



ROCK THE CAUCUS 2012

Speaker bios

For press interviews, please contact Chrissy Faessen at 202-368-1706.

Matt Schultz

Iowa Secretary of State

Secretary of State Matt Schultz grew up in the Des Moines area where he and his four brothers graduated high school. In high school Matt was a varsity wrestler, ran cross-country, and was an accomplished singer. Matt also received the rank of Eagle in the Boy Scouts of America.

After high school, Matt went on a two-year mission for his church to the country of Argentina, where he was able to serve hundreds of people and learn to speak Spanish.

After his mission to Argentina, Matt received an Associates Degree from BYU-Idaho, after which he transferred to the University of Iowa where he graduated with a Bachelors Degree with Honors in Political Science.

After graduating from the University of Iowa, Matt moved his family to Council Bluffs and attended Law School at Creighton University.

He served six years on the Council Bluffs City Council and was elected the Iowa Secretary of State in November of 2010. Matt is the youngest serving secretary of state in the nation.

Secretary of State Matt Schultz is married to his wife, Zola Schultz, and they have four children: Levi, Hyrum, Kendra, and Jacob Isaac

Heather Smith

President, Rock the Vote

Under Smith's leadership during the past two election cycles, Rock the Vote built new tools and refined best practices for the continued engagement of young voters, setting the highest voter registration records in both midterm and presidential elections in the organization's 21-year history. In 2010, Smith led Rock the Vote in its largest midterm election effort that generated more than 300,000 voter registration applications, engaged thousands of volunteers, and increased youth turnout in targeted precincts. This work built on the successful efforts of 2008, when Rock the Vote registered a record-shattering 2.25 million people.

Prior to Rock the Vote, Smith founded and directed Young Voter Strategies, a nonpartisan project in partnership with The Graduate School of Political Management at The George



Washington University with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts. Young Voter Strategies provided the general public, political parties, candidates, consultants and non-profits with data and research on the youthvote as well as best practices to effectively mobilize young people.

In 2004, Smith served as national field director for the Student PIRG's New Voters Project, the largest nonpartisan grassroots effort ever undertaken to register and mobilize young voters. Under Smith's direction, the New Voters Project registered nearly 600,000 voters and conducted an intensive, multi-faceted get-out-the-vote effort to bring these newly registered voters to the polls on Election Day. Youth turnout was 11 percentage points higher than in 2000.

Prior to her work at the New Voters Project, Smith was an organizing director for Green Corps' Field School for Environmental Organizing in Boston.

Smith currently serves as a youth vote expert appearing on programs such as MSNBC, CBS 'Washington Unplugged,' Fox News, and CNN; in addition to writing for and being quoted in publications such as Rolling Stone, The Huffington Post, National Journal, The Hill, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Nation, The Washington Post, POLITICO, The Atlantic, and more.

Smith received a B.A. with honors in Economics and Public Policy from Duke University. In 2006, Smith was named one of Campaign & Elections magazine's Rising Stars for her work with young voters. She was also named one of Esquire Magazine's Best and Brightest of 2007.

Valley High School student spokespeople statements:

Maddy Baker

Hello! My name is Maddy Baker and I was born and raised in Des Moines, Iowa. In the 7th grade I transferred from a Catholic school to a public school, and I am now a senior at Valley High School and loving it. I've found joy here in expressing myself through the arts by participating in school play productions, the Iowa High School Speech Association and show choir. I've also enjoyed collaborating with friends in smaller clubs such as the "Closed Captioned" literary arts magazine, and fulfilling my role as co-president of the school's "Baker's Dozen Mime Troupe." Like most teenagers, I've felt my opinion doesn't matter a whole lot because I'm still just a "kid" in adults' eyes. However, as I begin to finish up my last semester of high school I've realized that I am becoming an adult and soon, my voice will be heard. As the next election draws nearer, I look forward to carrying on my love of expression through voting and having the opportunity to participate and have a say in the world of politics.

Jasmine Au

My name is Jasmine Au and I am a proud senior at Valley High School. I was born in Queens, New York and I lived there until the age of five. At the age of five, I moved to West Des Moines,



Iowa, the place I am pleased to call home. It was in Iowa that my love of art and my appreciation of cultures were developed. These passions led me to become involved in many of Valley's art programs as well as becoming Co-President of Valley's World Cultures Club. In addition to my passion in art and culture, I am also passionate in trying new things resulting in my captainship of Valley's robotics team and becoming a staff member of Closed Captioned—Valley's literary magazine publishing group. While being an avid participant in many school activities gives me a voice at school, I feel that being able to vote will give me a voice in deciding the future of our nation, even if my voice is only a light whisper. To be able to contribute to the decision of who our future president will be is thrilling to me because it proves that my importance as a United States citizen extends beyond the school walls.

Laney Abrahamson

My name is Laney Abrahamson and I am a senior at Valley High School in West Des Moines, Iowa. I was born in Des Moines and went to Jefferson Elementary Traditional School through 5th grade. I have been in the West Des Moines school district ever since. My main activities are softball and Young Republicans Club at Valley. I am also involved in National Council on Youth Leadership. As I will be 18 in time for the next election, I am excited to get the opportunity to vote. It is encouraging to know that my voice can be heard by voting in elections from now on. The power of voting is immense and is our way for people to know our opinions. Even from a young age, voting is an important right that I can embrace for my entire life.

I am thankful for the opportunity to participate in Rock the Caucus!

Benjamin Douglas Weinberg (Ben)

My name is Ben Weinberg. I am a junior at Valley High School in West Des Moines, Iowa. I was born and raised in Clive and have attended the West Des Moines School District since Kindergarten. At Valley I am a member of the Executive Cabinet as Secretary of Arts for Student Government. I am heavily involved in the Art programs at Valley. I am in the Varsity show choir, have acted in our fall and spring theatrical productions and participate in IHSSA (Iowa High School Speech Association) Contest. I also swim and do mock trial.

The right to vote in America is often taken for granted. Yet, just like getting your driver's license, getting the right to vote is a great milestone. For the same reasons American Idol became an immediate hit, voting in America has been a long standing tradition. The American people have strong opinions on issues and candidates and want their voices to be heard. Even as a high school student I feel it is important for my voice to be heard. Elections affect the future of the country and many generations to come as well. My generation is the future of America and sharing our voice in the election process is imperative to the rest of our lives.

I am very excited to be involved in Rock the Caucus and let my voice be heard. I appreciate the opportunity.