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VOTER RESOURCE GUIDE

Why You Should Care.

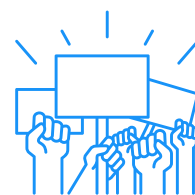
We know that it can feel like your vote doesn't matter. There are tons of systems in place to make you feel that way. But if you want to amplify the impact of your vote, know that your civic engagement journey starts at the polls. In this guide we break down ways to make greater change in your community and country after you cast your ballot. For this section, we'll focus on why that first step of voting is so important. After all, the best efforts start with the end in mind. **While there are more reasons to vote than we can list, here are some of the big ones:**

1. You Pay Taxes.



Whether you started working as a camp counselor or cashier to make some extra funds at 13 or you're working your first job out of college, you're giving the government parts of your income. The IRS doesn't play games. Those taxpayer dollars fund the social programs and systems that impact your day to day life. They pay for the roads you drive on, the public schools that educate you, and the salaries of the elected officials that represent you. You can have direct input on what is happening in your country and state when you vote.

2. Suffrage was won, not given.



Countless lives have been lost and endless bloodshed in our ancestors' efforts to ensure that all Americans have an equal opportunity to vote. If we don't learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it. If we don't appreciate the progress that has been made, we are liable to lose that progress and its benefits. We should not take for granted that these efforts from activists, some of whom gave their lives, to ensure that we, their future generations, have these rights protected. Due to these sacrifices we have the right to vote, but don't get caught up. There are active efforts to restrict voting access happening daily.

3. Represent your voice.



While you're juggling your day to day responsibilities, you shouldn't have to worry about whether who represents you reflects your values and beliefs. Our elected officials should mirror the communities they serve. There should be an emphasis on the diversity of thought, experience, education, and culture that result in the best policy decisions being made on your behalf. To achieve this goal, your participation is required. To make sure our elected officials never forget who they represent, you can hold them accountable with your vote.

4. One vote matters.



The smallest things are decided by elections. The biggest things are decided by elections. Your vote could legalize marijuana nationally! Your vote could also decide the next president of the United States. In the 2000 Gore v. Bush election, Bush won Florida, and the election as a whole, by just 537 votes. If everyone chimed in, a group of people as small as your high school could win an election. Your singular vote can have major impacts. Races have been decided by a single vote.

5. They don't expect you to care.



This country was built on coordinated efforts to ensure that young voters stay uninformed and uninterested in politics. Your vote matters, and it is so crucial that politicians recognize how powerful the young and underrepresented voting block can be. Political campaigns often utilize data from previous elections to determine how to target their efforts. But what happens if you were not old enough to vote in the previous election, or only old enough to have voted in one election? You are then often not viewed as a priority target. Which means the wants and desires of our generation are blatantly ignored because we do not appear as an influential demographic.

Making the decision not to participate means your opinion is valued less on what choices are being made for you. The harsh reality is, by not voting, you are benching yourself. But, you have the power to choose to be engaged. The following sections will build your knowledge, give you resources, and make sure you're ready to make positive and lasting change!

Conclusion.

We know this may feel overwhelming, and honestly at times it can be. We understand if you feel frustrated with the world of politics, and hold the belief that nothing will truly make a difference. Feeling this way is valid. But the reality is, nothing will really change if we all decide to not be civically engaged. Civil rights have never been won by giving up. As we talked about in earlier sections, so much effort has been deployed to disenfranchise the people's vote. This shows that voting has power. Not only does your vote have power, but the power of your voice is amplified when you stay informed, show up, and connect with your elected officials. Delaware is a small state which at times can lead to some sticky personal situations, ifykyk, lol. It also means there are boundless opportunities to make a meaningful difference in your community.

Remember, the only one who can take away all your power is you!

