



# AMPLIFY YOUR VOICE

WITH YOUR VOTE!





**DEMOCRACY “DEPENDS ON OUR  
PARTICIPATION; ON EACH OF US  
ACCEPTING THE RESPONSIBILITY OF  
CITIZENSHIP...”**

**-President Barack Obama**

# WHY VOTE?

It is **YOUR RIGHT** as a United States citizen to vote.

*Voting is*

the power to decide who speaks up for you, who writes laws, how money is collected and spent, and how initiatives support our lives in Detroit, in Michigan, and across the country.

*When you don't vote*

those decisions are made for you by anyone else who did vote – by people who may not understand, don't like, or simply aren't aware of your community and its needs.

Many have fought for the right to vote so our **VOICES CAN BE HEARD**, our **COMMUNITIES** can be **REPRESENTED**, and we can **CREATE A FUTURE** we want to live in.

Now it's **YOUR OPPORTUNITY** to let your voice be heard and shape the future of American democracy.

# VOTING IS ABOUT MORE THAN WHO WINS

Voting shows that you can directly make or change a policy that **IMPACTS YOUR LIFE.**

Voting reminds elected officials that you have the power!

Whoever wins, politicians think about how many votes they **DIDN'T** get and what is needed to get that support in the future.

The number of people who vote in your community draws attention and support. The more people who vote, the more attention your community can get.

Votes above the amount needed to win show just how much support an initiative or candidate has.

When a person or an issue wins by a **LARGE MARGIN** (a whole lot of votes), it demonstrates that the issue or candidate is representing the voters well (or at least better than the alternative).



# FORGET THAT NOISE!

## Answering myths about voting.

### 1. Your vote doesn't make a difference.

Only 10,704 votes separated Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton in Michigan in November 2016 - that's close to the number of all the people who live in Highland Park.

### 2. I'm too busy to vote.

Get an absentee ballot. An absentee ballot gives you more time to fill it out at your convenience.

### 3. I don't know anything about the candidates.

Research your ballot! (see pages 11-12)  
Talk to your family and friends.

### 4. Nobody votes.

Not true. Two out of three people voted in the Michigan presidential election between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. Join the crowd!

### 5. I don't like politics.

Politics likes you. "Politics" is made up of people making decisions about the roads you ride on, the water you drink, and the education you receive. Your DPSCD school board, Mayor, and City Council are elected by Detroit voters. Your Wayne County Commission dictates some funding for roads. Your Governor runs the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, which tests our drinking water. Make sure people are making the right decisions on your behalf.

# HOW TO VOTE

## 1. Mark your calendar for Election Day.

2024 Elections are on

*Tuesday, February 27*

*Tuesday, August 6*

*Tuesday, November 5*

Polls are open from **7:00 AM to 8:00 PM.**

Go to [michigan.gov/vote](https://michigan.gov/vote) to find out where your

## 2. Register to vote!

Find all your voter information on [michigan.gov/vote](https://michigan.gov/vote) If you aren't registered, do it right there online!

Register to vote ahead of time **OR** on Election Day in person at the Department of Elections – then vote there too!

