



## Terror attacks won't budge millennial voters

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The attack by a young Somali-American at a mall in Minnesota and arrest of Ahmad Rahami for the bombings in New York City and New Jersey have reignited the debate over immigration and terrorism.

Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton both responded quickly to events, with Trump complaining that America's open immigration system was to blame and Clinton promising to "smash ISIS" through an intensified air campaign in Syria and Iraq. But neither candidate's rhetoric is likely to resonate this fall with one very important group of voters — millennials. Ranging from 18 to 36 years old, millennials take a more sanguine view of the threats from terrorism and immigration.

Despite the fact that they are the "9/11 generation," survey data consistently shows that millennials feel far less concerned than their parents and grandparents about all kinds of threats to national security, including terrorism. This could be a rational response to a world that has, in fact, become much safer over time. But it may also be due to the fact that they have never known a time without the persistent, low-grade threat of terrorism lurking in the background. Either way, only 40 percent of millennials say that terrorism is a "very important" part of their vote this election compared to between 57 percent and 80 percent for older generations.

And when it comes to immigration, millennials embrace a far more progressive stance than older Americans. A recent Pew survey found that 76 percent of millennials believe immigrants "strengthen the country because of their hard work and talents," compared to just 48 percent of Baby Boomers. This finding shouldn't be too surprising given that 11 percent of millennials are the children of immigrants, compared to just 5 percent of Baby Boomers.

On first blush, then, millennials are likely to have a more muted reaction to the events in Minnesota and New York from a security perspective. On the other hand, millennials are more likely than older Americans to view homegrown terrorism through the lenses of race and social justice. Shaun King, a young writer and activist, for example, praised the police who arrested Rahami in the New York Daily News for showing restraint despite the fact that he shot two of them in the process. This stood in stark contrast, he pointed out, to the tragic wave of police shootings of unarmed African-Americans that has taken place, including that of Terence Crutcher just this past Friday. King's comments illustrate a persistent divide between millennials

and older Americans on issues of race and justice: White Americans under 30 are almost twice as likely as whites over 50 to support the Black Lives Matter movement.

As the election looms, the burning question is which candidate will benefit from the increased attention to terrorism and immigration. But on this score it's clear that millennials aren't thrilled with either Trump or Clinton. Sixty eight percent of millennials feel uneasy with Trump's ability deal with terrorism and 44 percent are uneasy with Clinton's ability to do so. And the latest New York Times/CBS News poll found that just 32 percent of likely voters under 30 support Clinton and just 35 percent support Trump when Libertarian Gary Johnson and the Green Party's Jill Stein are included among the options.

Nor is there much millennial support for either candidate's plans to deal with terrorism and immigration. A 2016 USA Today/Rock the Vote poll found that 68 percent of millennials support a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, for example, and just 20 percent of millennials support Trump's proposal to build a border wall. Regarding Clinton's promises of aggressive military intervention, surveys have shown that millennials are considerably less supportive than older Americans of military efforts to confront the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. In fact, as a study by the Cato Institute recently found, millennials are the least supportive of the use of force under almost any sort of scenario.

But despite the apathy and general uneasiness millennials feel about Trump and Clinton, the pollsters have predicted that this is very likely to be the year that millennial and Generation X voters finally outnumber older voters. How millennials respond to terrorism and other key issues of the day could have a huge impact on the outcome of this election. Indeed, whatever else happens, millennials won't be able to lay the blame for the next president at their parents' feet.

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