



Easy Read Edition

Your Vote Counts:
A Self-Advocate's Guide to
Voting in the U.S.

Focus group editors for Your Vote Counts

Jeremy Carpenter

Rachel Colby

David Frye

Kathy Hook

Samantha Shoram

Taylor Terry

Tesha Thibodeau

Danielle Viau

Nicole Villemaire

Molly White

Focus group facilitator: Max Barrows, Green Mountain Self Advocates

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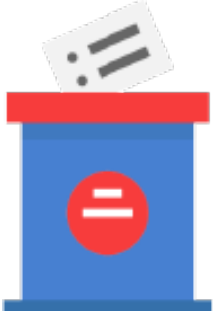
Words to Know in Part 1



voting

A way to make decisions. It gets used to choose elected officials, pass laws, or making other kinds of choices.

1. What is voting?



Voting is a way to make decisions.



Voting gets used to make all kinds of choices.



Voting gets used for small decisions.



For example, friends can vote to decide what flavor of ice cream to buy.



Voting can also be used for bigger decisions.



Voting gets used to decide who runs the government.



Voting gets used to pass laws.



In this toolkit, we talk about voting on bigger decisions.

Words to Know in Part 2



voting

A way to make decisions. It gets used to choose elected officials, pass laws, or making other kinds of choices.

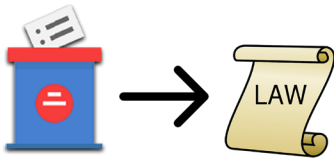


2. Why should I vote?

Voting is one of our most important rights.



Laws affect our lives.



Voting lets us have a say in laws that affect our lives.



This is important for people with disabilities!



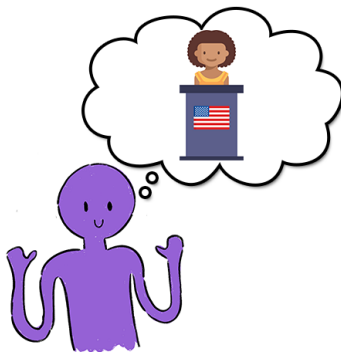
Voting is a way to speak up for ourselves.
Voting is our voice! Voting is our right!



Voting helps us fight for laws we believe in.



Voting lets us have a say about who is in charge of the government.



We can pick people who we agree with.



Then, they will help pass laws that we agree with.



It matters who you think should be in charge.



It matters what you think about laws.



Voting is just as important for people with disabilities as it is for everyone else.

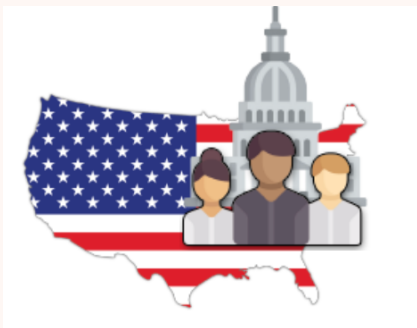
Words to Know in Part 3



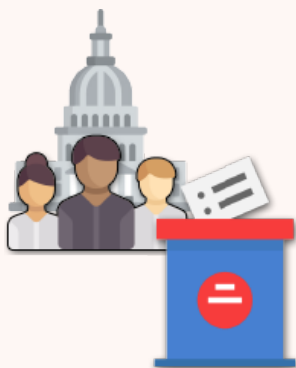
candidate

Someone who is running for office

Congress



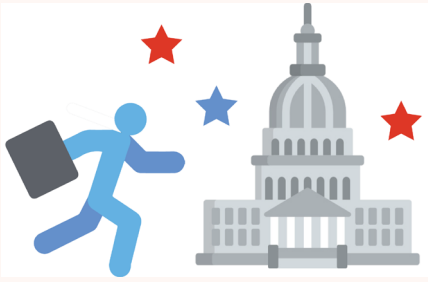
The part of the U.S. government that makes laws. It has 2 parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives.



elected official

A person picked by voting to lead a part of the government.

run for office



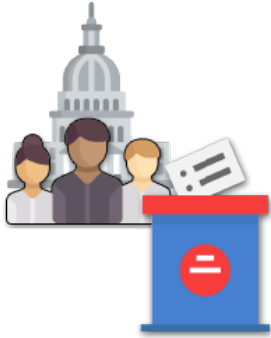
When someone wants to be an elected official, they need to run for office. When they run for office, they explain their ideas and ask people to vote for them.



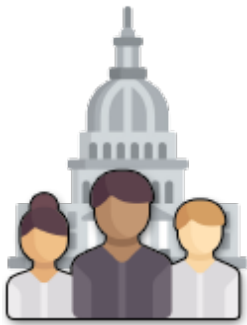
voting

A way to make decisions. It gets used to choose elected officials, pass laws, or making other kinds of choices.

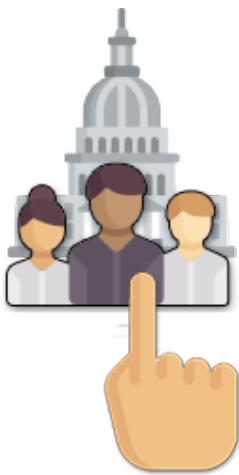
3. What kinds of votes are there?



The main way we vote is for **elected officials**.



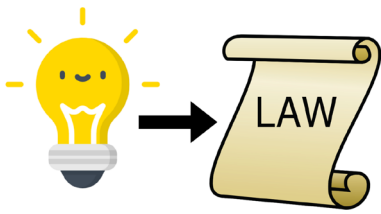
An elected official is someone who leads a part of the government.



People vote to choose their elected officials.



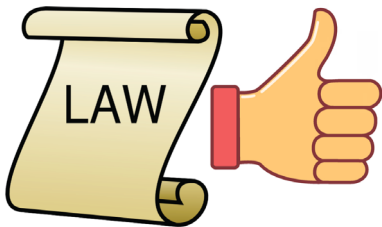
They vote for someone with ideas that they agree with.



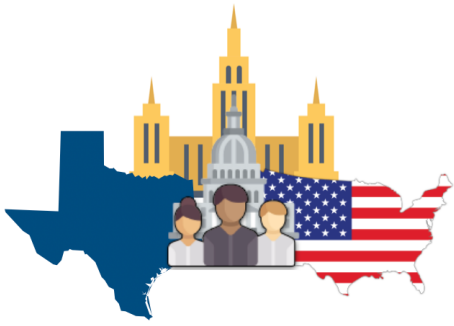
Then, the elected official works to make those ideas into laws.



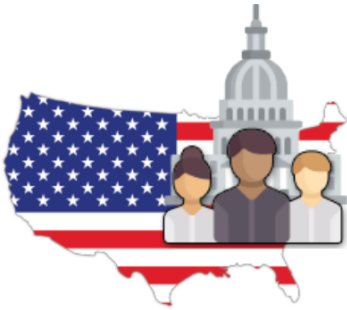
The elected official wants people to keep voting for them.



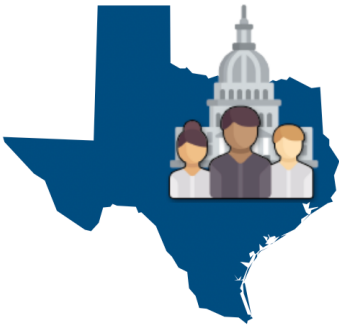
So, they have to work to make laws that people want.



There are different kinds of elected officials. Some kinds of elected officials are:



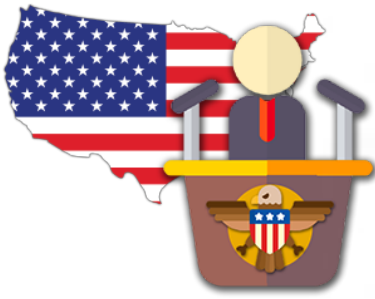
- A member of **Congress**. Congress is the part of the U.S. government that makes laws. It has 2 parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives.



- A State Representative. They make laws only for their state.



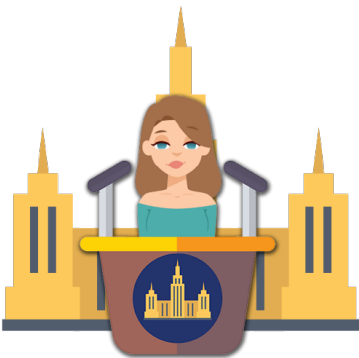
- A city council member. They make laws for their city.



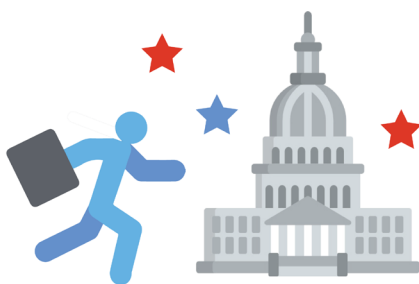
- The President of the United States. They make decisions for the whole country.



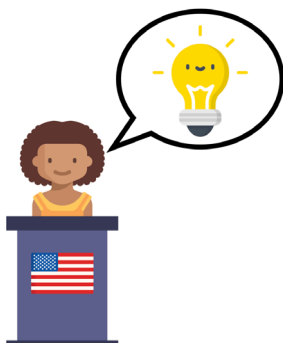
- A State Governor. They make decisions only for their state.



- A Mayor. They make decisions for their city.



When someone wants to be an elected official, they **run for office**.



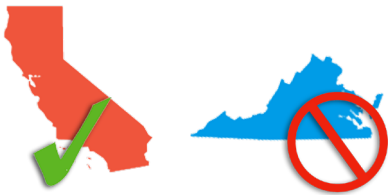
This means they explain their ideas and ask people to vote for them.



Someone who is running for office is called a **candidate**.



Sometimes, you can vote to pass a law.



This only happens in some states.



In other states, you can't vote to pass laws.

Words to Know in Part 4



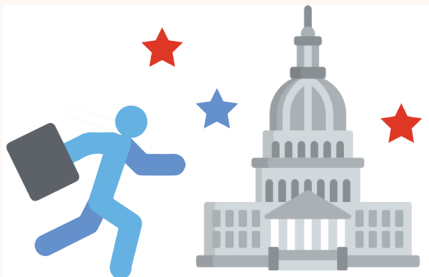
candidate

Someone who is running for office.



debate

When a group of candidates talk about their ideas to each other. They try and show why they should win the election.



