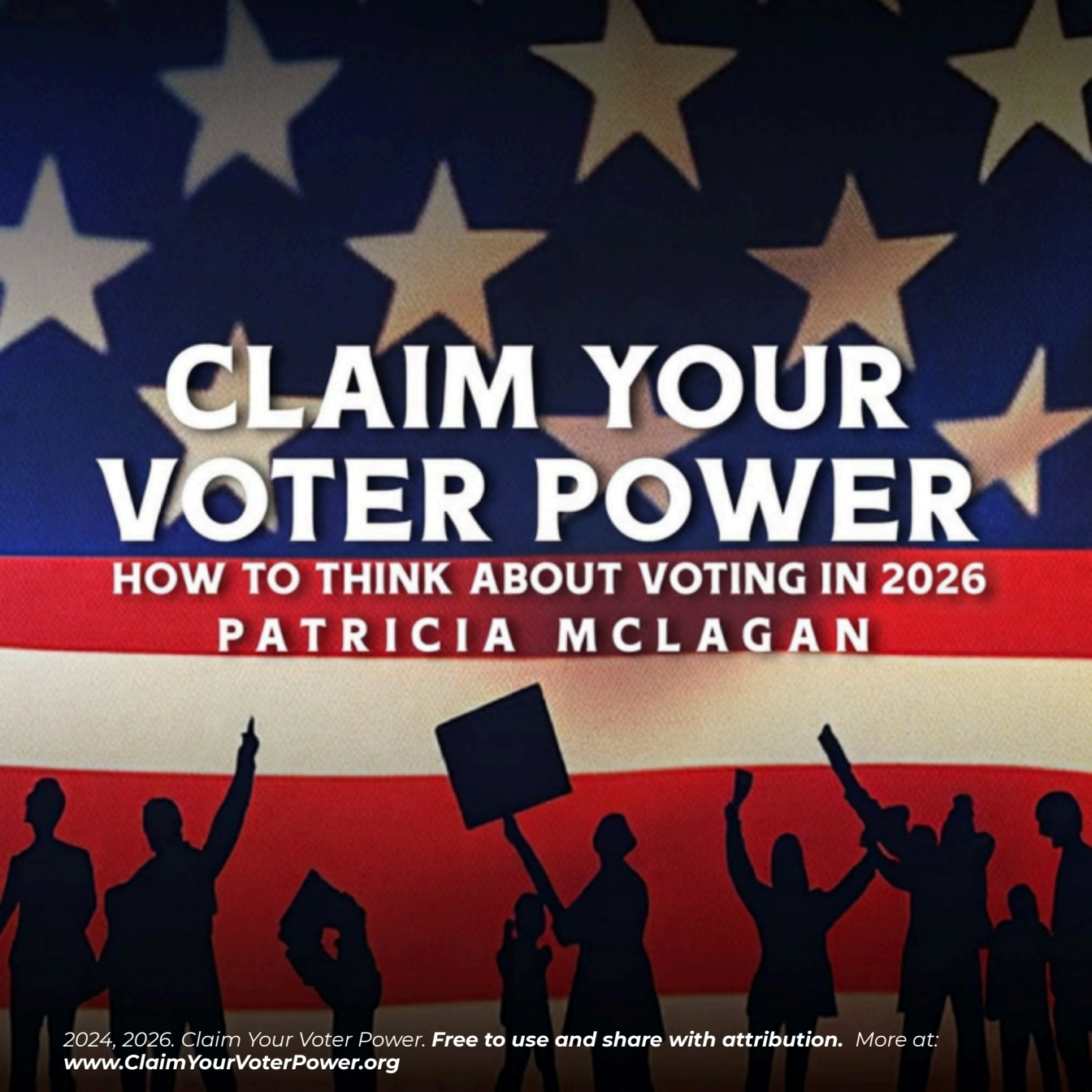




CLAIM YOUR VOTER POWER

HOW TO THINK ABOUT VOTING IN 2026

PATRICIA MCLAGAN



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How to Think about Voting in 2026

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Your Voter Power

How to Think About Voting in 2026

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1. Your Vote Is Your Power

On Election Day 2026, your vote helps decide who will hold some of the most powerful positions in our country, state, and community.

