Get Out to Vote

In a Nutshell

Living in a democracy requires participation of the people. One of the easiest ways to become involved is to vote in elections. The information in this tool will provide information on registering to vote, becoming a knowledgeable voter and how to encourage others to vote.

The “How To”

Registering to Vote

To register to vote in the State of Missouri, please visit the Missouri Secretary of State's website. To register to vote in the State of Illinois, visit the State Board of Elections website.

Voting Smart

The most effective voter is a knowledgeable voter. There are many ways to become a knowledgeable voter. One of the best is Project Vote Smart, which has information on elected officials, issues, and legislation for the National, state and many local governments. Project Vote Smart is a nonprofit organization with the goal of making informed citizens. The information on their website can be relied on to be accurate and relatively unbiased.

If you are wanting to look at the ballot before election day, you can look at the Missouri Secretary of State's website or the Illinois Board of Elections website.

The best way to be an informed citizen at election time is to be an informed citizen ALL of the time. You can become an informed citizen by staying attentive to the news. It is recommended that you rely on different news outlets to ensure the news you see is well-rounded.

Encouraging Others to Vote

A lot of research has been done on how to get people to vote, and what discourages people from voting. This has resulted in some agreement on what individuals and organizations can do to get people to vote. Nonprofit VOTE is a nonprofit that works with other nonprofits to get people to participate and vote. Their website has a "Get-Out-the-Vote" page with resources on encouraging citizens to vote. Rock the Vote offers resources to help your coworkers, classmates, friends, family, and members of your community vote.

Planning & Zoning

The most relevant law applicable here is The Voting Rights Act of 1965. Among other provisions, the law prohibits discrimination in the voting process. Thus everyone of age has the right to vote, except prisoners, those on parole or probation, or those who have been convicted of a felony in relation to suffrage. Also, no fee or tax can be assessed to vote.

The Poor People's Campaign operates a successful campaign to encourage low-income individuals to vote. To remove potential barriers to low-income voters, they also recommend "automatic voter registration, same day registration, no-excuse mail in voting, early voting, more polling stations, and extended and longer voting hours."

Dollars & Cents

Voting in the United States of America is free, and in fact it is illegal to charge someone a fee to cast a vote. Project Vote Smart is free, as well.

Measuring Success

Success can be measured by how many people go out to vote. It is also possible to measure success by testing citizen knowledge of the political issues and political environment.