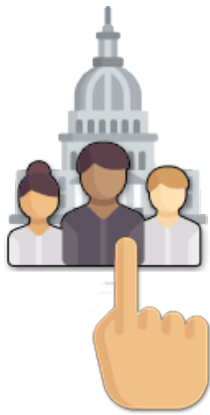
run for office

When someone wants to be an elected official, they need to run for office. When they run for office, they explain their ideas and ask people to vote for them.

voting

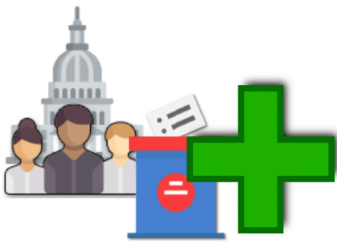


A way to make decisions. It gets used to choose elected officials, pass laws, or making other kinds of choices.



4. How do I choose who I want to vote for?

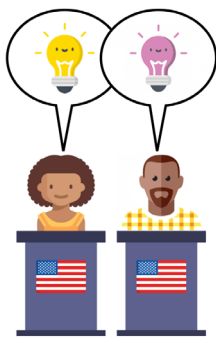
By voting, you get to help decide who is in charge of your city, state, and country.



It can be hard to choose who will do the best job.



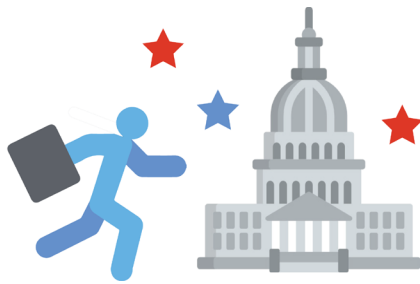
When you vote, you don't just vote for the candidate you like best.



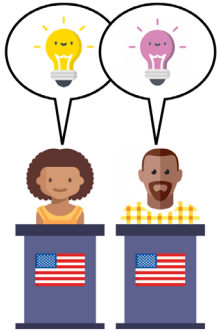
You vote for the candidate whose ideas you like best.



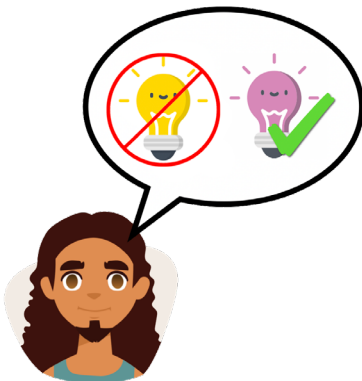
You vote for the decisions that person might make.



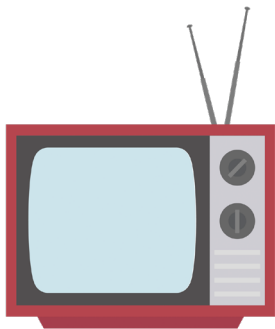
Lots of candidates run for office.



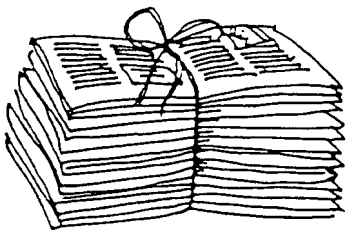
Each one has different ideas about what the government should do.



There are lots of ways to find out what ideas each candidate has.



You can watch the news.



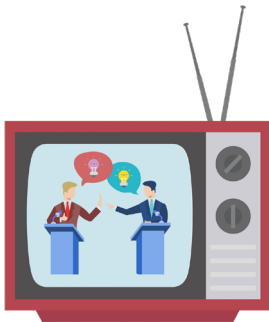
You can read a newspaper.



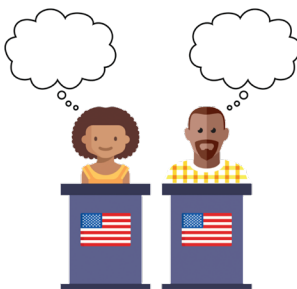
You can look up candidates online. Most candidates have a website that says their ideas.



You can watch debates. Debates are when a group of candidates talk about their ideas to each other. They try and show that they have the best ideas.



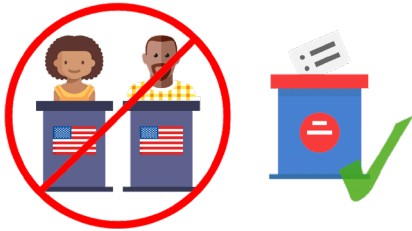
Sometimes, a debate will be on tv. Other times, you can watch a debate in-person.



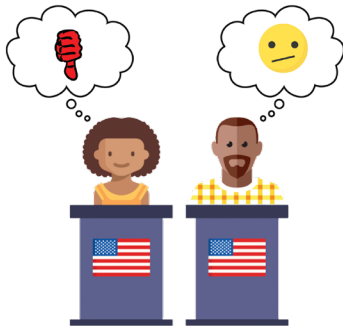
You should learn about what each candidate thinks before you vote.



You should vote for someone if you like their ideas the most.



You might not like any of the candidates. But you should still vote.



Maybe one candidate has terrible ideas. And the other candidate only has okay ideas.



Things will still be better if the okay candidate wins.



If you don't vote, your voice isn't heard.

Words to Know in Part 5

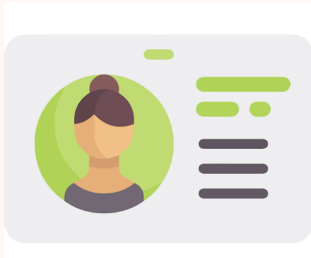


photo ID

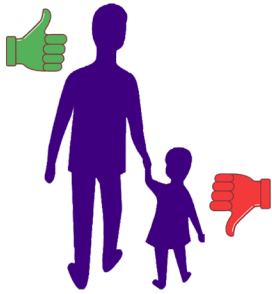
A paper or card given to you by the government. It has your picture and other information about you on it.



register to vote

Registering to vote means getting on the list of people who can vote in your state. You have to register to vote before you can vote.

5. How do I get ready to vote?



You must be 18 years old (or older) to vote.



Before you can vote, you need to **register** in most states.



Registering means signing up to vote.



In North Dakota, you do not need to register to vote.

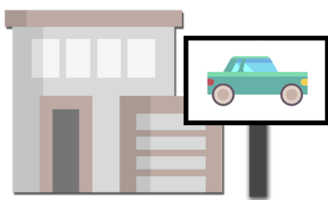


In every other state, you do need to register to vote.



In every state, you can register to vote in-person.

To register in-person, you can go to one of these places:



- Your local Motor Vehicles Administration (MVA) or Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).



- Your town hall or city hall.



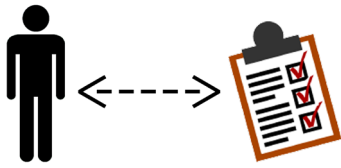
- Your state or local election office.



There are other places you can register to vote, too.



You can find out more places at <https://www.usa.gov/register-to-vote>.



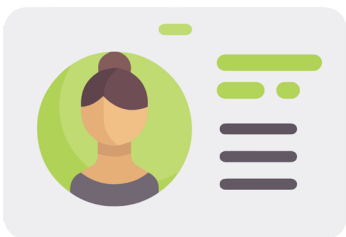
In-person is not the only way to register.



In most states, you can register to vote [online](#), or, you can print out a [voter registration form](#) and send it in the mail.



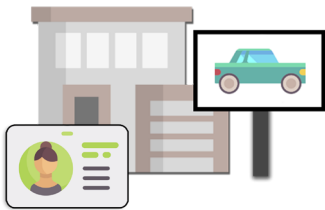
Most states say you need a **photo ID** to vote.



A photo ID is a government document that has your picture and other information about you on it.



If you have a driver's license or a passport, you have photo ID already.

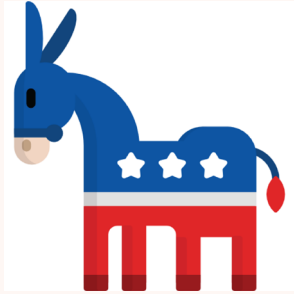


If you don't have a photo ID, you can get one at your MVA or DMV.



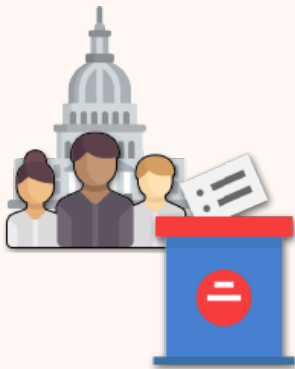
You can also get a photo ID from your town or city hall.

Words to Know in Part 6



Democrats

One of the two main political parties in America.



elected official

A person picked by voting to lead a part of the government.



Independent

Someone who isn't a Republican or a Democrat.



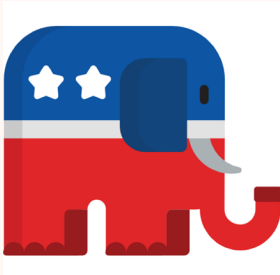
political parties

Groups of elected officials that believe the same things and work together.

register to vote



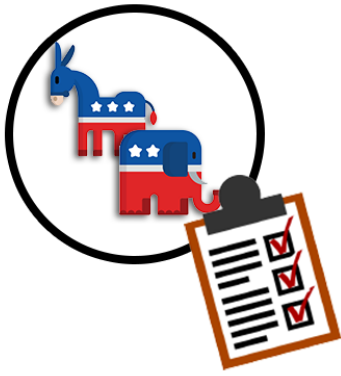
Registering to vote means getting on the list of people who can vote in your state. You have to register to vote before you can vote.



Republicans

One of the two main political parties in America.

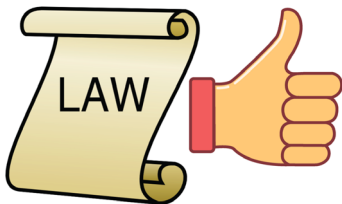
6. What are political parties?