During an election, your power is at its highest. Candidates want your attention, your support, and your vote.

After the election, power shifts to those who win office. They make decisions that affect your life, your community, and future generations.

Voting is both a right and a responsibility. It was hard won over many generations and should never be taken for granted.

Before you hand power to someone else, stop and think. Look beyond campaign ads, slogans, and social media messages.

Be curious. Ask questions. Check facts.

Understand what is at stake—for today and for tomorrow.

Democracy works best when citizens are informed, engaged, and willing to participate.

The place to start?

Be informed
Care about the results

1. Your Vote Is Your Power

Your Voter Power

- Greatest at election time
- Delegated to winners
- A right and responsibility of citizenship
- People fought hard for the right



How Power Moves

- Voters have it before election
- Then delegated to elected leaders
- Leaders temporarily wear the power of their role



Know the History

- 235 years white males vote
- 154 black males vote
- 124 years women vote
- 59 years Voting Rights Act – all vote
- 11 years, some protections removed by Supreme Court



Be Prepared

- Your vote stands for YOU
- Be wary of misinformation
- Know what's at stake today and future
- You are delegating YOUR power



Act

- Identify what matters to you for now and the future
- Get informed; be curious; check facts
- Commit to making your voice/vote heard



2. Be Aware of Three Kinds of Leader Power

Every candidate brings three kinds of power. Before you vote, think about each one.

Power¹ - Personal Power

Their experience, skills, judgment, character, and values.

- **Ask:** Are they prepared for the job?

Power² - Role Power

The authority that comes with the office.

- **Ask:** Can I trust them with this power?

Power³ - Emotional Power

The feelings they evoke in you—hope, pride, anger, fear, or trust.

- **Ask:** Am I responding to facts or emotions?

**Before you vote, think about how the candidates will use the
immense power of their office**

Vote with clear eyes

2. Be Aware of Three Kinds of Leader Power

POWER¹ - Personal

- Background & experience
- Knowledge & skills
- Networks & connections
- Communication ability
- Beliefs & values
- Reputation & charisma



Your Vote Matters

- Sharpen your awareness of the powers elected leaders possess (and that you give them).
- See their power through clear eyes
- Use YOUR voter power wisely.



POWER² - Institutional

- This is the borrowed power residing in the role
- Vast for National leaders
- Like light sabers, wands & rings in fantasy stories
- Leaders always tempted to misuse
- Requires aware and principled leaders



POWER³ - Emotional

- You share values, beliefs
- Triggers your emotions: anger, fear, disgust, sympathy, joy
- Can be manipulated by misinformation and propaganda



Act

- List candidate personal qualities (**Power¹**)
- Think: how will they use their “role” **Power²**
- Feel disgust, fear, anger, even joy? (**Power³**) What in you is being hooked?
- Look at candidates’ use of power with clear eyes



3. Seven Leadership Tests

Leadership roles give their occupants institutional power. It's easy to be corrupted

Leadership Test #1 — Know How Power Can Change Behavior

The first test of leadership is awareness. Does this leader understand how power changes him/her, others, decisions, and truth itself? Choose **SELF-AWARE** leaders.

Leadership Test #2 — Tap the Decision Field

Great leaders widen the decision space; weak leaders shrink it to themselves and their echo chambers. Choose leaders who seek **SYNERGY**

Leadership Test #3 — Lead Today, Bridge to Tomorrow

Responsible leaders focus on both today's and tomorrow's needs — even when the future has no official voice in today's debates. Choose leaders with **BIFOCAL** vision - focused on both today and tomorrow.

Leadership Test #4 — Stop the Buck Here

True leadership means more than performing the role; it means owning the consequences when things go wrong. Choose leaders who take **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Leadership Test #5 — Step Up or Step Aside

Powerful leaders are expected to show courage when it matters most — not hide when the winds turn dangerous. Choose **COURAGEOUS** leaders.

Leadership Test #6 — The Humanity Test

A leader's moral compass is revealed by this essential question: Do they respect human dignity? Choose leaders who **RESPECT** the humanity of all people.

Leadership Test #7 — The Devil's Bargain

Institutional power is a sacred trust. Corruption begins when leaders use it to serve themselves instead of the whole. Choose leaders who are **STEWARDS**.

