

Marist Poll™

GenNext: Fall 2023 Survey

Is Gen Z more conservative on some key issues than Millennials? Results from the new *GenNext* survey from the Marist Poll suggests they may be.

GenNext is an innovative research project from the Marist Poll that captures the opinions of Americans ages 18 to 25 in order to find the issues and topics that motivate, inspire, and excite America's next generation of leaders.

And here's the twist – **student researchers** mount each survey from start to finish. It's a poll of American youth *by* American youth.

This time around, the students focused their research on three areas: climate change, marijuana laws, and healthcare. Among the findings:

Climate Change

- Gen Z is more concerned about climate change, and more likely to believe it's caused "mostly by human activity" than any other generation.
- 85% of Gen Z are "very" or "somewhat" concerned versus 78% of Millennials, 60% of Gen X, and 59% of Boomers.
- 66% of Gen Z and 65% of Millennials say climate change is mostly human caused, while 47% of Gen X and 48% of Boomers agree.

Marijuana

- Gen Z is more conservative about marijuana in several ways than Millennials.
- 53% of Gen Z say marijuana is "addictive" or is "addictive and leads to other drug use." This compares with 43% of Millennials, 44% of Gen X, and 48% of Boomers who say the same.
- Just 7% of Gen Z and 6% of Millennials believe it should NOT be legalized nationally, versus 16% of Gen X and 22% of Boomers who share this view.

Healthcare

- Gen Z views healthcare coverage as more of a government responsibility than their elders.

- 86% of Gen Z say it's the responsibility of the federal government to make sure all Americans have healthcare coverage. 76% of Millennials, 60% of Gen X, and 51% of Boomers have this opinion.
- Similarly, when asked if the federal government should provide coverage for all, only for those who can't afford it, or not at all, just 9% of Gen Z say the government should provide no coverage. 12% of Millennials, 18% of Gen X, and 22% of Boomers agree.

Marist students Elizabeth Fenton, Neel Viswanathan, and Lara Vasquez worked alongside professionals at the Marist Poll learning best practices for measuring public opinion including data fluency, topic review and research, development of scientifically rigorous questionnaires, data collection, analysis, and presentation of results to the public.

"I expected that the younger generations possessed more progressive viewpoints," said Viswanathan, "But, it wasn't that way. On several questions, millennials actually appeared more progressive than Gen Z..."

Fenton had a similar experience expecting "significant differences between opinions based on the generations that answered, but the differences proved to be much larger gaps than I had thought they would be."

By researching these topics and learning the fundamentals of survey research, the students applied key concepts they'd learned in other classes.

"I can think of no better way to understand and move the discussion forward on issues critical to future generations than to draw from their insights to shape these surveys," says Lee M. Miringoff, director of the Marist Institute for Public Opinion. "As a result of these projects, we will all benefit from the perspectives and views of those who will shape the years to come."