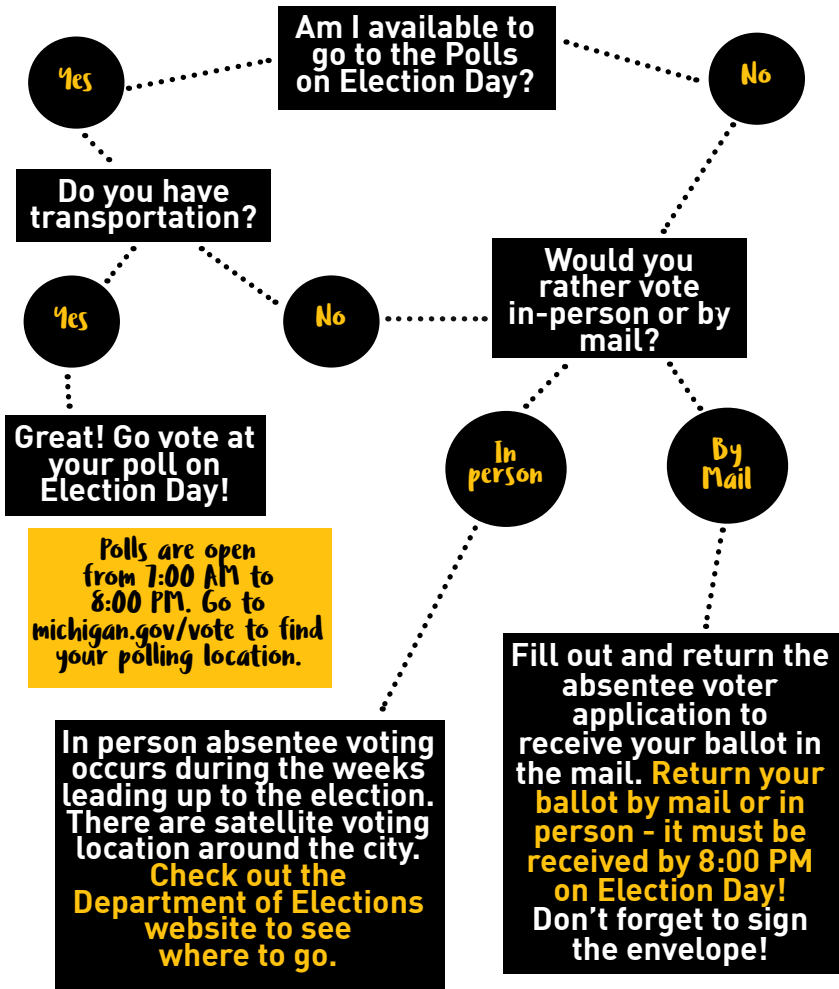


**Detroit Department of Elections**  
2978 W. Grand Blvd.,  
Detroit, MI 48202  
(313) 876-0190  
Mon - Fri 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

## Know Your Rights!

When you vote in-person, poll workers will ask for photo ID. You can vote without a photo ID, but you will have to sign an affidavit, which is a legal document saying you are who you say you are.

# HOW TO VOTE - STEP BY STEP



## Tip

If you need a ride to the polls on Election Day, check for discounts from ride-sharing apps like Uber, Lyft, and Lime. Neighborhood organizations, churches, and even candidates might be coordinating volunteers to offer free rides to the polls, but you may want to call ahead of time.



Visit [michigan.gov/vote](https://michigan.gov/vote) to get your absentee application sent to you.

# MY VOTING PLAN

**IT'S EASIER TO VOTE WHEN YOU'VE CREATED A PLAN FOR YOURSELF.**

Fill this out and have confidence that you know what to do, when, where, and how.

In-Person	In-Person Absentee	Absentee by Mail
I Will Vote on Election Day	I Will Vote on Election Day	I Will Vote Before Election Day by mail.
_____	_____	_____
at my polling location	at the following satellite location	I will mail my absentee application by this date:
_____	_____	_____
I expect to vote:	I expect to vote:	I will make sure I sign my absentee ballot.
<input type="checkbox"/> Before school/work <input type="checkbox"/> At lunch <input type="checkbox"/> After school/work	<input type="checkbox"/> Before school/work <input type="checkbox"/> At lunch <input type="checkbox"/> After school/work	I will put my complete absentee ballot in the mail by this date:
I will get to the polls by:	I will get to the polls by:	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> getting a ride <input type="checkbox"/> walking/biking <input type="checkbox"/> catching a bus <input type="checkbox"/> driving myself <input type="checkbox"/> other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> getting a ride <input type="checkbox"/> walking/biking <input type="checkbox"/> catching a bus <input type="checkbox"/> driving myself <input type="checkbox"/> other _____	



**Tip**

Look at your ballot before the election at [Michigan.gov/vote](https://michigan.gov/vote). Make a list of who and what you support and take it with you to vote.



# WHAT'S ON YOUR BALLOT?

Your ballot may be long, or it may be short. **Who and what you vote on changes every year!**

You not only **vote for people**, you can also **vote on policies and ideas**.

In 2020, you can vote for the **President of the United States**, and you'll also have the opportunity to vote in city, county, and state elections.

You may also be able to vote for an **initiative** (new law!), **referendum** (old law!), **constitutional change** (powerful law that makes rules for other laws!) or a **millage** (property tax!).

**For general elections in November**, you can vote a straight party ticket at the top of your ballot to support only one political party. All candidates of that party will receive your vote.

**The non-partisan section of your ballot has to be filled out separately** – this section isn't connected to a political party and has offices like judges and school board members, plus initiatives and millages!

Don't forget to always check the back of your ballot!



Janice Winfrey  
City Clerk  
City of Detroit

# Elections in 2024!

## February 27 - Presidential Primary

In Michigan, you can pick which presidential primary to vote in - either the Democrat or Republican party (even if you aren't a member), but you can't vote in both!

**Uncomfortable with that? You could ask for a non-partisan ballot without the presidential candidates and only vote on local initiatives.**

Don't forget to check out the materials in this zine to help you prepare for this election!

## August 6 - Primary Election

In Michigan, you can pick which party primary to vote in and choose amongst the Democrat candidates or Republican candidates in elections such as state representative, county commissioner, and members of the U.S. Senate.

## November 5 - General Election

This year's general election includes the President of the United States and members of the U.S. House of Representatives, one U.S. Senator, the Michigan House of Representatives, the Michigan Senate, the Wayne County Prosecutor, the Detroit School Board, judges, etc.



# HOW TO RESEARCH WHAT'S ON MY BALLOT

Now that you know what's on your ballot, you can **research** the office, the candidates, and the issues to **decide who and what you support!**

You can **find out about the items on your ballot** online and from the Department of Elections. Go to **[michigan.gov/vote](https://michigan.gov/vote)** to look at a sample ballot.

