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**Script for Registering to Vote with a Paper Application**

**(August 2023)**

**Slide 1 – Notes for Teachers**

Be sure to read this important information at least one week before using the presentation.

**Slide 2 – Introduction**

Welcome to this presentation by the League of Women Voters.

In 1920, after years of advocating for the right to vote, the 19th amendment was passed. This gave women the right to vote. At that same time, the League of Women Voters was established to assist people to register to vote and provide nonpartisan information so that people could become educated voters. This is still true of our mission today.

The goal of this presentation is to provide a short introduction about the history of voting and help you register to vote in Virginia using a paper registration application. If you want to register online, view the PowerPoint that explains online voter registration. Additional presentations in this series will address other aspects of voting.

**Slide 3 – Voting Rights Timeline**

**Top photos:**

When the United States was founded, only white men who were 21 years old or older and property owners could vote. While the first women’s rights convention was held in 1848 at Seneca Falls, after the Civil War, women began advocating for the right to vote once again. Here you see a picture of women participating in a protest rally . Women protested at the White House for the first time and even chained themselves to the fence there. Under the direction of President Wilson, the women were arrested and jailed at the federal prison in what is now the Lorton Workhouse. While there, the women continued their protests and were even force fed. There is a small museum, called the Lucy Burns Museum, there now that documents what took place.

**Middle photos:**

While Blacks were given the right to vote in 1870 by the 14th and 15th Amendments, they were effectively kept away from the polls by Jim Crow laws such as poll taxes and literacy texts until the 1960s. The Civil Rights Movement began after WWII when Black soldiers who had fought for freedom oversees came home only to face discrimination here. There were many leaders within the Civil Rights Movement who led protests to increase voting rights. One of them was John Lewis who was beaten and arrested more than 25 times in his efforts to promote voter registration. This work culminated in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

**Bottom photos:**

During the 1960s, the United States was involved in a war in Southeast Asia. The Vietnam War required many soldiers which resulted in the establishment of a draft that required all males to register for the draft when they turned 18 years old. Many of these young men who were drafted died or were injured in the war. As media coverage of the war showed the devastation, young people began to protest the war and the draft. “Old enough to fight, old enough to vote” became the driving message that resulted in the 26th Amendment which gave young people, age 18-21 the right to vote.

**Slide 4 – Why vote?**

**Vote to:**

**Voice your opinion**

**Impact our government**

**Elect our government leaders**

Why is it important to vote? It is the **best** way to make your opinions heard, influence government decisions, and elect people who support your views.

If you don’t vote, you are giving up **your** **voice** to influence **your** government to those who do vote.

**Slide 5 – Every Election Matters**

Not only does every vote matter; every election also matters. In Virginia, there are elections held every year!

Often people are only interested in presidential elections that occur once in every four years and get lots of media attention. As a result, fewer people vote in state and local elections.

However, **state and local elections are very important, maybe more important, because these results MOST directly affect your daily life.** You can have the most influence in these state and local elections due to the total number of votes cast for these offices. You can also contact these officials directly to communicate your concerns or ask questions.

For example, the results of these elections impact the amount of state and local taxes people pay and how that tax money is spent. The people elected make decisions about what you study in school, graduation requirements, and what roads to fix or build, The same for school buildings, public libraries, parks, and recreation facilities. They also influence policing, public safety, the environment, and the local rules about voting.

Think about what issues are important to you? Are these same issues as your parents and grandparents? If you want **YOUR voice** to be heard about these issues, **YOU** **must** **vote** in state and local elections.

**Slide 6 – Parents in the Military?**

If you are from a military family, check with your parents. They may want you to register in their home of “record” rather than here in Virginia. If so, go to Vote 411.org, click on register to vote to find Information about how to register in another state.

**Slide 7 – Who Can Register and Vote?**

If you decide to register to vote, you must be a Virginia resident, and you must be a US citizen. If you are 17 today but will be 18 by the next November general election which is the first Tuesday in November, you can register and vote.

If you will NOT be 18 by the next November Election Day but are 16 or 17, you can **preregister**. The process is the same and you need to complete the same form. However, once the form is turned in to the Office of Elections, they will keep the pre-registration application and you will be notified when you are age eligible as to where you need to go to vote. Please remember that **if you pre-register, that means you are NOT eligible to vote until notified you are eligible.**

**Slide 8 – What you need to register to vote**

To register to vote today, you will need a paper application form. You also need either a **blue or black pen**. A pencil or any other colors of ink cannot be used. You also need to have your full Social Security number. If you do not remember your social security number, that is not a problem. You can complete the rest of the form and bring it home to get the number. Be sure to bring the completed form back to your teacher ASAP so that it can be forwarded to the Office of Elections for processing.

