NERDS VOTE

HOW TO D.M. A PRE-VOTING PARTY

WHAT YOU'LL NEED: Friends, snacks, sample ballots, internet access, time to research

1.) Have snacks and drinks
Voting is serious business, but that doesn't mean it can't be fun, too.

2.) Get sample ballots
Sample ballots tell you who's running and what issues will be on the ballot. Print one out for everyone attending your party. They not only help with research, but you can also mark one up with your choices and bring it to the polls! (See below for where to find them)

3.) Research
Split up the slate of candidates and issues amongst your group so no one person is doing all the research (two people to each race makes it balanced). Don't leave out any candidate or issue. Local issues affect you most directly and school board and judicial candidates are crucial decision-makers in how your community is run. (NOTE: You can do this part before or during the party... whichever works best for your crew!)

> **RESEARCHING A CANDIDATE**
> i. **Start with their own website** – See if there's anything about the candidates that speak to you, either positively or negatively. What people or organizations have endorsed them? Are any of those people or organizations aligned with your views?
> ii. **Double check** – After that, start Googling. If a candidate makes a claim about themselves, an issue or their opponent, double check it against reputable news and fact sources (we've listed some below). If running for reelection, does the candidate's record in office match what they say they stand for?

> **RESEARCHING AN ISSUE**
> Your local election may include measures or propositions on the ballot up to the public to decide. Research these the same way you would a candidate, double checking sources and listing pros and cons.

4.) Share your findings
Try to stay neutral when sharing so everyone can decide for themselves. If more than one person did research, have each person share their findings as well. If further questions arise, research answers rather than guess.

5.) Your friends may make different decisions
Establish a code of respectful discussion before you get started. The goal is research, not consensus. As long as everyone has enough info to make their own informed choices at the polls, you should consider your night a success!

6.) Record your choices on your sample ballot
Take it with you on Election Day (or consult when filling out your mail in ballot). It will help you remember your choices and prevent errors.

WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

Our partner **HeadCount** has a great starting place for all your election day informational needs. Start by visiting headcount.org/voter-info to find out your polling place, what identification (if any) you'll need at the polls, how to request an absentee ballot and what the deadlines for that are, and an exhaustive list of websites to research candidates and issues.

We also recommend the government website www.usa.gov/voting as an incredibly exhaustive resource. Info on the upcoming midterm election can be found here: www.usa.gov/midterm-state-and-local-elections#item-213827

Am I registered?
Find out at www.headcount.org/verify-voter-registration/

Can I get an absentee ballot or vote early?
Get all the info here: www.headcount.org/early-voting-and-absentee-voting/

Can I get reminders about Election Day?
Sure can! Visit turbovote.org/

Where is my polling place?
Good question! Check here: www.headcount.org/find-your-polling-place/

Am I allowed time off to vote?
Every state is different. Visit: www.workplacefairness.org/voting-rights-time-off-work

Where can I get a sample ballot?
Your state may mail you a sample ballot prior to Election Day, or you may be able to download one from its election site (find yours at www.usa.gov/election-office). If not, you can find sample ballot info at vote-usa.org or ballotready.org.

Where can I research candidates and issues?
There are a ton of websites you can use, including major news sources, newspapers, the candidates' own websites, and fact-checking websites. Here are a just a few:
- Votesmart.org - Resource to find out the positions your current elected officials running for reelection hold on multiple issues
- HeadCount.org – This is their exhaustive list of websites for researchin'
- ISideWith.com – Like a dating website for voting, a quiz matches you with the candidate that most closely shares your political opinions.
- FactCheck.org and PolitiFact.com – For fact-checking statements re: candidates and issues

Remember: not every site has info on EVERY candidate or issue SO extra internet searching MAY BE IN ORDER

Is there a way to know my sources are reputable?
This is a good resource: www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/how-to-spot-fake-news-and-teach-kids-to-be-media-savvy