3. Seven Leadership Tests



AWARE

Know how power
changes behavior



SYNERGY

Tap the full
decision field



BIFOCAL

Lead today, bridge
to tomorrow



POWER IS A KEY LEADERSHIP RESOURCE

**How does/will the leader
use IT?**



ACCOUNTABLE

Stop the buck
here



COURAGEOUS

Step up or
step aside



RESPECT

Honor human
dignity



STEWARDS

Serve the whole,
not self

4. Are You a Rational Voter? Think Again!

Political campaigns don't just compete for your vote. They compete for your emotions.

We all tend to favor people and ideas that feel familiar. Repeated messages, labels, and slogans can shape how we see candidates. And when your emotions -- anger, fear, hopelessness, disgust -- are triggered, it's hard to think clearly.

The good news? You can recognize when it is happening.

Your body will tell you.

Strong emotions are a signal to pause and look more closely. Ask yourself:

- What am I feeling?
- What triggered it?
- What are the facts?
- Am I open to other views?

Self-awareness won't eliminate political differences. But it can help you think more clearly, make better decisions, and avoid being manipulated.

When your emotions flare, get curious.

4. Are You a Rational Voter? Think Again!

Fuel for Polarization

- Emotions can distort reality
- We favor people & ideas most like us
- More exposure makes ideas believable
- Labels: lenses for seeing others



Signs You Are Not Thinking Rationally

- Your feelings are extra strong
- You are not open to other ideas/people
- You have uncomfortable physical sensations
- You repeat labels without critical thinking



Leader-Follower Dynamics

- Leaders and followers reinforce each other
- Past authority relationships shape expectations and behaviors
- Many dynamics are not conscious



Act

Understand, but don't let emotions dictate your decisions

- Know elections and ads can hook emotions
- Recognize when you are “triggered” to react
- Ask “why” is my reaction “hot”
- Seek out alternative views and resources
- Challenge your assumptions and biases
- Commit to a wise choice



5. The View from the Top: The President's Power

The President combines three sources of power. Think about how each candidate will use them.

Power¹: Role Power

- Military—troops and nuclear weapons
- Judiciary—appointing federal judges and Supreme Court Justices
- Congress—setting agendas; signing or vetoing bills
- Federal government—leading 15 departments and 438 agencies
- Foreign affairs—working with foreign leaders and setting policy
- Bully pulpit—speaking to and influencing nationally and globally

Power²: Personal Power

- Experience, education, and judgment
- Passes the seven tests:
 - Awareness - understands the vastness of the power he holds
 - Synergy- seeks views beyond echo chambers
 - Bifocal - is concerned for both short and long term
 - Accountable - for the overall health, values, and prosperity of the country
 - Courage - to do the right thing, even when personally at risk
 - Respect - honors the humanity of all people
 - Steward - sees job as a sacred trust. Avoids corruption.

Power³: Emotional Power

Presidents influence how people think, feel, and act. Their charisma and words can inspire, unite, divide, reassure, anger, or frighten.

The President has IMMENSE Power
Choose Wisely, for yourself and generations to come

5. The View from the Top: The President's Power

Presidential Role Power

- Military:deploy troops; nuclear war
- Judicial: appoint federal judges
- Legislative: set agenda; approve/ veto bills
- Agencies/Cabinet: appoint and oversee
- Foreign policy
- Spokesperson: for the Nation

Personal POWER

- Ability: Experience > Education
- Networks > Family background -Pass the 7 Tests
- Work capacity: work ethic>
- Physical and mental energy>
- Self-control

Emotional POWER

- Role model/inspiration for youth
- Role model for leaders
- Energize action for common cause
- Huge negative influence on national psyche if misused

President's Span of Impact

- Actions have a broad and complicated reach
- Affect all Americans
 - Influence global politics and relationships
 - Shape future for years and decades to come
 - Create national culture that is hard to change

Voter Commitments

- Consider short and long term impact
- Focus on your needs and future generations
- Rate candidates on 7 Tests
- Select more on facts than emotion

6. Power Partners in Legislation: the President and Congress

The Executive Branch, House, and Senate must work together to make laws. They are ***PARTNERS IN POWER***, reflecting the checks and balances built into the US Constitution.

