



LESS TALK. **MORE ACTION.**

NEWS RELEASE

Press Contact

Judi Hilman, Executive Director
801.870.3887
judi@voterise.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 14, 2016

Introducing...VOTERISE, A New Nonpartisan 501(c)3 Nonprofit Dedicated to Bringing Millennials, Other New Voices into Utah's Electorate:

Press event (was) Thursday, July 14, 2016 11:00 AM at ImpactHub SL, 150 S. State St.

Salt Lake City – VOTERISE is officially open for business with tools, campaigns, and fresh ideas designed to bring 18-29 year olds and other new voices into the voting booth. As a nonpartisan 501(c)3 nonprofit based in Utah but with a national overlay through its digital channels, VOTERISE hopes to build a more inclusive and vibrant democracy.

In the 2014 mid-term election, Utah ranked near the bottom in voter turnout—below 29%. For millennials the turnout was an embarrassing 8.1%, and only 38% of Utah's people of color registered to vote. Even in the last Presidential election, only 34% of Utah's 18-29 year olds voted. These issues aren't much better at the national level: In the 2014 election only 20% of U.S. millennials voted. VOTERISE will tackle a second and related problem: the growing number of people who are registered but then don't turn out to vote in elections. In Utah in 2014, these people accounted for more than half of all registered voters.

"That's just embarrassing," says Executive Director Judi Hilman. "We are assembling tools and tactics to move these different groups based on where they hang out, whether online or in the community, and what issues they care about," adds Hilman.

Hilman brings a wealth of experience in the nonprofit sector to VOTERISE. She was the co-founder and first CEO of the nonpartisan Utah Health Policy Project, which is now celebrating its 10th year. "With less than four months to go before November, we hope to move the needle on voter registration in 2016," says Hilman, "but we're also in it for the long haul—it's not just about filling in the gaps in our electorate, but helping people engage in the political process, around issues they care about. That's how first-time voters will become persistent voters." "It hit me to do this," adds Hilman, "when I saw the data on millennials, communities of color, and other communities that don't have a voice in our democracy."

Through integrated, data-driven online and peer-to-peer campaigns, live events, capacity building for Utah nonprofits, and promotion of excellence in civic education, VOTERISE will find those

eligible but not registered to vote and help them register using a fast and easy online platform through Rock the Vote. For details visit: www.voterise.org.

Messaging will be strong, provocative, fun, and delivered in the language and on platforms of the target populations. For example, the organization is calling for video entries from across Utah and the U.S. as people of all ages and backgrounds tell the story about [#MyFirstTime](#)—voting, that is.

To motivate new voters, VOTERISE will offer [ActionPak2016](#): discounts on products or services relevant and appealing to the millennial generation from companies including Skullcandy, RMSP - Rocky Mountain School of Photography, Snowbird Resort, Koi Piercing Studio, the Nerd Store, and more to come.

The organization was founded by Dick and Elsa Gary, Utah residents whose Los Angeles-based advertising agency has been the leading agency for the music industry. Their expertise in marketing to millennials will be enormously helpful to VOTERISE and its digital campaigns.

“The millennial generation is the largest in American history, and has the power to be the single most important voting bloc in the nation. Yet theirs are the unheard voices on Election Day. Lack of interest in politics, distrust of our government, and the feeling that their votes won’t matter are recurring reasons that keep millions of young citizens from participating in our democratic process. That created the need for a strong voter registration and civic engagement initiative which VOTERISE fulfills. It is imperative that these voices be heard and registration is the first step in engaging them” said co-founder Elsa Gary.

To learn more about VOTERISE, visit their website at <http://www.voterise.org>/or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/voterise/>.

#####