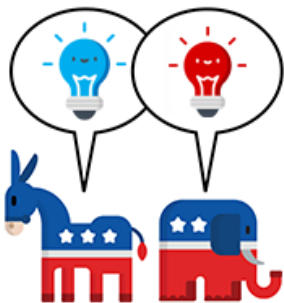
You register for a political party when you register to vote.



Political parties are groups of elected officials



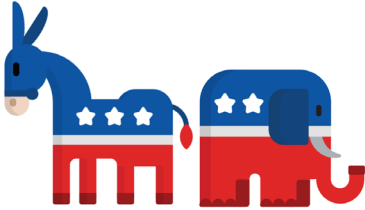
They work together to make laws that they all agree with.



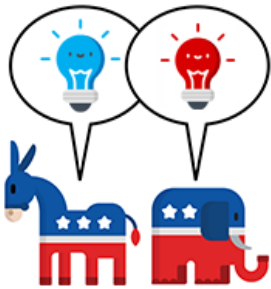
Different parties believe different things.



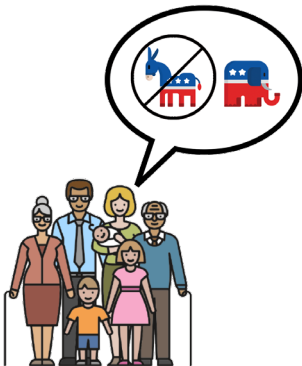
In America, we have two main **political parties**.



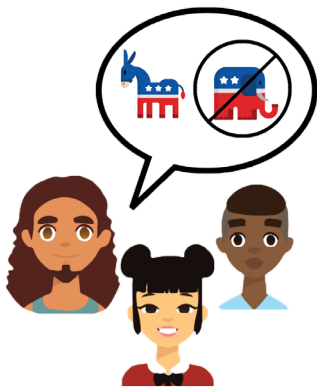
They are called **Democrats** and **Republicans**.



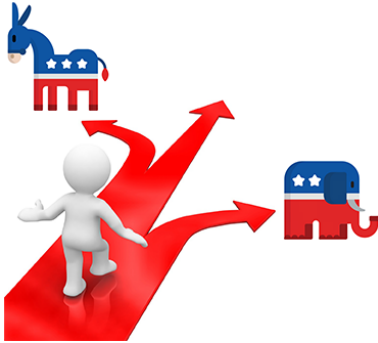
Republicans and Democrats believe different things.



Your family might like one party more than the other.



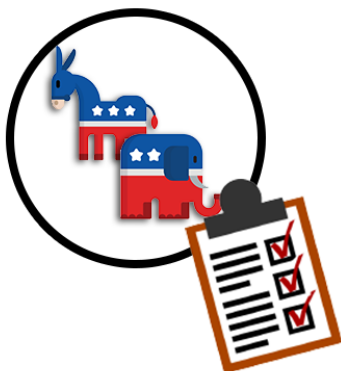
Your friends might like one party more than the other.



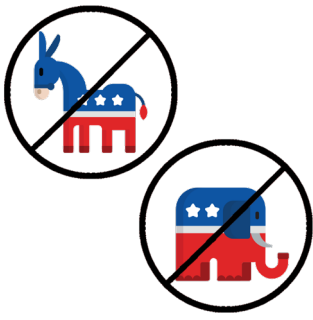
You can decide which party you like better for yourself.



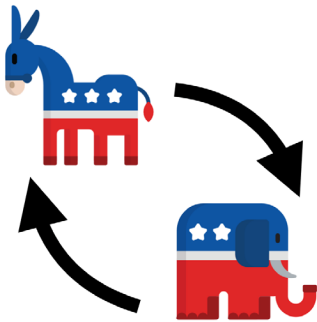
Only you get to decide the best way for you to vote.



You can register as a Republican. You can register as a Democrat.



Or, you can register as an **independent**.
That means you aren't a Republican or a Democrat.

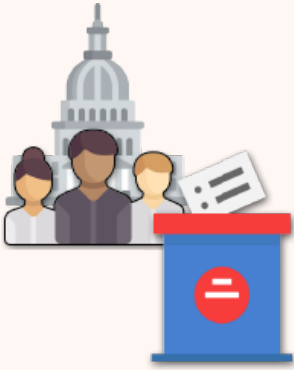


You can change your party whenever you want.



You just need to register again.

Words to Know in Part 7



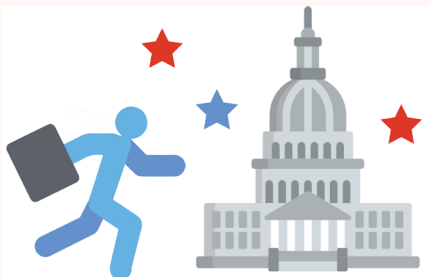
elected official

A person picked by voting to lead a part of the government.



election

An official and organized way to choose our elected officials, like Senators or Mayors. Voting is how we make choices in an election.



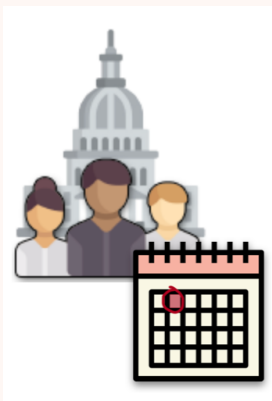
run for office

When someone wants to be an elected official, they need to run for office. When they run for office, they explain their ideas and ask people to vote for them.



special election

An election that happens when an elected official has to quit. It chooses a new elected official at a different time than other elections.



term

How long someone is allowed to be an elected official before they have to run for office again.

7. When Can I Vote?



You vote for laws and elected officials during an **election**.



Elections usually happen at the beginning of November.

2 4
6 8

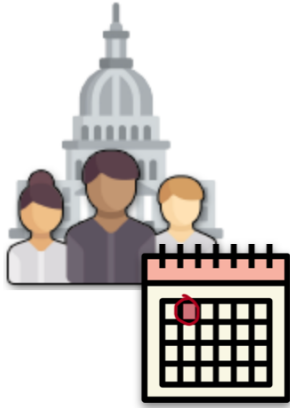
Elections usually happen in years that end in an even number.



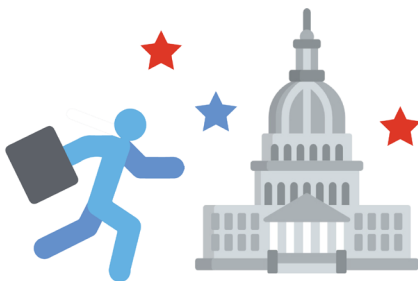
For example, the next state and U.S. government elections will be in 2022.



Different elected officials have different terms.



A **term** is how long someone gets to be an elected official.



When their term ends, they need to run for office again.

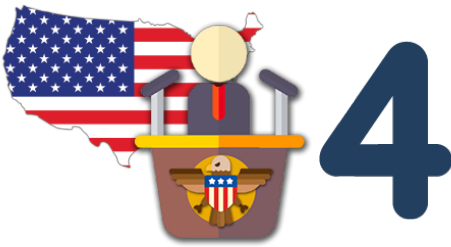


That is when an election happens.

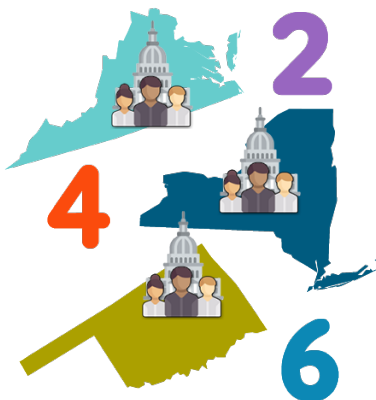
Here are some of the terms for elected officials:



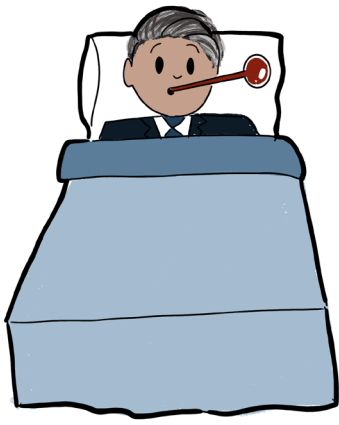
- A Senator's term is 6 years. A member of the House of Representatives' term is 2 years. Members of Congress can have as many terms as they want. They just need people to keep electing them.



- The President's term is 4 years. The President can only have two terms. That means no one can be President for more than 8 years.



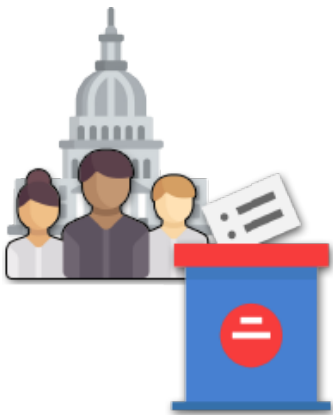
- Different states have different terms for their Governors and State representatives.



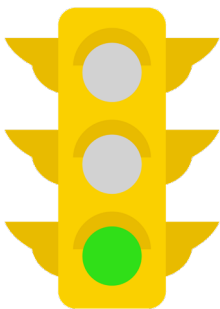
Sometimes an elected official gets sick or breaks the law.



They may have to stop being an elected official.



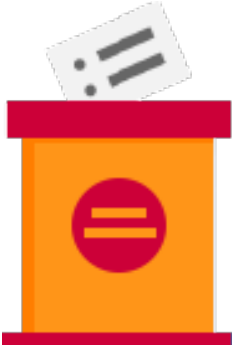
Then, people need to vote for a new elected official.



The new vote has to happen right away.



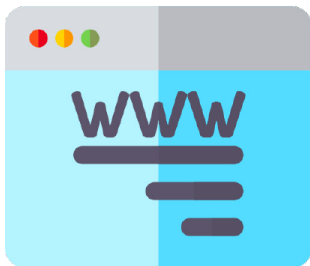
It has to happen even if it is not election time.



This is called a **special election**.



Special elections are elections that don't happen at the usual time.