The US is not like parliamentary systems where it is easier to agree on policies because the head of government (Prime Minister) is also the head of the legislative majority. But in our “checks and balances” system, either party has many options for making or breaking deals.

Take a look at this 5 minute official congressional video overview of the process:

<https://www.congress.gov/legislative-process>

Sadly, today it is common for one or the other party to block legislation by not approving budgets, failing to put legislation to a vote, or even using the filibuster (continual talking as a delaying tactic) – not because there is no good faith possibility of an agreement, but because one party doesn’t want to support a bill that the other has proposed.

If today’s polarization concerns you, look for candidates whose policies and character you support, but who will also work with the other side of the aisle to get things done.

Remember, *legislation is a shared power*. Good faith negotiation and even compromise are required in our system.

Use your voter power wisely to help ensure what you care about and what is best for the country will get done.

6. Power Partners in Legislation: President and Congress



Partners in Power

- Final agreement is key
- Collaboration goal: better decisions
- Disagree but -- debate and decide in good faith
- Easier to agree in a parliamentary system



Why Checks & Balances?

- Built into Constitution
- Intent: Better decisions
- Disagree but work together
- Negotiate & compromise in good faith
- Avoid concentration of power



Don't

- Put all expectations on the President
- Underestimate the role of party control in Congress
- Overlook the importance of compromise
- Disregard the effects of polarization on governance



Current Polarization

- Blocks good legislation
- Fails to approve budgets
- Keeps legislation from a vote
- Uses filibuster for minority control
- Keeps US from moving forward
- Destroys faith in democracy



Act

- Consider pros and cons of party control of presidency and Congress
- Support candidates who will work across the aisle
- Give your presidential candidate a supportive Congress in polarized times

7. The Special Powers of Senators

When you vote for a senator, you are giving someone important powers that affect both your state and the nation.

Senators serve six-year terms (vs. two years for House members), giving them more time to address difficult long-term issues.

Like House members, senators can introduce legislation. But they also have several **unique powers**:

- Confirming (or rejecting) Presidential appointments, including federal judges and Supreme Court Justices
- Using the filibuster (ongoing talking) to delay or block legislation unless a supermajority votes to end debate
- Ratifying treaties by a two-thirds vote
- Approving declarations of war and the use of military force
- Acquitting or convicting officials impeached by the House

The **Senate Majority Leader** is one of the most powerful people in Washington.

- Appoints committee chairs
- Decides which bills and nominations come to a vote—and which do not
- Can help advance or block a President's agenda

Before you vote, **Do your research**. Go to **www.govtrack.us** to see current senators voting records, absenteeism, sponsored bills. Consider **asking AI** to research candidates. “What is their background? What have they accomplished? Evidence of character?”

Think about how control of the Senate will affect the country's direction, the President's agenda, and the ability of government to function.

- Whatever your political views, choose senators who are competent, responsible, and likely to use power wisely.
- Apply the Seven Leader-Power Tests in Section 3.

**Want to learn more about the Senate? Go to
<https://www.senate.gov/about/powers-procedures.htm>**

7. The Special Powers of Senators

Senators: Your State's Voice

- 6-year terms so they have more time to address complex issues
- Expectation: be wise and thoughtful
- Represent both State and National interests

Unique POWERS

- Approve top Presidential appointments
- Approve federal judges
- Ratify treaties
- Convict during impeachment
- Use filibuster to block laws

Majority Leader: POWER Broker

- Appoints committee chairs
- Decides bills for committees
- Decides bills and appointments to vote on (or not)
- Works with Minority Leader on operations

The Filibuster – a Minority tool

- Allows unending debate to prevent vote
- 60 votes to end – favors minority
 - Positive: protect minority rights
 - Negative: obstructs important bills and appointments

Act

- Check out candidate websites
- Review qualifications and positions
- List areas where you agree and disagree
- For incumbents, go to [GovTrack.us](https://govtrack.us) to find out voting record, bills sponsored, absenteeism, and more
- Consider both the candidate and your vote's impact on party control
- Pick the candidate who will receive YOUR delegated POWER
- Ask your AI to do fact-based research

8. The Special Powers of Representatives

435 is the fixed number of Representative in the US House, updated every ten years based on US Census data. Each representative serves a District in their state

Your vote is for your district's representative as YOUR most immediate voice in Congress. Your job is to select and vote for the person who will best represent YOU – supporting bills that are important to you and your district.

