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## Does anyone really care who Hollywood votes for?

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(RNN) - Move over, Scar Jo.

While the star power of *Avengers* actress Scarlett Johansson drives people to the box office, the same can't necessarily be said of the polls.

For all their Twitter and MTV-soaked endorsements, when it comes to who young Americans are voting for, parents - and not Hollywood's A-list - have more influence than Gen Y may want you to believe.



Kid Rock recently stumped for Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan. (Source: CNN)

According to a recent survey by Millennial Branding, a research and consulting firm focused on Gen Y, and [internships.com](http://internships.com), 48 percent of voters ages 18 to 29 say parents most influence their vote, aside from themselves.

Friends and co-workers rank just behind parents.

Celebrities, not used to sitting in the cheap seats, bring up the rear in terms of voter influence, according to the poll.

Still, while few would admit to consciously aligning their politics with a favorite star, is there some subliminal pull celebrities have on a fan's collective voting subconscious?

"If the person is at all well-known, time after time, [research] shows it does have impact. You see celebrities endorsing products from cars to wine - they may not have expertise in that area, but the very fact that the public knows them means they take what they say more seriously. The same goes for politics," said Dr. Paul Levinson, a professor of communications and media studies with Fordham University.

"People aren't going to admit 'I saw Bruce Springsteen endorse Obama. I'm going to vote for Obama.' It might not even be that conscious."

The Democratic National Convention relied heavily on celebrity presence to compel young voters to head to the polls. Johansson, *Desperate Housewives'* Eva Longoria, and *Scandal's* Kerry Washington all took the platform in Charlotte to stump for Obama, along with the band Foo Fighters and R&B artist Mary J. Blige.

At their convention in Tampa, Republicans, who typically have not successfully courted a generally left-leaning Tinsel Town, relied more on political rock stars than musical ones, showcasing party powerhouses like Condoleeza Rice, Sen. Marco Rubio, and newly minted Republican Artur Davis.

But not all of Hollywood votes Democrat. Clint Eastwood made a now infamous appearance as a

"mystery guest" at the 2012 Republican National Convention.

Around a dozen Olympic athletes also took the stage at the convention to make their pitch for Mitt, who, as chief executive, they billed as the savior of a troubled 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City.

Kid Rock appeared recently at Minnesota's Oakland University to stump for the Romney/Ryan ticket, saying "I'm very proud to say we elected our first black president. I'm sorry he didn't do a better job."

"Celebrities are great endorsers for political candidates because they usually have a fan base that's bigger than any candidate. One tweet from Kim Kardashian goes out to 16 million followers - each time she tweets," said April Masini with [AskApril.com](http://AskApril.com).

"The downside? It's Kim Kardashian. Some candidates don't want to be associated with a celebrity whose claim to fame is a sex tape, a healthy derriere and a family show that many consider is lacking in family values."

Endorsements aside, speech is free, but sometimes the consequences of exercising your right to free speech aren't.

"I do feel that they should be more cautious in voicing support or opposition to a candidate because it can harm them if misconstrued. Remember the Dixie Chicks?" said Kelly Lynn Carter from Athens, AL.

"They have the right to their opinion same as we do. I just don't feel like they should use their status as a celebrity to try and force their opinion on us."

In 2003, thousands of radio stations pulled music from country group The Dixie Chicks off the air after singer Natalie Maines criticized President George W. Bush in an off-the-cuff remark, saying "We're ashamed the president of the United States is from Texas."

Though the band experienced success in the years following, even winning five Grammy's along the way for their 2006 release *Taking the Long Way*, they never fully rebounded from the hit commercially.

Levinson, who says the public has a short, forgiving memory, has a different take on why the band's star has since faded.

"Nobody remembers them because they stopped making hit records," he said.

"The Beatles, John Lennon said 'We're more popular than Jesus' and people in the American south went ballistic. Stations stopped playing their records. It didn't hurt the Beatles one bit. Their next album still sold a jillion copies because people love their music."

For many voters, Republican, Democrat, or Independent, the bottom line remains - celebrities should stick to their day jobs.

Debbie Dieter Kellery, of Perrysburg, OH, says she doesn't care who celebrities stump for, "Unless of course they have degrees in economics, political science and business management. Other than that I just want them to entertain me and keep their politics to themselves."

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