You can find out when elections will happen by going to [MyTimeToVote.com](https://www.mytimetovote.com).

Words to Know in Part 8

candidate

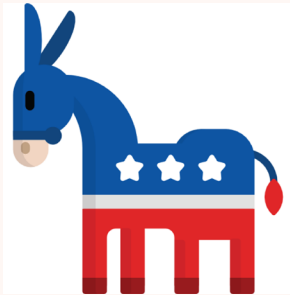


Someone who is running for office

closed primary election

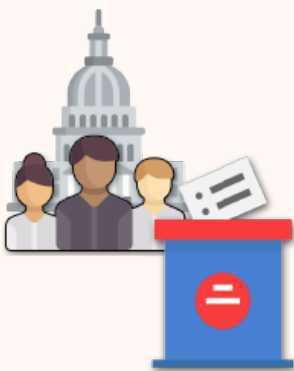


A kind of primary election. You have to register with a political party to vote in their primary.



Democrats

One of the two main political parties in America.



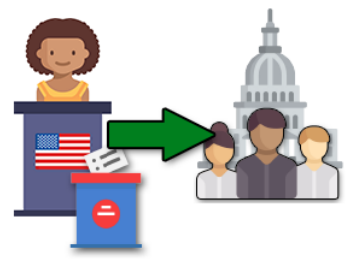
elected official

A person picked by voting to lead a part of the government.

election



An official and organized way to choose our elected officials, like Senators or Mayors. Voting is how we make choices in an election.



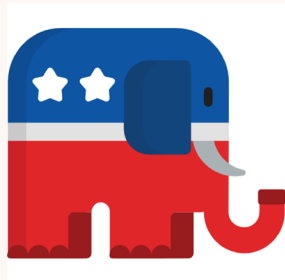
general election

An election that decides who will represent all or part of America.



open primary election

A kind of primary election. Ywhere you can vote without registering for a political party.



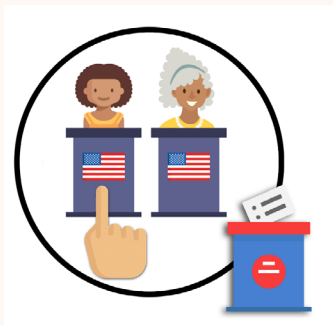
Republicans

One of the two main political parties in America.



political parties

Groups of elected officials that believe the same things and work together.



primary election

A vote for who should represent the Democrats or Republicans in the general election.

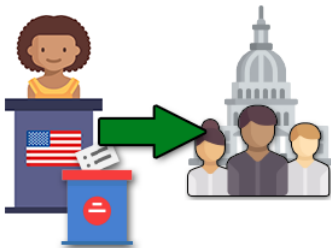
8. What kind of elections are there?



There are 2 main kinds of elections.



These are called general elections and primary elections.

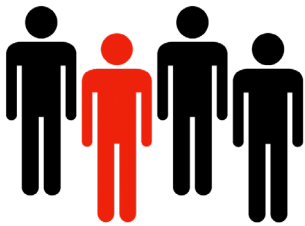


In general elections, you vote for who will become your elected officials.



Sometimes, there are too many candidates for one election.

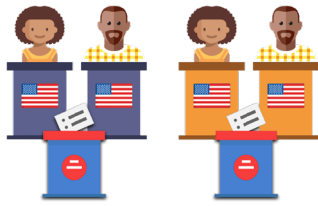
For example:



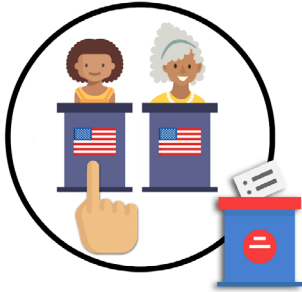
Only 1 person from each political party can run for President.



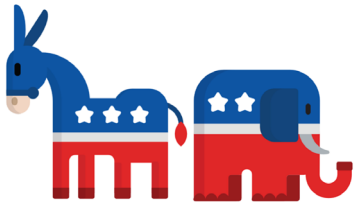
But lots of people want to be President.



So each party votes on who their candidate will be.



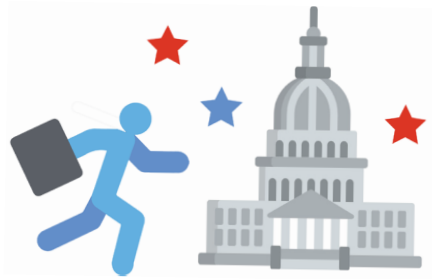
This is called the **primary election**. It happens before the general election.



There are different primary elections for each political party.



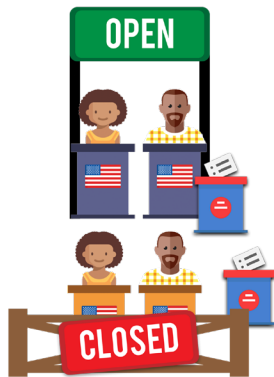
After the primary, there will only be a few candidates left.



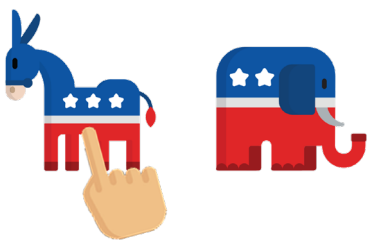
They will run in the general election.



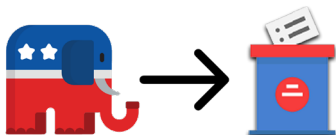
There are two kinds of primary elections.



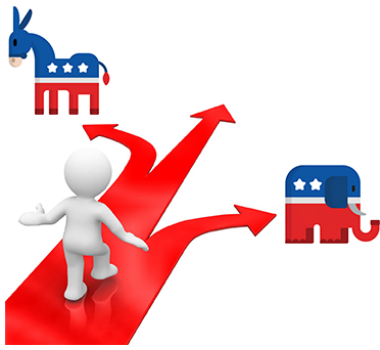
These are called **open primary elections** and **closed primary elections**.



When you register to vote, you pick a political party.



The party you pick can change which primary you're allowed to vote in.

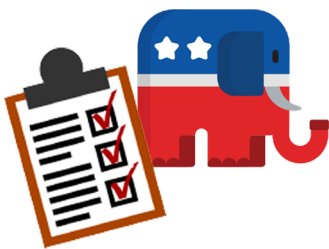


In **open primary elections**, people can vote in whatever primary they want.



But, you can only pick one primary to vote in.

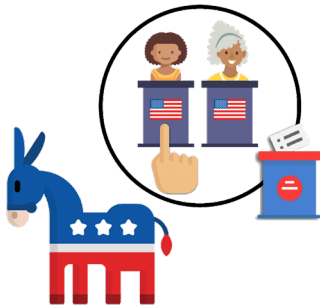
For example:



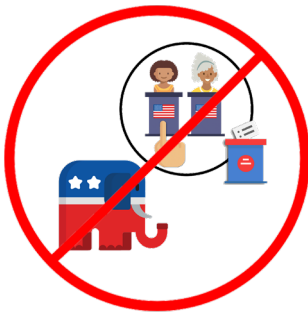
Dylan registered to vote as a Republican.



His state has open primary elections.



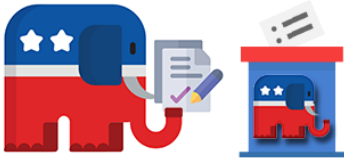
Dylan decides to vote in the Democratic primary election.



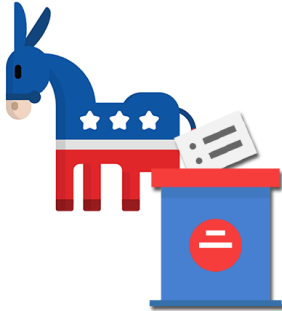
But, Dylan can't also vote in the Republican primary election.



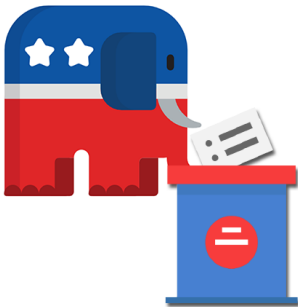
He can only vote in one primary election.



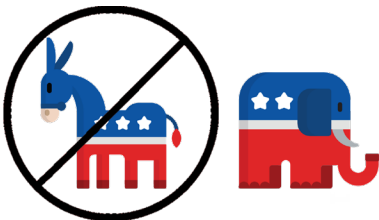
In **closed primary elections**, people can only vote for their own political party.



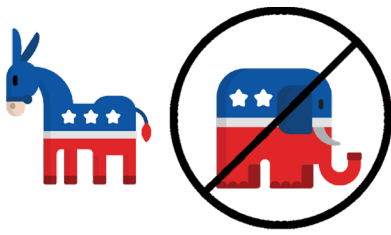
If you register as a Democrat, you can vote in the Democratic primary.



If you register as a Republican, you can vote in the Republican primary.

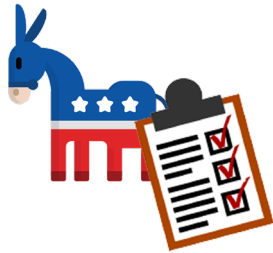


Democrats can't vote in the Republican primary.



Republicans can't vote in the Democratic primary.

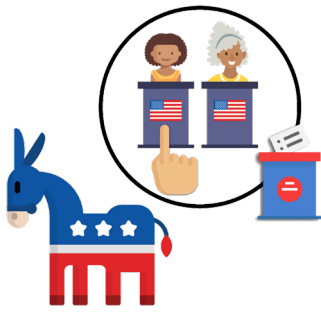
For example:



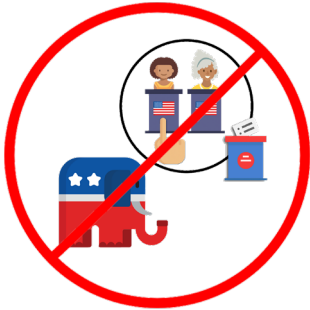
Richelle registered to vote as a Democrat.



