



## Hudson Catholic Regional High School

### Voter Registration Information

Every citizen of the United States of America is afforded the right to vote. The New Jersey Department of Education mandates that the board of education of each public school district and each non-public high school provide voter registration information to their eligible high school students. **N.J.S.A. 18A:36-27** states that districts must provide a voter registration form, a summary of voter registration eligibility requirements, and materials describing the role of a citizen and the importance of voting to high school students prior to the graduation date for each school year.

**N.J.S.A. 18A:36-27 Voting information.** The board of education of each school district and the appropriate school officials in each nonpublic school shall provide a voter registration form, a summary of voter registration eligibility requirements, and material describing the role of a citizen and the importance of voting to each eligible high school pupil prior to the graduation date for the school year. This material shall be nonpartisan and conform to the provisions of N.J.S.18A:42-4.

**N.J.S.A. 6A:32-14.1 Distribution.** District boards of education, appropriate school official(s) in nonpublic schools with high schools, and private agencies that provide educational services to high schools by means of public funds shall provide to each eligible high school student prior to the school year's graduation date a voter registration form, a summary of voter registration eligibility requirements, and materials describing the role of a citizen and the importance of voting, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-27.



#### **Why is It Important to Vote?**

Steve Frantzich, Professor of Political Science at the U.S. Naval Academy, provides answers to this basic question and is directed to students. Frantzich's most recent book, *Citizen Democracy: Political Activists in a Cynical Age*, tells the real life stories of over two dozen average citizens who used politics to affect national public policy.

#### **Why is it important to vote?**

You can't win if you don't play. Election outcomes are determined by those who participate. Elected officials make important (often life and death) decisions about how our society will expend its collective resources and the restraints it will place on individual behavior. The drinking age, the age at which you can get a driver's license, and the amount of money your teachers receive are some of the decisions made by elected officials. In making those decisions,

elected officials respond to people who bother to vote more than to those who abstain. Voting does not guarantee that one's preferences will prevail, but choosing not to vote denies a person one of the key tools of having a say in a democracy.

### **How can a young person get involved in the voting process?**

The first step is registration. All 18 year old American citizens have the right to register in the community where they live, usually by going to the city hall. Many young voters register when they get their driver's license. Some states allow mail-in registration or mobile registrars who set up tables at shopping centers or community events. The Web sites mentioned below all provide information, and in some cases direct Web links, to voter registration processes.

For those who wish to go beyond voting, most campaigns are always on the lookout for volunteers. Stopping by a candidate or party headquarters or Web site will often provide a number of volunteer opportunities.

### **How do you know who to vote for?**

Elections seldom provide perfect choices between good and evil. The first step toward informed voting lies in determining your own personal preferences as to the public problems you are most concerned with and the solutions you prefer. What solutions to current societal problems do you prefer? Should we be spending more money on schools or for national defense? Would it be better if government limited pornography or hate speech on the Internet, or is one's right to free expression more important? There are not "right" answers to these questions on which everyone agrees, so the informed voter looks for candidates who share their preferences on the issues of most importance to them. Above and beyond shared preferences, informed voters look at the personal characteristics of candidates to help determine how they will perform in office. We usually prefer candidates who are hard-working, honest, moral and skillful since we are entrusting them with decisions that affect our futures.

Sorting out the information about candidates from their speeches, campaign ads, media coverage and Web sites is one of the real challenges to citizens in a democracy. Many voters use short cut aids, such as relying on a candidate's political party label. Over the years, political parties have taken relatively consistent packages of policy stands. Candidates for more important offices have usually served in previous positions, making it possible to assess their policy preferences and capabilities. A number of nonpartisan Web sites provide useful information for voters. Talking with friends and relatives about politics helps define one's own outlooks and understand the available options.

<https://www.state.nj.us/state/elections/assets/pdf/forms-voter-registration/68-voter-registration-english.pdf>

<https://www.usa.gov/register-to-vote>

<https://www.nonprofitvote.org/documents/2015/07/reasons-register-vote.pdf/>