Representatives, by majority vote, collectively, have these unique powers:

- launch budget-related legislation
- Bring a potential bill to the Speaker for potential committee assignment
- Work with the President and Senate to finalize the budget
- Shut down the government in the case of a budget stalemate
- Impeach federal officials (charge them with a crime or abuse of office)
- Break a tie in a Presidential election

The Speaker of the House is a very powerful leader, because s/he...

- Decides what bills will go to committees for potential vote
- Appoints majority leadership
- Decides what bills will be voted on (can be overridden by a “discharge petition” signed by a majority in the House)
- Is second in line for the Presidency, after the Vice President.

Prepare to vote for your Representative by

For **incumbents**, go to [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) or [GovTrack.us](https://govtrack.us) to ..

- Find out what bills s/he has brought to the House
- Know what his/her Committee participation has been
- Find out what bills s/he has voted for – and look at absentee record
- And, if they have seniority – and thus a more powerful voice – is that important to your vote?

For **new candidates**

- Go to their website. Check out their positions and promises. Investigate their character, values, and overall competence.
- Rate them on the 7 Tests of Power (Section 3) candidates on how they use/will use the three types of power:

Your Vote counts

Be an active part of our Democracy



House Basics

- 435 total
- One represents YOUR district
- 2-year terms
- Your most immediate voice in national government

8. The Special Powers of Representatives



Unique POWERS

- Launch budget bills
- Budget stalemate can shut down government
- Power to impeach (indict) federal officials
- Break ties in presidential elections



Act

- Check out candidate websites
- Review qualifications and positions - use **AI** to search for FACTS
- List areas where you agree and disagree
- For incumbents, go to **GovTrack.us** to find out voting record, bills sponsored, absen- teeism, and more
- Consider both the candidate and your vote's impact on party control
- Pick the candidate who will receive YOUR delegated POWER



The Speaker: POWER player

- Appoints committee chairs
- Decides bills for committees
- Decides bills to vote on
- Works with Minority Leader on operations
- 2nd in line for presidency

9. Lift Up Your Ideals

Ideals are a form of HOPE. They inspire us and give us a sense of purpose bigger than ourselves.

Elections are a time to reconnect with our ideals – to look beyond the noise and remember what we stand for, the kind of country we want to help create, and the values that guide us as citizens.

Many of our best leaders faced extraordinary challenges. They thought boldly, acted courageously, and called forth the best in us. They appealed to our *better angels* and left legacies we are proud to remember.

As voters, we can choose leaders who aspire to these qualities.

Approach this election not only as a choice among candidates, but as an opportunity to reflect on the kind of leadership—and country—you want to live in and leave to the next generations.

Bring your ideals to the polls
It matters...
Even if your candidate loses

Abraham Lincoln. *...that we here highly resolve that these dead should not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth* (Gettysburg Address)

Harriet Tubman. *Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.*
(attributed to Harriet Tubman)

Martin Luther King. *Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only Love can do that.* (MLK Memorial)

Jane Goodall. *What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make* (Jane Goodall, public remarks on responsibility and change)

John Lewis. *Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we called the Beloved Community.* (Across That Bridge: A Vision for Change, 2017)

Malala Yousafzai. *I raise up my voice – not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard... we cannot succeed when half of us are held back.* (UN Youth Assembly speech, 2013)

Franklin Roosevelt. *...future generations will know that here in the middle of the twentieth century, there came a time when men [sic] of good will found a way to unite, and produce, and fight to destroy the forces of ignorance and intolerance and slavery and war.* (Feb 1943)

10. Develop Yourself by Voting

Voting can help you grow... even when your candidates lose!!

Expand your understanding of the world. Every election shines a spotlight on issues that affect your community, state, country, and world. Use your Voter Power to *learn about the issues you care about*—and those emerging on the horizon -- from AI and the environment to geopolitics and the economy. Then learn where candidates stand.