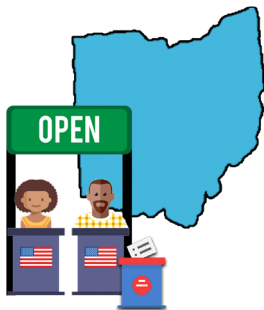
Her state has closed primary elections.



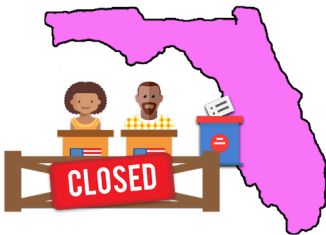
Richelle can only vote in the Democratic primary election.



She can't vote in the Republican primary election.



Some states only have open primary elections.



Some states only have closed primary elections.



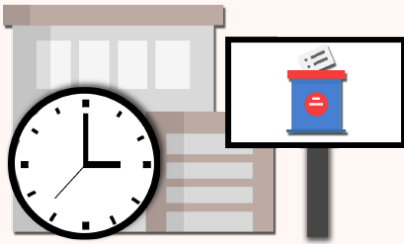
It depends on your state.

Words to Know in Part 9



absentee voting

When you don't have to go to a polling place to vote. You can vote through the mail.



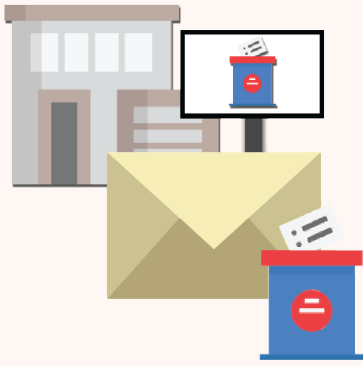
early voting

When polling places open for a while before election day. Not all states have early voting.



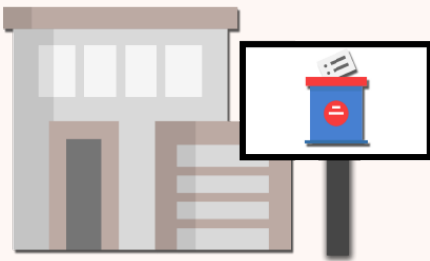
election

An official and organized way to choose our elected officials, like Senators or Mayors. Voting is how we make choices in an election.



in-person absentee voting

a kind of early voting where you vote at your polling place before election day. Some states only let some groups of people vote through in-person absentee voting. Other states let everyone use in-person absentee voting.



polling place

Somewhere people go to vote. Schools and community centers are two kinds of polling places.



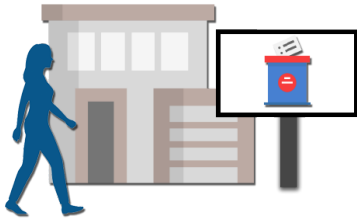
voting

A way to make decisions. It gets used to choose elected officials, pass laws, or making other kinds of choices.

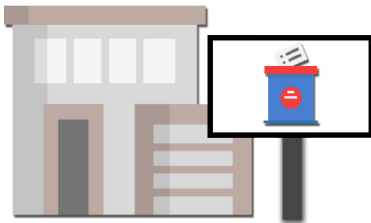
3

9. What ways can I vote?

There are 3 main ways to vote:



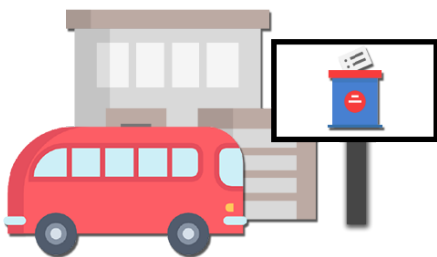
1. You can vote in person on election day.



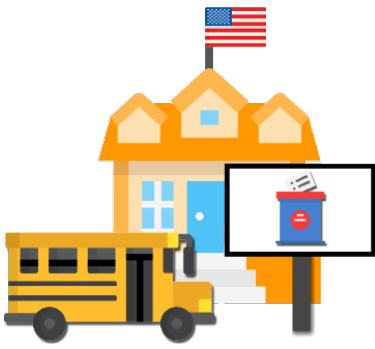
To vote on election day, go to your **polling place**.



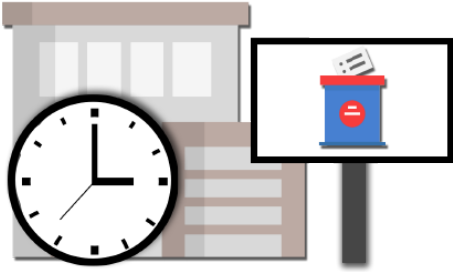
A polling place is a place where you can vote.



It is usually somewhere people can get to easily.



Some kinds of polling places are schools or community centers.



2. In some states, polling places will open before election day. This is called **early voting**.



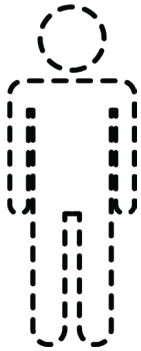
Early voting can be easier than voting on election day.



It is usually less crowded, so you can vote faster.



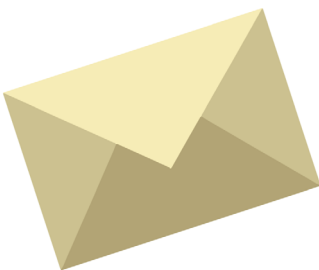
3. Some states have another kind of voting called **absentee voting**.



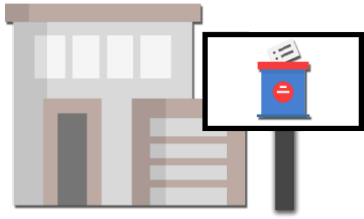
The word “absentee” means that something is not there.



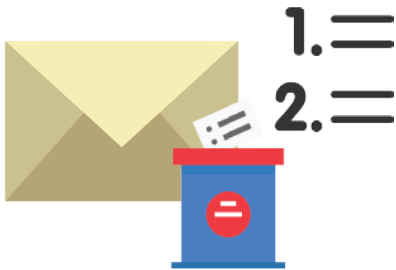
In absentee voting, you don’t go to the polling place at all.



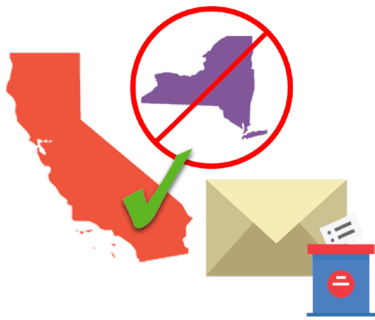
You can vote through the mail.



Or, you can drop off your vote at your polling place.



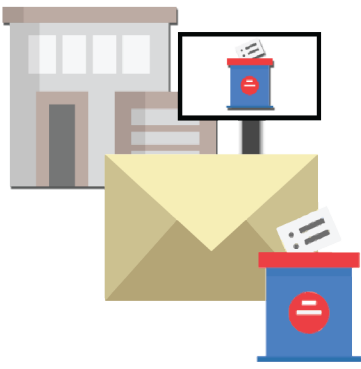
Different states have different rules about who can do absentee voting.



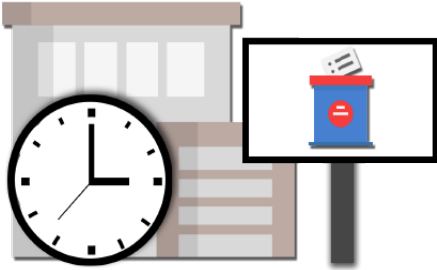
You might be allowed to in your state, but you also might not.



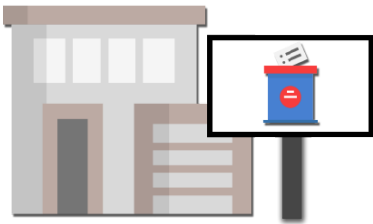
You can find out by going to <https://www.usa.gov/absentee-voting>



Some states have what is called in-person absentee voting.



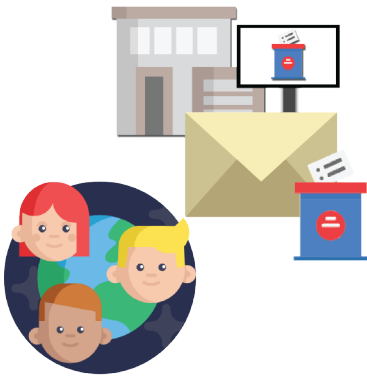
This is a kind of early voting. It happens before election day.



In in-person absentee voting, you vote at your polling place before election day.



Some states only let some groups of people vote through in-person absentee voting.



Other states let everyone use in-person absentee voting.

Words to Know in Part 10



ballot

A list of who and what you can vote for.



candidate

Someone who is running for office.



election

An official and organized way to choose our elected officials, like Senators or Mayors. Voting is how we make choices in an election.

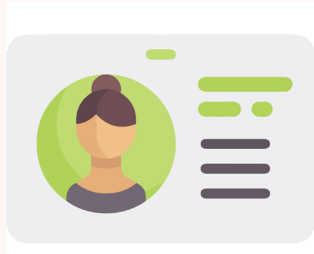
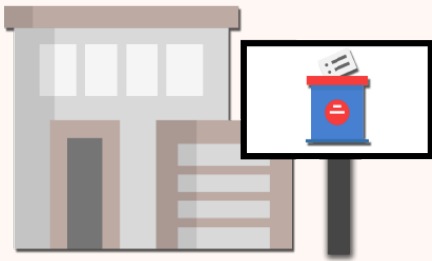


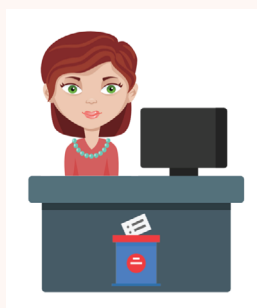
photo ID

A paper or card given to you by the government. It has your picture and other information about you on it.



polling place

Somewhere people go to vote. Schools and community centers are two kinds of polling places.



poll workers

People who work at polling places. They help others vote.



register to vote

Registering to vote means getting on the list of people who can vote in your state. You have to register to vote before you can vote.



