried job, for instance, might have more time to vote during the day than someone with a lower-paying hourly wage job and limited hours flexibility. Furthermore, someone with a higher income can probably afford to take some time off to vote, while those with a lower income may not be able to take that time off. I expect that those with higher incomes probably have more leisure time to use social media and engage with political content as well. So, I conjecture that respondents with higher incomes are more likely to vote and use social media. I used the variable “faminc\_new”, which asks “Thinking back over the last year, what was your family’s annual income?” The responses are 16 categories of income, from 1) \$10,000 or less to 16) \$500,000 or more. I recoded categories

1 through 5 (\$0 to \$49,999) as “Low Income”, categories 6 through 10 (\$50,000 to \$119,999) as “Middle Income”, and categories 10 through 16 (\$120,000 to \$500,000 and above) as “High Income”. The remaining category, “Prefer not to say”, I coded as “Undisclosed Income” rather than excluding the values as missing. The reference group is “Low Income”.

### 3.3 Descriptive Statistics

Here, I have two descriptive statistics tables, one for social media use and one for political social media use; I used the same control variables for both, because the two independent variables are similar enough for the justification of the controls to be similar. As I explained previously, the “vote” dependent variable is missing almost half of its values, because all responses which could not be validated or matched were coded as missing. The reason I did not code these observations as a 0 (e.g. they did not vote) was because a respondent could have said that they voted but were not matched. It is impossible to discern which of these respondents actually voted or not (or which ones were honest in their response), so these missing observations are unreliable.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics: Social Media Use and Voter Turnout

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Social Media Use	12,071	0.912	0.283	0	1
Vote	6,439	0.776	0.417	0.000	1.000
Party(1=Democrat,2=Independent,3=Republican)	12,036	1.882	1.020	1.000	4.000
Political Interest	11,824	0.731	0.591	0.000	2.000
Male	12,071	0.327	0.469	0	1
Income(3=highest,0=undisclosed)	11,841	1.388	0.772	0.000	3.000

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics: Political Social Media Use and Voter Turnout

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Political Social Media Use (5 = higher)	11,011	1.604	1.359	0.000	5.000
Vote	6,439	0.776	0.417	0.000	1.000
Party(1=Democrat,2=Independent,3=Republican)	12,036	1.882	1.020	1.000	4.000
Political Interest	11,824	0.731	0.591	0.000	2.000
Male	12,071	0.327	0.469	0	1
Income(3=highest,0=undisclosed)	11,841	1.388	0.772	0.000	3.000

## 4 Hypotheses and Empirical Tests

Based on my theory and previous literature, I made the following two hypotheses:

*H1: Social media use increases voter turnout in the 2018 midterm election among 18 to 29 year-old Americans.*

*H2: Increased political social media use increases voter turnout in the 2018 midterm election among 18 to 29 year-old Americans.*

The null hypothesis for *H1* is that social media use has no effect on voter turnout in the U.S. 2018 midterm election for 18 to 29 year-olds. I take social media to mean any platform that facilitates or enables online social interaction (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.). I define social media use as using any social media platform within the past 24 hours of the respondent's interview, and I define voter turnout as those who voted in the 2018 general midterm election. Similarly, the null hypothesis for *H2* is that increased political social media use has no effect on voter turnout in the U.S. 2018 midterm election for 18 to 29 year-olds. I define political social media use as using social media for a political purpose, such as watching a video or reading a story about Congress on social media.

Because I am using a binary dependent variable (voting or not voting), I am using logistic regressions for my hypotheses to correct for the non-normalcy of the errors. For each hypothesis, I conducted a bivariate regression and a multivariate logit regression to factor in various controls. I am also using odds ratios as a measure of effect size for my results. As an effect size measure, odds ratios indicate the direction and magnitude of the effect. Odds ratios less than 1 indicate a greater likelihood of voting for the reference group, and odds ratios greater than 1 indicate a greater likelihood of voting for the focal group.

## 5 Results

### 5.1 Hypothesis 1

Figure 1 shows that there is a slight difference in voter turnout between those who used social media in the past 24 hours and those who did not; as I hypothesized, a greater proportion of respondents who used social media (about 0.78) voted in the 2018 election compared to those who did not (about 0.734).

