The Phyllis Schlafly Report

GOP Should Focus on Young Voters' Hard Times

By John and Andy Schlafly

November 18, 2025

Hard times have hit young Americans, who are a pivotal voting bloc. Jobs are scarce, housing is unaffordable, student debt is suffocating, and foreign labor has taken away opportunities from American workers.

A downturn in the hiring of college graduates leaves the class of 2026 victims facing the weakest job market in five years. A National Association of Colleges and Employers survey found that 51% of employers rate the job market for college grads as "poor" or merely "fair," and only 2% said it is "excellent."

This does not bode well on Election Day for the GOP. The landslide victory by socialist Zohran Mamdani for Mayor of New York City was propelled by young voters, despite warnings that electing him would be a big mistake.

Polling indicates that 75% of young voters in New York City cast their ballots for Mamdani, and there was a surge in youth turnout. The blowout victories by Democrats in New Jersey and Virginia were also propelled by sharp increases in turnout by young voters.

The redistricting ballot initiative in California to send more Democrats to Congress was enacted with 80% support by young voters, and a large turnout by them. While some of this is due to a superior get-out-the-vote operation by Leftist groups, young people are struggling financially today.

Young adults should not face astronomical costs for health insurance, as they are mostly healthy and typically need coverage against only catastrophic losses. They should be able to purchase low-cost health insurance that is not dependent on their employer, so that they do not lose it when they are laid off or switch jobs.

Young adults are vastly overpaying for health insurance, as they are required to fund costly care they typically never need. The current system of tying tax breaks to employer-based health insurance no longer works, as the record 14.8% of American-born, working-age men who lack a job has increased from 4.2% in 1960.

Young men today are additionally burdened by gambling debts, due to the explosion in sports gambling that is heavily promoted with advertising. One out of every four of these men is unable to pay a bill because of his gambling losses.

Only 44% of young voters aged 18-29 have any investments in the stock market, so news of Wall Street records does not help with that demographic. Most of those voters are in debt.

In an interview with Tucker Carlson weeks before he was assassinated, Charlie Kirk explained how debt has radicalized the young generation. Kirk explained that in the 1970s and 1980s, the price of a home was about three times the average income.

Today, the price of a home is as high as seven times the average income. The average age of a first-time homeowner has increased by ten years, from 30 to 40, and people are marrying later, perhaps likewise due to economic difficulties.

“Gen Z owes the most money in any generation in history,” warned Charlie Kirk in the interview. He added that young adults are not living beyond their means, but “most are actually doing this to meet their means.”

Verizon just announced its biggest layoff ever, cutting loose a breathtaking 15,000 jobs. Layoffs by large, typically profitable corporations just reached their highest level for an October in 22 years.

Ending the racket of allowing hundreds of thousands of foreigners to continue to take jobs away from American college graduates would help. For fiscal year 2025, the four highest exploiters of H-1B visas for foreigners are Amazon, Meta (Facebook), Microsoft, and Google.

Private equity is a culprit in increasing costs and eliminating jobs, and Republicans are allowing Democrats like Mamdani to take the lead in scrutinizing predatory practices. Mamdani picked as co-chair of his transition team Lina Khan, the former Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Chair who investigated private equity tactics.

Toys “R” Us was a well-liked retailer employing 31,000 people, until private equity acquired it in a leveraged buyout. Private equity typically loads its target with debt, and a company acquired in this way is 10 times more likely to go bankrupt as Toys “R” Us then did.

Other companies that spiraled downward into bankruptcy after being acquired by private equity include Red Lobster restaurants, Payless shoes, Party City, Sears, Envision Healthcare, and the multi-state hospital system Steward Health Care. Each time this happens, jobs and healthy competition are lost, and prices increase.

An estimated 40% of emergency rooms in our country are controlled by private equity firms, and deaths increased as a result. Billed charges for visiting an emergency room are far higher, even after adjusting for inflation, than a generation ago.

Republicans should address the economic hardship of young voters as a high priority to have any chance of electoral success.

John and Andy Schlafly are sons of Phyllis Schlafly (1924-2016) and lead the continuing Phyllis Schlafly Eagles organizations with writing and policy work.