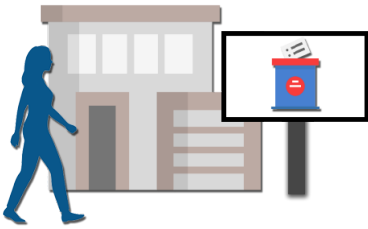
voting

A way to make decisions. It gets used to choose elected officials, pass laws, or making other kinds of choices.

10. What Will Election Day Be Like?



Here is what happens when you vote on election day.



First, you have to go to your polling place.



- You can take a bus or train.



- You can drive, or ask a friend to drive you.



- You can take a taxi.



- Or, if you live close enough, you can walk.



You can only vote at the polling place closest to where you live.



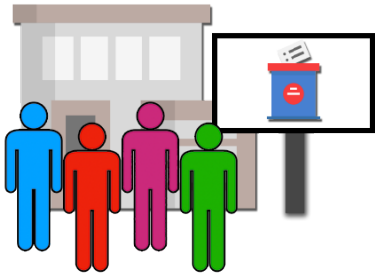
You can find your polling place by going to <https://www.vote.org/polling-place-locator/>



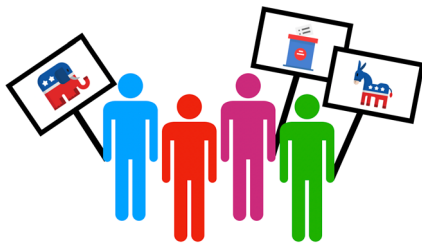
There might be a line in front of the polling place.



Lots of people come to vote. Make sure you are ready to wait.



When you go to the polling place, there might be people standing outside.



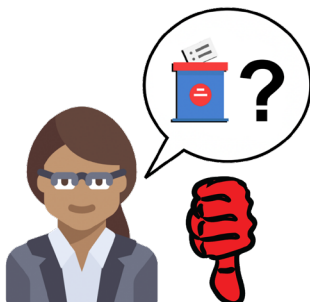
They might want to give you a flyer or tell you who to vote for.



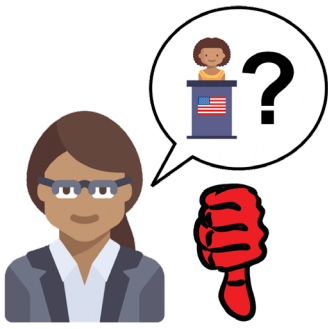
You don't have to talk to them.



Once you get inside, no one is allowed to talk about who to vote for.



Don't ask people at the polling place who they will vote for.



Don't ask who you should vote for.



Don't tell people who you are voting for.



It is a secret.



Poll workers work at polling places. Their job is to help people vote.



To vote, you will go up to a poll worker.



They might ask to see your photo ID.



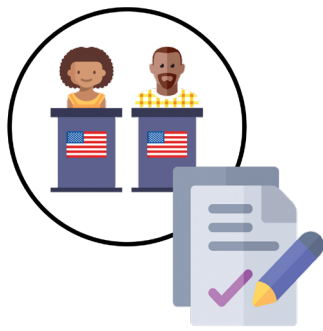
They will make sure you are registered to vote.



If you need help voting, you can ask the poll worker for help.



Next, the poll worker will give you a **ballot**.



A ballot is a list of candidates you can vote for.



There might also be laws or rules on your ballot.



Then, you can vote on whether to pass the law.



Most of the time, a ballot is a piece of paper.



Sometimes, a ballot will be on a screen instead.



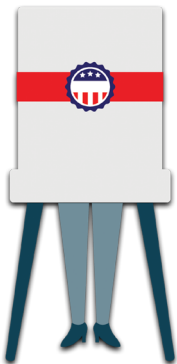
You can press buttons on the screen to vote.



The poll worker will tell you to go to a booth.



You will fill out your ballot in the booth.



The booths are private.



They keep voting a secret.



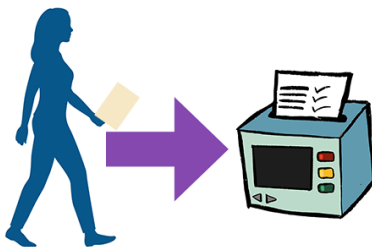
Once you fill out your ballot, it needs to get counted.



Counting machines get set up at the polling place.



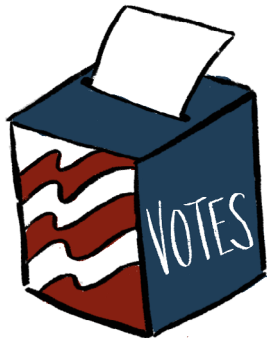
These machines count the votes for paper ballots.



When you finish your ballot, you go to the machine.



Some polling places don't have counting machines.



If there isn't a machine, you put your ballot in a box.



If your ballot was on a screen, you are all set.



Congratulations! You voted!



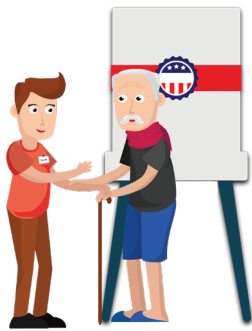
You made your voice heard.



The ballot can be hard to understand.



You may want to bring a friend, family member, or support person with you when you vote.



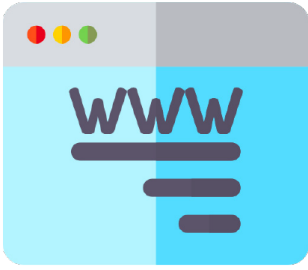
They can come into the booth to help you.



They can help you understand the ballot.



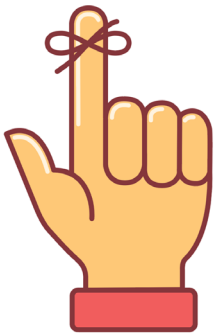
You can also study the ballot before you go to the polling place.



You can find your ballot by going to
<https://www.headcount.org/your-ballot/>



You can bring notes with you into the
polling place.



This can help you remember the
candidates you wanted to vote for.



Poll workers can't help you choose who to
vote for.



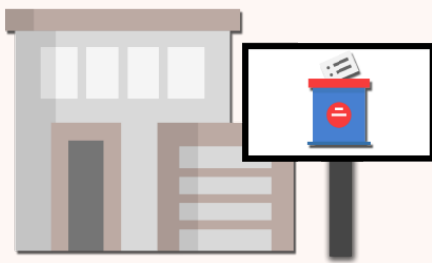
Who you vote for is your choice!

Words to Know in Part 11



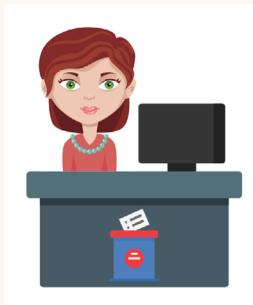
ballot

A list of who and what you can vote for.



polling place

Somewhere people go to vote. Schools and community centers are two kinds of polling places.



poll workers

People who work at polling places. They help others vote.



Protection and Advocacy organization (P&A)

A group that helps disabled people when they have problems with the law. Every state has one.

register to vote



Registering to vote means getting on the list of people who can vote in your state. You have to register to vote before you can vote.



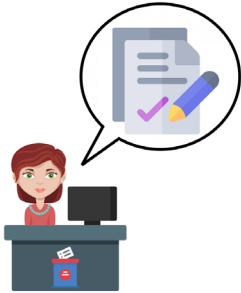
voting

A way to make decisions. It gets used to choose elected officials, pass laws, or making other kinds of choices.



11. Voting With A Disability

Poll workers are supposed to help people vote.



They can help you read voting forms.



They can help you figure out how to use voting machines.



Poll workers need to help people with disabilities vote.



They can't ask what your disability is. They just need to help you vote.



They can't stop you from getting help to vote.



They can't stop you from bringing a support person.



They can't stop you from voting if you have a support person.



Sometimes, poll workers won't let you vote because of your disability.



This goes against our rights!



If that happens, there are people you can call to help you.



You can call your **Protection and Advocacy organization (P&A)**.



P&As help people with disabilities fight for our rights.



They make sure states follow disability laws.



There is a P&A in every state.



You can find out how to contact your P&A at the end of this toolkit.



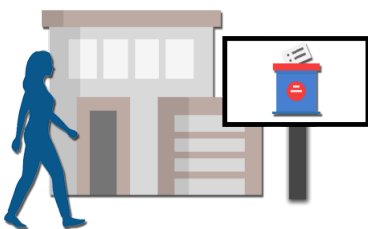
Here is a story about voting in California.



In California, you don't need a voter ID. You do need to register to vote.



In this story, everything goes right for Sally.



Sally walks to her polling place. It is a school near her house.



She gets in line to wait to talk to a poll worker.



The poll worker asks Sally her full name.



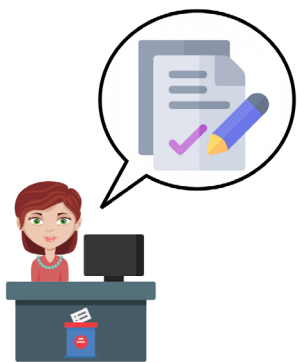
She asks for Sally's address.



Sally tells the poll worker her full name and address.



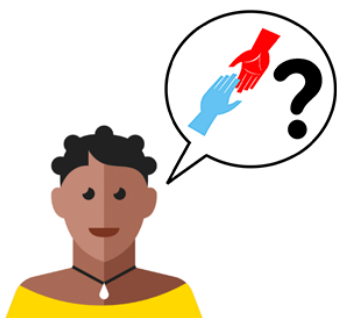
The poll worker gives Sally a ballot.



The poll worker explains how to fill out the ballot.



Sally has trouble understanding the ballot.



She asks another poll worker to help her.



The poll worker and Sally decide that Sally needs a large print ballot.



The poll worker gives Sally the large print ballot.



Sally takes out some notes about who she wants to vote for.



She fills out the ballot.



Then, she gets in line again to take her ballot to another poll worker.



The poll worker helps Sally put the ballot in the machine that counts the votes.



The machine takes Sally's ballot.



Then, Sally gets a sticker that says "I voted!"