Use legible printing on this form. It is important that the Office of Elections can read your handwriting as they need to enter this information into a database. **Only use cursive when you write your signature**.

**Slide 9 – Virginia Voter Registration Application: Sections 1 and 2**

Look at **section 1.** You must be a citizen of the United States to register. Check the box in front of YES, if you are a citizen. If you are not a citizen, you should not complete the form. We ask that you follow along to see how easy it is to register to vote and hope that when you become a citizen, registering to vote is one of the first things you do.

Write your Social Security number in the boxes. Then write your date of birth. Write the 2-digit number for the month and the day, and the 4-digit number for the year. Next, mark your gender.

In **section 2**, Write your last name and then your first name. Be sure to use **your full legal name**. If you have a hyphenated name, you need to include both parts. Next is your first name. Be sure to use your legal first name and not a nickname. For example, you should write Joseph and not Joe or Joey. If you have a middle name, **you must write your whole middle name, not just your initial.** If you do not have a middle name, be sure to check the box that says, “None.”

Write your complete address including your street number, the name of the street and the zip code. This is where you sleep at night, not necessarily where you get your mail and is used to determine where you go to vote.

Although your email and telephone number are not required, it is a good idea to include at least one of these. If the Office of Elections has a question about your application, they could contact you and get any issue resolved quickly. For example, if they cannot read your handwriting, they could call or email you for clarification.

**Slide 10 – Virginia Voter Registration Application: Sections 3-6**

In **section 3**, check NO, if you have **not** been convicted of a felony, a very serious crime or if you have been judged mentally incapacitated. Then you can leave the second part of the question blank.

**Section 4** most likely does not pertain to you. It is for people who have a residence in Virginia but are living elsewhere. Since you are here and residing in Fairfax, this can be left empty. This section also pertains to foster parents or people in a witness protection program. You can skip Section 4.

In **Section 5,** you need to list any state in which you have already registered to vote. That state will be notified, and your voter registration will be transferred to Virginia.

In **Section 6**, you are asked if you are interested in being a poll worker. If you check this box, it does not mean you are committing to work at the polls but just that you are interested and would like more information. In previous years, more than 350 FCPS students have worked at the polls on Election Day.

**Slide 11 – Virginia Voter Registration Application: Section 7**

In **section 7,** you are swearing or promising that the information on the application is true. Sign your name on the signature line and write **today’s date** in the box; two digits for month, two digits for the day of the month and 4 digits for year.

If you complete the paper form with your class, give the form to your teacher to be sent to the Office of Elections. If you complete the form at home, you can drop it off in person at the Office of Elections on the 3rd floor in the Fairfax County Government Center or mail it to the address listed. Remember to put a stamp on the envelope!

**Slide 12 – You’ve Submitted your application**

Once the application has been submitted, you should receive notice in about two to three weeks from the Board of Elections. If your registration was successful, you will receive a notification that identifies your polling (or voting) place. This is usually a location close to your home. Keep this for your records in case you need it in the future. If you lose this card, you can always look up your polling place prior to the election at the Virginia Citizens Portal (https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation ).

If your registration is **not** successful, the notice will tell you the problem with your application and a new application form will be included. You will need to complete the new application form correctly and mail it in in order to be registered to vote.

**Slide 13 – Questions about voting or the candidates?**

Once you are registered, it is important to be informed about the issues and candidates which may appear on the ballot you will be using. While there are many sources of information, there may also be misinformation about the candidates and the election. One place to find non-partisan information is Vote411.org.

Vote 411.org is a nationwide, nonpartisan website that has lots of the needed information to answer questions you may have, so you can make careful and informed decisions when you vote. Enter your name and address and you will get information about who is running for office in your area, when the election will be held, and other issues that will be on your ballot when you go to vote. You can also check to make sure you are registered and locate your polling place.

**Slide 14 – Remember . . .**

Voting is a right that should not be taken for granted. Voting is an opportunity to make your voice heard. Many people have fought, and some have even died for this right. Voting is your right and responsibility as a citizen of the United States.

Register to vote and urge your friends and family to become registered.

Become an informed citizen and vote.

Help to Get out the Vote by encouraging others to vote.