



Conservatives Buying Into Luring Millennials

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Conservatives are building more programs to attract and retain millennials for the GOP than Democrats by offering more paid opportunities for politically minded youth, [the HuffPost reported](#).

Conservative groups have "made strategic investments," Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, a political scientist at Columbia University, told the HuffPost.

"Americans for Prosperity is organized at the local, state and national level," he said. "If you want to affect politics in the United States, you have to organize at all of those levels. They've moved the party further and faster to the right than progressives have moved the Democrats to the left."

And that is why the left is seeing "attrition in the movement," according to Maggie Thompson, executive director of Generation Progress, the youth arm of the liberal think tank Center for American Progress.

She told the HuffPost that attracting and retaining young people to the left has not kept up with today's economic realities.

"The pipeline of young people who can get through school, deal with student debt, and stay involved in politics has shrunk dramatically compared to previous generations," she said.

Republicans "are building an army, while the Democrats are still paying you in 'making the world a better place,'" the head of watchdog group Pay Our Interns told the outlet.

"I've had older people say to me, 'Well, I did unpaid internships, and I was fine,'" Carlos Vera, the executive director of Pay Our Interns, told the HuffPost. "Then you ask them when that was and they say, '1972.' You could work your way through college back then. That simply is not the case anymore."

According to Vera, conservative organizations like the Heritage Foundation, the Cato Institute and Americans for Prosperity pay their interns. Left-leaning groups like the Progressive Policy Institute, Let America Vote and the Human Rights Campaign do not.

The gap in recruitment and retention programs comes despite a [2017 Pew Research poll](#) that showed just 12 percent of young people consider themselves conservatives.

"The right is focused on the long game of investing in people when they find them on a college campus," Stephen Kent, the spokesperson for Young Voices Advocates, a nonprofit that, among

other things, helps libertarian students place op-eds in their college newspapers, told the HuffPost.

"The left-leaning groups are working on whatever election is facing them in the next 12 months. Then all those connections die."

Amy Binder, a researcher at the University of California, San Diego, and the co-author of "Becoming Right: How Campuses Shape Young Conservatives," described the same trend.

"What the right is doing is creating a cadre of potential leaders," she said. "When they're on campus they aren't necessarily doing the bidding of donors, but they're getting to know each other. They're professionalizing and socializing students. I don't see that happening on the left in the same way."