Words to Know in Part 12



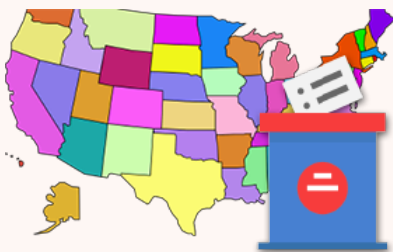
candidate

Someone who is running for office



election

An official and organized way to choose our elected officials, like Senators or Mayors. Voting is how we make choices in an election.



electoral college

How states decide who becomes the President. Each state has votes in the Electoral College.



recount

When votes get counted again if an election is very close or if something goes wrong.



runoff

Doing an election over again because it wasn't clear who won.

12. How Does a Candidate Win an Election?



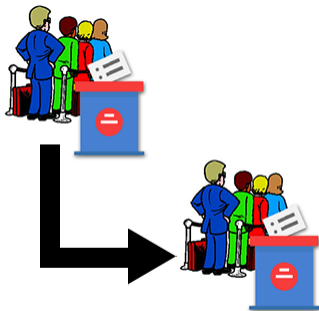
Most of the time, the candidate who gets the most votes wins.



Sometimes, candidates get the same number of votes.



Or, the number of votes is too close to figure out the winner.



When this happens, the election gets done over again.



This is called a **runoff**.



Sometimes, candidates think that the vote counting wasn't fair.



The candidate might ask for the votes to be counted again.



This is called a **recount**.



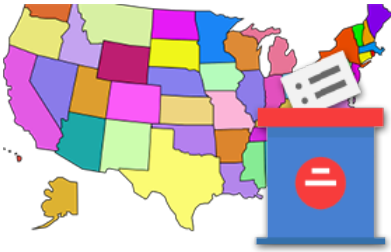
There are different rules for the President of the United States.



When the President is elected, it's not just about how every person voted.



It's about how every state voted.



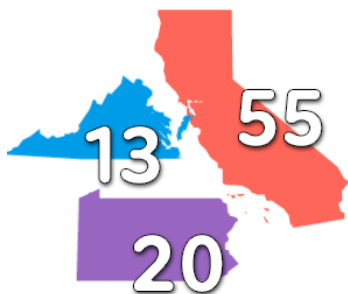
We can tell how states voted with the **Electoral College**.



The Electoral College is how states decide who becomes the President.



Each state has votes in the Electoral College.



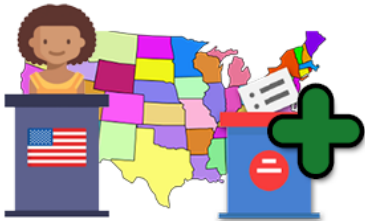
Each state has a different number of votes in the Electoral College.



Some states get more votes than others.



Sometimes, one candidate will get more people to vote for them.



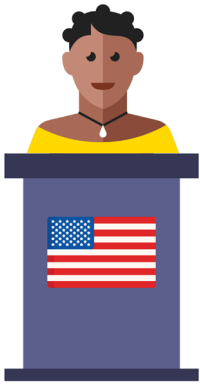
But the other candidate will get more state votes.



The candidate with the most state votes wins the Electoral College.



They become President.



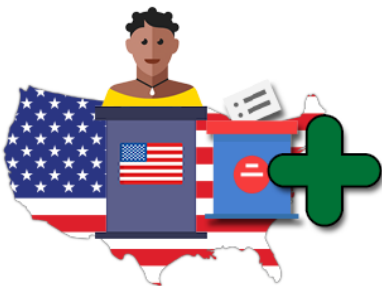
For example: Sally is running for President.



Sally got the most votes in California. She won the state of California.



California gets 55 votes in the Electoral College.



Sally also wins the most votes in the whole country.



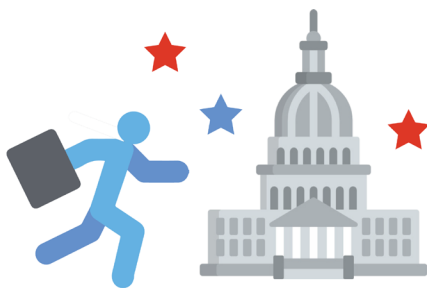
But, her voters only live in a few states.



So, she doesn't win the Electoral College.



Even though she has the most people voting for her, Sally loses the election.



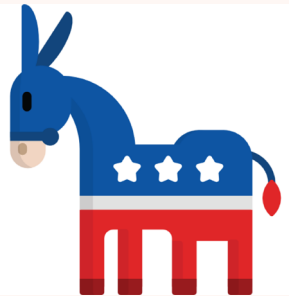
She can run again in 4 years.

Words to Know in Part 13



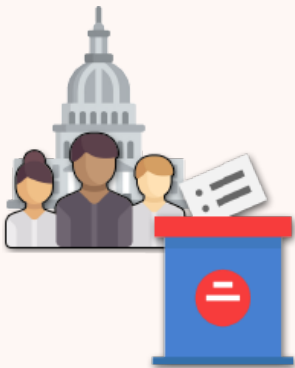
Constitution

A list of the most important laws in America. It says that every American has rights that can't be taken away.



Democrats

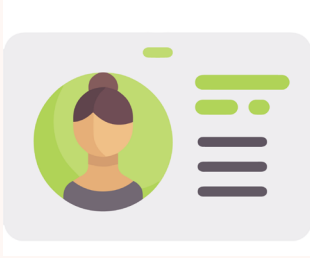
One of the two main political parties in America.



elected official

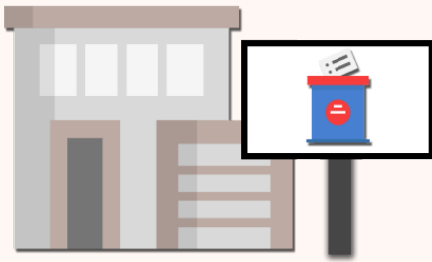
A person picked by voting to lead a part of the government.

photo ID

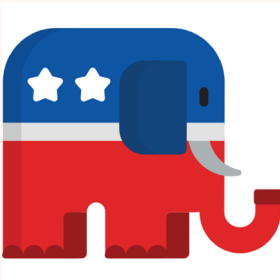


A paper or card given to you by the government. It has your picture and other information about you on it.

polling place



Somewhere people go to vote. Schools and community centers are two kinds of polling places.



Republicans

One of the two main political parties in America.

voter suppression



When people make it harder for others to vote.

voting



A way to make decisions. It gets used to choose elected officials, pass laws, or making other kinds of choices.

13. What is voter suppression?



Sometimes people will make laws to stop other people from voting.



Sometimes people will make it harder for some people to vote.



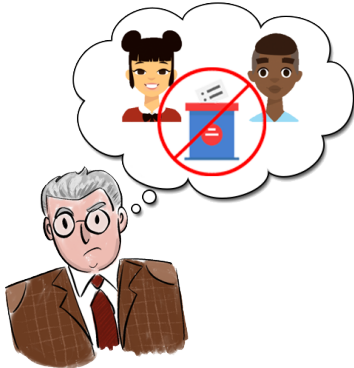
This is called **voter suppression**.



Voter suppression is when people make it hard for others to vote.



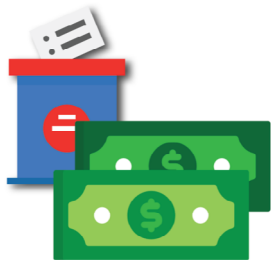
America has a lot of voter suppression.



In the past, people tried to stop groups like women, Native Americans, and African Americans from voting.



They didn't want those groups to make decisions.



Sometimes, people made these groups pay to vote.



Or, these groups had to show they could read and write before they could vote.



People even got hurt or killed for trying to vote.



Women, African Americans, and Native Americans fought for their right to vote.



The right for everyone to vote is now a part of the **Constitution**.



The Constitution is a list of the most important laws in America.



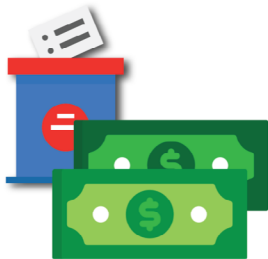
In 1965, the government also made a law called the Voting Rights Act.



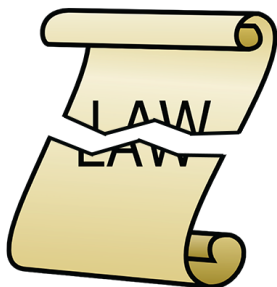
This law helps make sure everyone has the right to vote.



It made it against the law to stop people from voting.



For example: Sometimes, people had to pay before they could vote.



The Voting Rights Act said this is against the law.



Now, you can't make someone pay to vote.



The Constitution and the Voting Rights Act say everyone can vote.



But the laws don't always work. People still make it hard for others to vote.



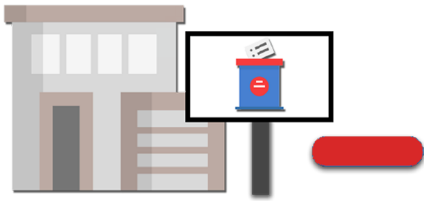
Voter suppression still happens today.



Elected officials can make new polling places.



They can also get rid of polling places.



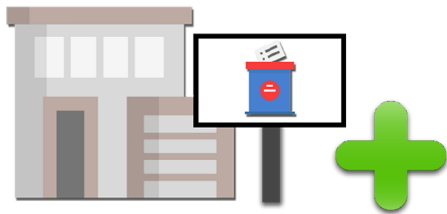
One kind of voter suppression is to have less polling places.



This makes people wait a long time to vote. Waiting in line is hard.



So fewer people end up voting.



Some cities may have more polling places than others.



It's easier to vote in cities with more polling places.



It's harder to vote in cities with less polling places.



More people will vote in cities with more polling places.



Less people will vote in cities with less polling places.

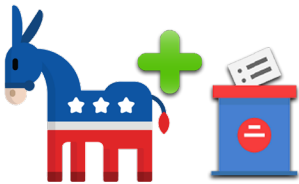


This is a way to control who gets elected.

