GOP Super-PAC Aims to Educate Youth Vote in Florida

By: Jim Turner | Posted: May 15, 2012 3:55 AM

Florida is among eight key states targeted by Crossroads Generation, a new venture to sway the youth vote to the GOP.

Crossroads -- a nonprofit 527 independent expenditure committee commonly known as a super-PAC -- on Monday announced a $50,000 online ad buy to target voters in Colorado, Florida, Indiana, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Nevada, Ohio and Virginia.

“Crossroads Generation aims to give a voice to a generation of Americans who are much worse off than they were four years ago,” Derek Flowers, executive director of Crossroads Generation, stated in a release.

“Young voters are feeling the pain of President Obama’s failure to create jobs, and they know that more of the same policies won’t make them better off four or 40 years from now.”

Crossroads is an effort from the College Republican National Committee, Young Republican National Federation, Republican State Leadership Committee and American Crossroads.

Representatives of the Florida Democratic Party were not immediately available for comment on Monday.

The youth vote traditionally doesn't have large turnout numbers. Kevin Wagner, Florida Atlantic University assistant political science professor, noted that the youth vote has also long been a tough sell for conservatives.

"For example, young voters are more likely to support same-sex marriage,” Wagner stated in an email. "If there is a large youth turnout, that usually favors the Democrats. With that said, it is good to see both sides trying to appeal to younger voters. In the past, younger voters were often ignored by both parties because of their lower turnout."
In the last three general elections -- 2004, 2006, and 2008 -- young voters have given the Democratic Party a majority of their votes, and for all three cycles they have been the party’s most supportive age group, according to the Pew Research Center.

In 2008, 66 percent of those under age 30 voted for Barack Obama, with a 16 percent gap among voters 29 and younger voting for Obama over Republican challenger John McCain.

A change in the voting percentage couldn’t have altered the 2008 outcome, as Obama also had 7 percentage point advantages with voters aged 30 to 44 and 45 to 64, and a 3 percentage point lead with voters older than 64.

But recent polls show that the views of potential voters have changed since November 2008.

To reach the young voters, Crossroads is tapping the CRNC's membership list and has launched a new website -- www.CrossroadsGeneration.com -- Twitter feed -- @CrossroadsGen; and a Facebook page -- www.Facebook.com/CrossroadsGeneration.

Crossroads will be hammering the message that President Obama and the Democrats have let their key 2008 supporters down, by reducing job prospects for recent graduates and an increased national debt.

“Many young voters who supported Obama in 2008 find themselves now facing a brutal economy, debt, and a need to move into their parents' basement to make ends meet,” Kristen Soltis, Crossroads’ communications adviser, stated in a release.

“But this year, young voters can choose a different path. It’s critical for Republicans to have a conversation with young Americans about that alternative path, and that conversation starts today.”