In the bivariate regression without any controls, I found this relationship between social media use and voter turnout to be statistically significant at the .05 level. Table 3 shows that compared



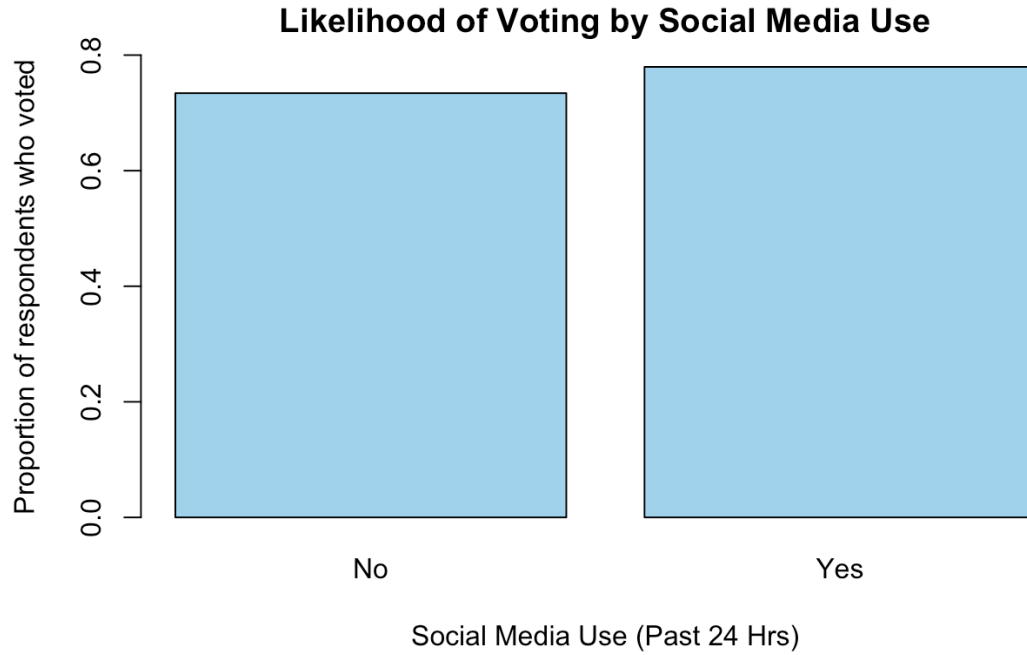


Figure 1: Voting by Social Media Use

to those who did not social media, the respondents who use social media increase in their likelihood of voting by .247 logits. Converted to probability,  $\frac{\exp(.247)}{(1+\exp(.247))}$ , the likelihood of voting increases by about 56.14 percent for respondents who use social media.

However, the effect of social media use on voter turnout is no longer statistically significant when controlling for party, political interest, gender, and income. The 95% confidence interval [- 0.0802, 0.3408] is not significant because it includes 0. Table 3 shows that several control variables are significant at the  $p < .01$   $\alpha$ -level, including all the factor levels of party identification, all the factor levels of political interest, gender, and a middle income. High income is significant at the  $p < .05$   $\alpha$ -level. Compared to Democrats, the log odds for voting decreases for all other categories of party id; for example, the log odds decrease for Republicans is 0.628 units with an odds ratio of 0.533. Compared to those who are interested in politics, the log odds of voting for those not interested in politics decreases by 1.07 units, with an odds ratio of 0.343. And for those who are not sure about their interest in politics, the log odds of voting decrease by 1.086 units, with an odds ratio of 0.338. The increase in log odds of voting for males in comparison to females is 0.340, which corresponds to an increase in the probability of voting by 58.42 percent and an odds ratio of 1.406. Compared to low Income respondents, both middle and high income respondents have a higher log odds of voting, whereas respondents who did not disclose their income were not significantly different.

Table 3: Bivariate and Multivariate Regression Coefficients and Odds Ratios for Hypothesis 1

	<i>Dependent Variable:</i>		
	Bivariate	Voter Turnout Multivariate	Odds Ratios
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Constant	1.016*** (0.095)	1.634*** (0.118)	5.126*** (0.607)
Social Media Use	0.247** (0.100)	0.133 (0.107)	1.142 (0.123)
Independent		-0.852*** (0.092)	0.427*** (0.039)
No Party ID		-1.528*** (0.165)	0.217*** (0.036)
Republican		-0.628*** (0.073)	0.533*** (0.039)
Not Interested in Politics		-1.070*** (0.067)	0.343*** (0.023)
Political Interest: Not Sure		-1.086*** (0.157)	0.338*** (0.053)
Male		0.340*** (0.073)	1.406*** (0.103)
Middle Income		0.383*** (0.071)	1.467*** (0.104)
High Income		0.295** (0.122)	1.343** (0.164)
Undisclosed Income		0.081 (0.117)	1.084 (0.127)
Observations	6,439	6,409	6,409
Log Likelihood	-3,425.405	-3,082.236	-3,082.236
Akaike Inf. Crit.	6,854.810	6,186.472	6,186.472

*Note:*

\*p&lt;0.1; \*\*p&lt;0.05; \*\*\*p&lt;0.01

## 5.2 Hypothesis 2

Figure 2 visualizes the relationship between political social media use and voter turnout through a line plot. In line with my hypothesis, as political social media engagement increases, the proportion of respondents who voted monotonically increases.