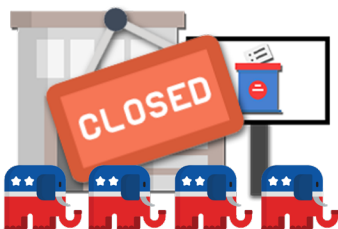
For example:



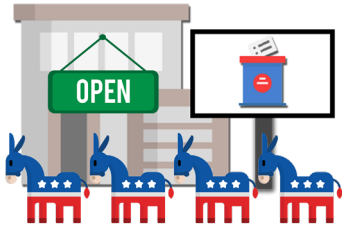
Mr. McGreedyPants is the Mayor of Everytown. He wants to keep his job.



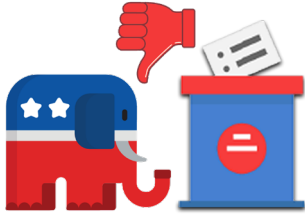
Mr. McGreedyPants is a Democrat. He wants more Democrats to vote.



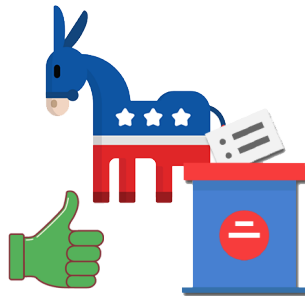
Mr. McGreedyPants closes some polling places in the west part of Everytown. That is where many Republicans live.



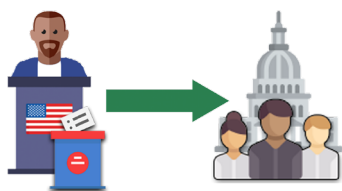
Mr. McGreedyPants opens more polling places in the east part of Everytown. That is where many Democrats live.



Now, it is harder for Republicans to vote in Everytown.



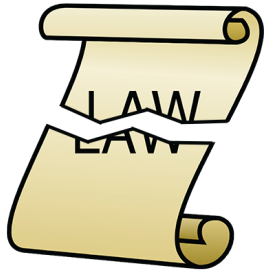
It is easier for Democrats to vote in Everytown.



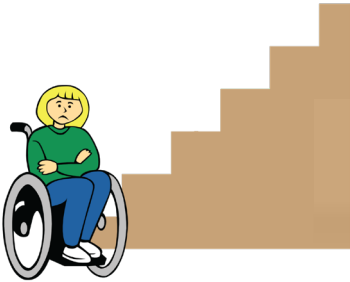
That makes it easier for Mr. McGreedyPants to keep getting elected.



Most polling places aren't accessible to everyone with a disability.



This is against the law.



It makes it harder for people with disabilities to vote. This is also voter suppression.



Voting needs to be accessible to everyone.



Sometimes, an elected official will close a polling place that is not accessible.



They will say they closed it to be fair to people with disabilities.



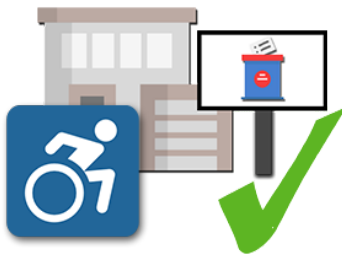
But they are lying. They actually closed the polling place to stop people from voting.



This is also voter suppression.



It isn't fair to blame people with disabilities!



Elected officials need to make sure all polling places are accessible.



Closing polling places doesn't help.



Another kind of voter suppression is making people have photo ID to vote.



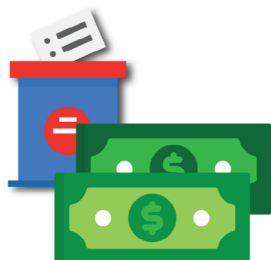
Getting a photo ID costs money.



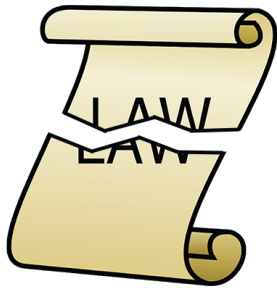
Not everyone has enough money to get a photo ID.



It isn't fair to make people pay for a photo ID so they can vote.



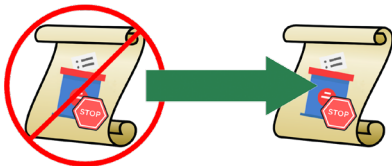
It is the same as making people pay to vote.



That's against the law.



Voter suppression looks different today than it did before.



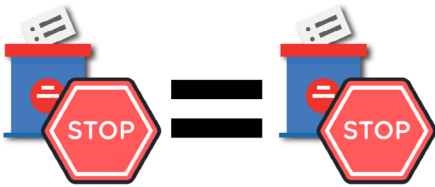
Before, there were no laws about voter suppression. Now we have laws.



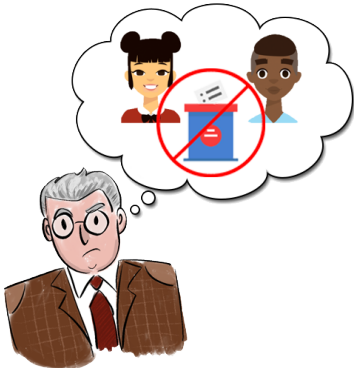
The Constitution and the Voting Rights Act say everyone can vote.



But people find ways to get around the laws.

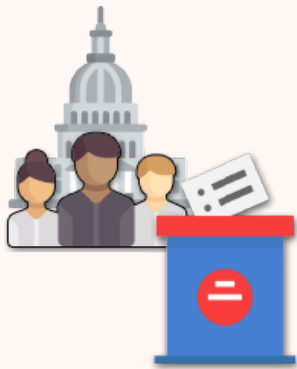


Voter suppression happens for the same reasons that it did before.



It happens to stop some people from making decisions.

Words to Know in Part 14



elected official

A person picked by voting to lead a part of the government.



Protection and Advocacy organization (P&A)

A group that helps disabled people when they have problems with the law. Every state has one.



voter suppression

When people make it harder for others to vote.

14. How can I help stop voter suppression?



Voter suppression is unfair.



But we can work to fix voter suppression.



We can make sure everyone can vote.

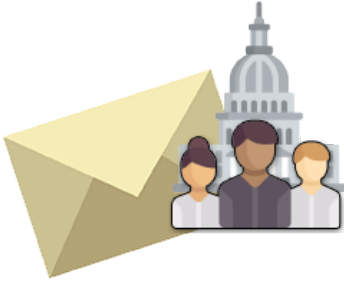


You can work with your state to stop voter suppression.



Your state can make new laws to fix voter suppression.

Here are ways you can help change your state's voting laws:



- You can write to your elected officials.



- Tell them that everybody should be allowed to vote.



- You can also call your elected officials.



- Or, you can meet with your elected officials in person.



- You can also work with self-advocacy groups near you.



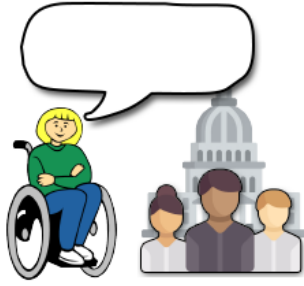
- You can talk to your P&A.



- You can find other groups in your state that work on voting rights.



For more information, look at ASAN's [Civic Engagement Toolkit](#).



You can find more tips there about talking to your elected officials.



Let's work together to fight for the right to vote!

Words to Know in Part 15



guardian

Someone who makes decisions for a person with disabilities. A judge decides who someone's guardian will be.



voter suppression

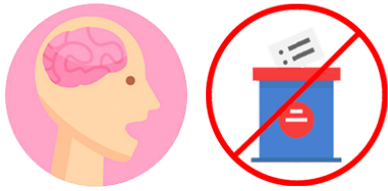
When people make it harder for others to vote.



voting

A way to make decisions. It gets used to choose elected officials, pass laws, or making other kinds of choices.

15. Am I Allowed to Vote?



In some states, people with intellectual disabilities are not allowed to vote.



The laws that say this are usually very old. But nobody got rid of them.



People can still use these laws to take away our rights.



This is a kind of voter suppression, too.



Some people with disabilities have **guardians**.



A guardian can make legal decisions for a person with disabilities.



Usually, a guardian is a parent or family member.



A judge chooses who will be the guardian for a disabled person.



In some states, people with guardians can't vote.



In other states, people with guardians can vote unless a judge says no.



In other states, people with intellectual disabilities can vote just like everyone else.



At the end of this toolkit, there is a list of every U.S. state.

1. =
2. =

Find your state to find out the rules about voting where you live.



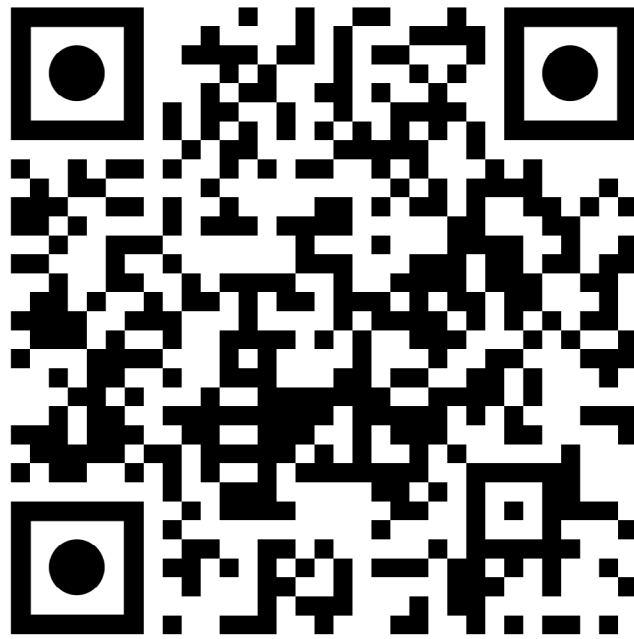
If you can't vote, you can work on getting your rights back.



If you can vote, you can work to help others get their rights!

Want to share your thoughts on
this toolkit?

Take our survey!



Scan this code with your phone
to go to our survey.

Or, go to

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/
ASANresource](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ASANresource)
