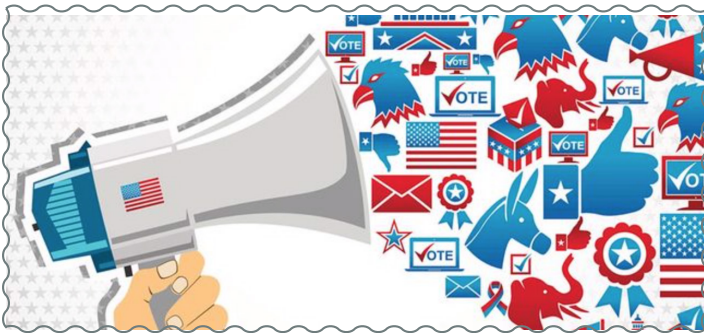


Whether you have an interest in politics, lean left or right, are energized by the current administration, or want to make a change, there are many ways for you to participate. As we know, the upcoming presidential election takes place this November, with many primaries taking place now. While age may hamper the ability to participate, some of these apply to students, and other activism ideas may apply heading into adulthood.



1. Know your local legislators

You should not be intimidated contacting a government representative. There are several online sources, including commoncause.org, where you can find a list of representatives. After discovering their website or profile, you can find the bills they have introduced, committees they served on, and political contributions they have received.

2. Contact them, have them listen

Do you have a social issue or topic that you feel needs attention or changes? While social media is mostly ineffective, a letter or email sent to a state office of your senator or representative (instead of Washington, D.C.) gets better results. A well constructed and communicated issue might get you a call from a representative, so include a phone number.

3. Attend meetings or events

A *town hall* event is where you, in person, can make your actual voice heard in front of local politicians who can do something about it. Your congressperson will usually have a schedule of town hall meetings on their website, or you can check out your city's website as well. Alternatively, you can attend *city council* meetings to get an up-close view of what is important to your city's legislators.

4. Join a group or political organization

Join a group that has the same beliefs, or join an association, and your cause will be magnified. A non-partisan group like the League of Women Voters is an excellent way to get informed, or you can choose

a political group that aligns with your values. Your state has a chapter of your political affiliation (ex. Democratic, Republican, etc).

5. Join or volunteer with a campaign

If you find a local politician who represents the change you want to see in your community, contact their office to figure out how you can get involved in the campaign! Maybe they will have you stuff mailers or put up signs or some other tedious task, but the boring tasks are what gets stuff done. Attend or organize rallies and events, make sure you are safe and lawful. Alternately, there are always political talks and events going on, probably in your area.

6. Expand your study of history & civics

Just like your study of the Constitution, learn much more about government by studying history and lessons learned. Two useful online resources are usa.gov and the library of congress (loc.gov). Visit a museum, state or national park, or historical society. Share that knowledge with family and friends. Engage in a respectful debate when appropriate.

7. Volunteer inside your community

Align volunteer work with your most important causes. Volunteer at church, at the local VA hospital, at a homeless shelter, or a school. Volunteering is not just about serving others; it's also about making sure the organizations that are important to you continue to serve others.

8. Limit your use of social media

Complaining on social media only gets you so far. Get out, meet people, use your hands, your mind, and your time.

QUESTIONS

EXPRESS YOUR OPINION

1. Will you vote when you are of voting age? _____

Why or why not? _____

2. Is there a topic or organization that you align/agree with that would make you more involved? _____

If so, what is that *cause or group*, and how would you devote your time? _____