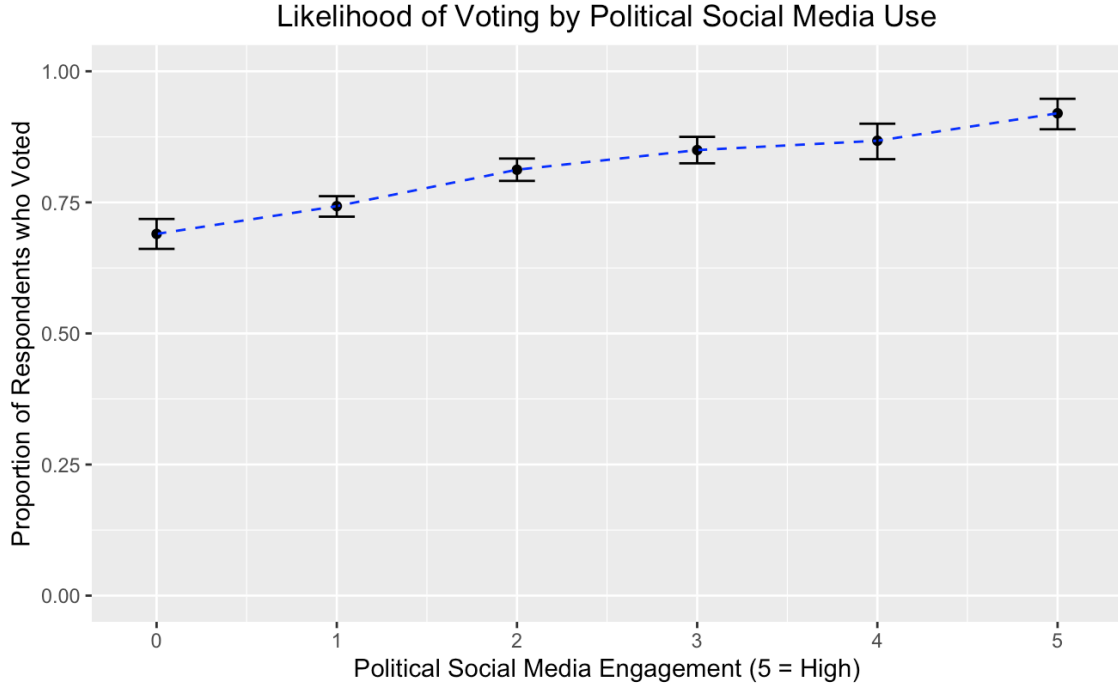


Figure 2: Voting by Political Social Media Use

Table 4 presents the results of a bivariate logistic regression and a multivariate regression with controls for party, political interest, gender, and income. In the bivariate regression, for every one unit increase in political social media use, the log odds of voting increase by 0.314; this is significant at the  $p < .01$   $\alpha$ -level. The 95% confidence interval for political social media use is [0.1059, 0.2150]. The effect of increased political social media use is still statistically significant when controlling for other variables, with an increase in log odds of 0.16 and an odds ratio of 1.174. Converted to probability, the likelihood of voting increases by about 54 percent. In direction and relative magnitude, the control variables are similar to Table 3. Compared to Democrats, all other categories of party identification decrease in log odds and have odds ratios of less than one ( $p < .01$ ). Compared to those interested in politics, the two other categories of political interest decrease in log odds of voting as well. Compared to females, males have a higher log odds of voting of 0.281 units, with an odds ratio of 1.325. For both middle income and high income compared to low income, the

log odds of voting increase, and the odds ratios are greater than one. Respondents with undisclosed incomes were not significantly different.