Sharpen your thinking. Today's challenges are complex. Get better at spotting misinformation, finding facts, and evaluating competing claims. Listen critically. Consider both short- and long-term consequences. *Practice thinking rather than reacting.*

Become a better citizen. Elections invite us to step back and reflect on our *role in a democracy*. What do you stand for? What trade-offs are you willing to make? Why is voting important to you? What kind of country do you want to help create? Citizenship grows stronger when we engage with these questions.

Develop a wiser relationship with power. Voting is an act of power. You *delegate some of your own power* to elected leaders. Be aware of the emotional pull of parties, candidates, and political movements. Understand those feelings—but *vote with a clear eye*.

Every election is an opportunity to learn, think, reflect, and grow. Use your vote not only to shape the future of your country, but also to shape the person you are becoming.



Update Your Knowledge

- Learn about important issues
- Understand local, state, and global challenges
- Research candidate positions
- Clarify issues you care about



Sharpen Your Thinking

- These are complex times with complex issues
- Refine how you detect truth and misinformation; find facts
- Listen critically to candidates
- Be willing to trade off long and short term benefits



Become a Better Citizen

- Reflect on your role in democracy
- Revisit your personal values
- Consider societal trade-offs
- Ask why voting is important to you
- Explore ways to engage in the voting process

10. Develop Yourself by Voting



Evolve Your Relationship with Power

- Do you have a healthy view of authority?
- Are there any emotional hooks?
- Who is your ideal power figure?
- Have past positive/negative experiences influenced your choices
- Use your power with clear eyes



What Do You Want to LEARN Through Voting?

- More about challenges my community, state and country face
- Understand problems and issues better
- Feel more involved as a citizen
- Understand how I view power – mine and others
- Clarify what is important to me
- Clarify my vision for the country

11. Your Vote Matters Even When Your Candidate Loses

Yes, your vote matters, even if your candidate loses.

Close elections are often decided by a handful of votes. In 2008, Minnesota's Senate race was decided by just 312 votes. In 2020, one Iowa congressional race was decided by only 6 votes. *Every vote counts.*

Democracy is a community project. During South Africa's first democratic election in 1994, nearly 87% of eligible citizens voted, many waiting for hours to exercise a hard-won right. In the 2022 U.S. midterm elections, fewer than half of eligible voters participated. What if every eligible person voted?

Voting is an act of citizenship. Whether your family has been here for generations or you became a citizen by choice, your vote is a statement that this country and its future matter to you.

Not in a battleground state? Your vote still helps shape the balance of power in Congress, state government, and local communities. And, your vote counts as a statement even if your candidate loses.

Step into your Voter Power. Cast your vote. Wear that "I Voted" sticker with pride.

**Your vote is a small but mighty statement
It helps shape the future**

11. Your Vote Matters, Even When Your Candidate Loses

Every Vote Counts

- 2016 NH Senate: won by 1,000 votes
- 2018 FL Senate: won by 10,000 votes
- 2008 MN Senate: won by 312 votes
- 2020 IA House: won by 6 votes
- 2020 NY House: won by 109 votes
- 2020 Presidential: GA won by 0.24%, AZ by 0.31% of the vote

A More Perfect Democracy

- 1994 South Africa: 86.9% turnout
- 2020 US Presidential: 66.8% turnout
- 2022 US Midterms: 46.8% turnout

- Democracy evolves through voter participation
- Your vote contributes to national progress - win or lose

Your Vote

- A right and responsibility
- Makes you an active member of US community
- Honors sacrifices of those who fought for right to vote
- Cherished by your ancestors
- Desired by many globally

Every State and District Matters

Not in a battleground state?

- Every state counts for presidential electors
- All states are vital for Senate and House control
- Local and state elections have direct impact on your life
- High turnout sends a strong message about civic engagement

Step into Your Voter Power

- You help shape your country's future
- You honor those who fought for your right to vote
- You join a community of engaged citizens
- You make your voice heard on issues that matter
- You contribute to the strength of democracy



12. Check Your Registration & Logistics!

Amidst this year's amped up concerns about voter fraud and security, it's important to update your citizenship credentials. Here is what to do to make sure that when you cast your vote, it will be accepted.

