Easy Read Edition

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

Words to Know
**absentee voting**
When you don’t have to go to a polling place to vote. You can vote through the mail.

**ballot**
A list of who and what you can vote for.

**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.

**Congress**
The part of the U.S. government that makes laws. It has 2 parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives.
**Constitution**
A list of the most important laws in America. It says that every American has rights that can’t be taken away.

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

**Democrats**
One of the two main political parties in America.

**early voting**
When polling places open for a while before election day. Not all states have early voting.
**elected official**
A person picked by voting to lead a part of the government.

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

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

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

**Independent**
Someone who isn’t a Republican or a Democrat.
**open primary election**
A kind of primary election. Where you can vote without registering for a political party.

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

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

**poll workers**
People who work at polling places. They help others vote.
**polling place**
Somewhere people go to vote. Schools and community centers are two kinds of polling places.

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

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

**recount**
When votes get counted again if an election is very close or if something goes wrong.
**Republicans**
One of the two main political parties in America.

**runoff**
Doing an election over again because it wasn’t clear who won.

**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.
**voter suppression**
Unfair laws and other tricks that keep people from voting.

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