Table 4: Bivariate and Multivariate Regression Coefficients and Odds Ratios for Hypothesis 2

	<i>Dependent Variable:</i>		
	Bivariate	Voter Turnout Multivariate	Odds Ratios
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Constant	0.780*** (0.048)	1.500*** (0.084)	4.479*** (0.376)
Political Social Media Use	0.314*** (0.026)	0.160*** (0.028)	1.174*** (0.033)
Independent		-0.871*** (0.098)	0.418*** (0.041)
No Party ID		-1.528*** (0.179)	0.217*** (0.039)
Republican		-0.657*** (0.077)	0.518*** (0.040)
Not Interested in Politics		-0.950*** (0.073)	0.387*** (0.028)
Political Interest: Not Sure		-1.023*** (0.167)	0.360*** (0.060)
Male		0.281*** (0.078)	1.325*** (0.104)
Middle Income		0.382*** (0.075)	1.466*** (0.110)
High Income		0.332** (0.129)	1.394** (0.180)
Undisclosed Income		0.110 (0.125)	1.117 (0.140)
Observations	5,871	5,844	5,844
Log Likelihood	-3,014.872	-2,761.353	-2,761.353
Akaike Inf. Crit.	6,033.743	5,544.706	5,544.706

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

## 6 Discussion and Conclusion

In conclusion, I have not found enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis for  $H1$ . Although there was some significant effect of social media use on voting in the initial bivariate regression, the introduction of significant controls in the multivariate regression, such as party id and political interest, eliminated that effect. However, I have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis for  $H2$ . In both the bivariate and multivariate regressions, the effect of political social media use on voting remained significant, despite controlling for the same variables as in  $H1$ . So, I supported my hypothesis that increased political social media use leads to increased voter turnout.

Although I expected to reject both null hypotheses, I am not surprised that I failed to reject the null hypothesis for  $H1$  and rejected the null hypothesis for  $H2$ . Since “social media use” is only a binary dependent variable, it is not as specific or comprehensive as “political social media use”, which operates on a scale of 0 to 5 and focuses specifically on politics in social media. Just as I expected, party and political interest were significant predictors of voter turnout, with Democrats and politically-interested respondents having the highest likelihood of voting. I also expected that a higher income would be associated with higher voter turnout compared to lower income, though middle income actually had a slightly larger effect size than high income. Contrary to my expectations, however, males were more likely than females to vote in the 2018 election. Perhaps males were more interested in this election because it was a midterm election, which are not usually considered as important as presidential elections.

I have partially supported my theory that social media use leads to higher voter turnout among young Americans, in that I have supported my hypothesis that increased political social media use is associated with increased voting. I do recognize that there could be many other factors which affect this association (according to omitted variable bias)—for instance, if there were a question which asked for previous voting history, like: “How many elections have you voted for in the past?” Voting history is probably the most important factor in voting, because respondents can prove that they have made it a habit or conscious decision to consistently vote. This could also determine how frequently the respondent uses social media in the days leading up to the election, because they could be seeking out information on the election. To bring up a related issue with measuring political social media use, it is uncertain whether the respondent is actively seeking out political information near the election *because* they intend to vote, or if they are influenced to vote by the social media they use. For this reason, I would like to use a more precise question, such as “How often have you seen content on social media which encourages you to vote?”, or “Have you ever

found voting information or registered to vote on a social media platform?” Similarly, I think a question that asks for a longer span than “the past 24 hours” would more accurately measure the frequency of social media use; for example, the respondent could indicate how many days in a week, on average, they use social media (0 through 7 days a week).

Overall, my analyses seem to point to a general positive association between social media use and voter turnout, which aligns with the assessments of previous research like the CIRCLE 2018 Pre-Election Poll. Although it is easy to draw quick conclusions about causality between social media use and voting behavior for young people, because it is a very intuitive assumption, my analysis at least proves that the answer might not be so clear. Many, like Chris Doten, chief innovation officer of the nonprofit National Democratic Institute (NDI), also acknowledge that “The science on this stuff [matching social media to voting behavior] is hard to get right... When you’re trying to do analyses of get out the vote tactics, it’s really hard to tease out a determination of what matters”<sup>5</sup>. Nevertheless, successful ventures like Snapchat’s massive voter registration campaign and the ever-growing presence of social media point to the conclusion that social media has an important role to play in voter mobilization for America’s young generation, as well as generations to come.

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<sup>5</sup>Kraus, Rachel. “The Midterms Had Record Voter Turnout. Should Snapchat Get Credit?” Mashable, 21 Nov. 2018, [mashable.com/article/snapchat-voting-social-media-elections/](https://mashable.com/article/snapchat-voting-social-media-elections/).