Very important NOW: Confirm your VOTER REGISTRATION

- Go to <https://www.vote.org/am-i-registered-to-vote/> OR <https://www.eac.gov>
- Enter your name and address
- Review your registration status, or register to vote.
- Re-register if your registration is incorrect

Decide HOW and WHERE you will vote

- Check out <https://www.usa.gov/find-polling-place> to find where you should vote, if in person. It contains locations for all states and communities.
- Check out how to vote by mail or vote early...and location of drop boxes
- Find and record your voting location if you will vote in person

13. Do Your Homework



1. Identify the ISSUES you care about. These are the top ten from US surveys. Pick the two or three that are at the top of your list

- Cost of living and inflation
- Jobs, wages, and the overall economy
- Health care costs and access
- Retirement security, Social Security, and Medicare
- Immigration and border policy
- Crime, public safety, and drugs (including fentanyl)
- Democracy, election integrity, and political stability
- Abortion and reproductive rights
- Climate change, extreme weather, and energy policy
- Government spending, deficits, and taxes
- Other?

Get FACTS about your key ISSUES

Check out the **Fact Briefs** section of www.ClaimYourVoterPower.org

Go to the non-partisan <https://usafacts.org/>

Ask AI to identify the facts on your issues (See *next section*) Confirm or change your list of top issues based on new information

• Get FACTS about your CANDIDATES

- Ask **AI** (see next section)
- Go to <https://www.ballotready.org> for facts about ANY local, state, and national candidate on YOUR ballot
 - Put in your address
 - Follow links for specific candidate websites and information
- Go to <https://www.Congress.gov> or www.GovTrack.us to see how your CURRENT ELECTED OFFICIALS are performing
 - What bills they have SPONSORED?
 - Discover who were most and least absent from Congress

4. DECIDE, with clear eyes who will get YOUR vote

Pick the candidates you think will support policies that are most important for you today and for a better future, and who have the character and moral compass to wield power wisely.?

TIME TO VOTE!

2024, 2026. Claim Your Voter Power. **Free to use and share with attribution.** More at:
www.ClaimYourVoterPower.org

14. Do Your Homework - Get Help from AI

Voting can be overwhelming. AI can help. It is a powerful research partner—but only if you are really curious to know the facts and use good prompts (questions.) Poor questions produce shallow answers. Better questions produce better information.

AI searches are free on *ChatGPT.com*, *Claude.ai*, *Gemini.Google.com*, *Perplexity.ai*, *copilot.microsoft.com*.

Here are some **PROMPTS** to help you *prepare for high quality voting*.

Prompts to help you RESEARCH AN ISSUE

- Ask: *"Give me objective information about [ISSUE]. Separate facts from opinions. Summarize the strongest arguments from different perspectives. Show where experts agree and disagree. Provide links to the most credible sources and current data."*

Prompts to help you COMPARE CANDIDATES

- Ask: *"Compare [CANDIDATE A] and [CANDIDATE B] on [ISSUE]. Use their voting records, public statements, campaign websites, and independent fact-checking sources. Distinguish promises from actions."*

Prompts to help you TEST A CLAIM

- Ask: *"I heard this claim: [INSERT CLAIM]. Is it supported, unsupported, misleading, or disputed? Show the evidence for and against it. Provide the original source and links to fact-checking organizations."*

Prompts to CHALLENGE YOUR OWN THINKING

- Ask: *"I currently believe: [INSERT VIEW]. Present the strongest arguments against my position. What evidence might change my mind? How might reasonable people see this issue differently?"*

ONE FINAL RULE

- Never rely on a single AI answer. Verify important information asking for and using the original sources, data, and references provided.

**AI can help you think.
Don't let it do your thinking for you.**

ChatGPT.com

General-purpose AI that can summarize issues and candidate records when you ask for sources and nonpartisan information.

Gemini.Google.com

Tightly connected to Google search, useful for pulling in recent public information and links while you cross-check sources.

copilot.microsoft.com

Chat + search assistant built into Bing and Microsoft 365, good for quick fact-finding with web links.

14. Do Your Homework Get Help from AI

Claude.ai

Strong at long, detailed, and careful explanations of policies and documents when guided to stay neutral and cite sources.

Perplexity.ai

Designed as an "AI search" tool that automatically shows citations and links for most claims it makes.

These are considered to be reasonably factual, reliable AIs. Always ask for the sources they have used. The facts you rely on YOUR fact checking.

15. Voting Day: Ready, Set, Vote

It's time to vote! Whether you are voting by mail, voting early or on the day, imagine the endorphins (natural feel good chemicals in your body) coming to the surface as self-rewards for helping select leaders, supporting policies you favor, and for playing your part in the evolution of our democracy.

You might say to yourself....

I made a difference, whether my candidates win or lose

I am part of history

My voice matters

It feels good to vote

I'm fortunate to be able to vote

I'm supporting democracy

I fulfilled my obligation

Maybe, if you stand in line to vote, you meet some neighbors and renew your sense of belonging to a community - activating another natural feel-good brain chemical – oxytocin!

Then, when the results come in, you can imagine your one vote as part of the total for the candidates you selected.

If you are worried about how your and others' votes will be counted, or about whether you can trust the results, See the links in the next section about **vote security**. Also check out the Fact Brief on the www.ClaimYourVoterPower.org website

Go for it! Claim the VOTER POWER that is only available to people who live in a democracy.

Ronald Reagan: *Voting is a precious right that for two centuries Americans have fought and died to protect. Let's all honor that sacrifice this election day.*

Radio Address, October 18, 1986)

Voting Day Ready Set Vote!



Visualize Your Impact

- Imagine your vote as part of the total for your candidates
- Picture your contribution to policy decisions
- Envision your role in shaping the future
- See yourself as an active participant in democracy
- Recognize your part in the collective voice of the people



Trust and Verify the Process

- Learn how votes are handled and counted
- Understand the safeguards in place for fair elections
- Get information from credible election websites (see Resources section here)



Claim Your Power

VOTE!!



Your Reward

- *I made a difference*
- *I am part of history*
- *My voice matters*
- *It feels good to vote*
- *I'm fortunate to be able to vote*
- *A better democracy*
- *I fulfilled my obligation*

16. Concerned About Vote Security?

There have been very few instances of voter fraud, and those have not affected election results. But you can check for yourself.

CONCERNED ABOUT SECURITY OF VOTING EQUIPMENT?

- State voting equipment
- State audit requirements

Go to <https://verifiedvoting.org/>

CONCERNED ABOUT SECURITY OF VOTING OFFICES AND PROCESS?

- State and local election offices
- State/local help to register, vote, get results • Information about election security

Go to: <https://www.eac.gov/voters/election-security> for information

**Be alert to attempts to make you
distrust our voting system.
There are many safeguards.
Check for yourself.**

A Lifetime of Learning Shared...

For over a half-century, **Patricia McLagan** advised government and business leaders and those they lead, in the US and globally, on matters related to participative governance, leadership and personal empowerment. She was Board Chair for the Desmond Tutu Peace Foundation, an elected member of the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame, and is the 2026 recipient of the Association for Talent Development's Lifetime Achievement Award. She was selected one of the University of Minnesota's College of Adult and Human Development 100 Inspiring Minds for a Century. Among her books: *The Age of Participation: New Governance for the Workplace and the World, Change Is Everybody's Business*, and *The Shadow Side of Power: Lessons for Leaders (and Their Supporters)*. She writes weekly substack.com articles as *The Power Mesh.*, and is the person behind this *Claim Your Voter Power* booklet and www.ClaimYourVoterPower.org

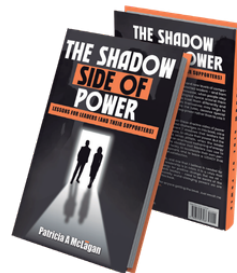
Also part of the Claim Your Voter Power Support Series

www.ClaimYourVoterPower.org

- Fact Briefs on key political and citizen issues
- Worksheets and other Tools to help you prepare to Vote in 2026
- A list of articles and books helping you evolve as a citizen, voter, and powerful player in 21st Century life

[The Power Mesh](#) -an ongoing, public service on Substack.com

- Advocates for competent, ethical, inclusive, and high-consciousness leadership and followership.
- Free, non-partisan



The Shadow Side of Power – Lessons for Leaders and Their supporters

A short adventure story where you learn more about POWER - yours, your leaders