You can also learn about them from the mail you get at home, TV, and radio **BUT** those are typically ads – messages trying to convince you to make a certain decision. Use those along with your own research.

**Think critically** about all the information you find and make **YOUR OWN DECISION.**



## Tip

Write down your choices ahead of time so you know how to fill out your ballot! Don't worry – you can get a new ballot if you spoil your first one (incorrectly cast a vote, use the wrong color pen, etc).

# RESOURCES TO HELP YOU KNOW YOUR STUFF!

Any information you find may be:

- **Non-partisan** - independent of any political parties
- **Unbiased (Objective)** - representing facts without favor or opinions
- **Partisan** - supporting a particular political party
- **Biased** - showing favor one way or another, which could be influenced by personal feelings, tastes, or opinions. Bias may be good or bad.

## In-Person Resources

Source	Non-partisan	Unbiased	Partisan	Biased
Candidate forums in churches or community centers	Depending on who is hosting the forum, it could be any of these. Read the promotional materials to determine what kind of forum it is.			
Candidate meet & greets - Meet the candidate in person			★	★
Local political party meetings and events			★	★
Talking with friends and family	Your friends and family may be learning with you, or they might already have strong opinions. Talking things over with them, you might become more clearn about your own opinions.			



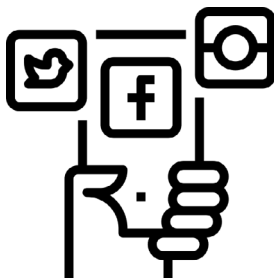
## Online Resources

Source	Non-partisan	Unbiased	Partisan	Biased
InformDetroit.org	★	★		
Vote'11.org	★	★		
Ballotpedia.org	★	★		
Citizens Research Council crcmich.org	★	★		
Candidate Websites			★	★
Websites for or against ballot initiatives			★	★
Bridge Magazine bridgemi.org	★	★		
Local News (Detroit Free Press, Detroit News, etc.)	Depending on who is hosting the content, it could be any of these. Read or listen carefully to determine if the content is biased or partisan.			
National News (CNN, Fox News, Washington Post, etc.)	Depending on who is hosting the show, it could be any of these. Read or listen carefully to determine if the content is biased or partisan.			
Podcasts	Depending on who is hosting the podcast, it could be any of these. Read or listen carefully to determine if the content is biased or partisan.			

# WHAT ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA?

**False social media posts and visuals are common.**  
Learn how to spot fake news with these helpful tips from Bridge Magazine:

1. **Read more than the headline** and see if you recognize information you know is false.
2. **Check your biases** – is this something you already kind of believe?
3. **Read the “About” page on the publication** – if there isn’t one, it could be a shady site.
4. **Research the author.**
5. **Click the links.**
6. **Is anybody else reporting it?**
7. **Is it a joke?**
8. **Look at the date** – many times, outdated information is posted and can cause confusion.
9. **Examine the URL** – is it a .com, .org, or a weird ending?
10. **Do a reverse-image search.**



Source: “How to Spot Fake News,” Bridge Magazine.  
<https://www.bridgemag.com/michigan-truth-squad/how-spot-fake-news>.

# CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE - HOW TO LISTEN WHEN A POLITICIAN TALKS

Going to a candidate forum or watching candidate videos online or TV? Use the 5 P's of Political Speech to identify candidates you may want to support or set to the side.

1.

Platitudes/Pandering

**General moral statements that don't say anything new.** These statements play to people's existing biases and don't offer specific actions the candidate will take.

2.

Pants on Fire

**A false claim or statement,** whether intentionally so or not.

3.

Pivot

**Briefly responds, but shifts** to a different topic. This can be a strategy to keep the focus on the candidate's priorities.

4.

Pertinent

**Directly responds to the question.** The statement demonstrates understanding about the role of the office or knowledge about the issue.

5.

Potshot

**An unfounded or irrelevant criticism** of an opponent's character that doesn't impact job performance (like gender or religion).

# 5 P'S OF POLITICAL SPEECH - EXAMPLES

1.

Example

## Platitudes/Pandering

"I was born and bred in this city. I'm from the eastside. Ya'll know me! Now vote for me!"  
(These are general statements that do not explain their qualifications for the job.)



2.

Example

## Pants on Fire

"When I'm elected Mayor, my first executive order will be to make every single Detroit Police Officer live in Detroit. If you work for this city, you have to live in this city."  
(In 1999, the Michigan legislature made it illegal to require employees to live in the city where they work.)

3.

Example

## Pivot

"Too much crime is happening near bus stops and on buses. My plan for DDOT will reimagine our bus routes and add electric buses."  
(The candidate does not offer any solutions to the problem of crime.)

4.

Example

## Pertinent

"Simply put, crime does not abate until the police presence increases. New York solved its crime problem with more police and still has more officers per resident than we do. I will allocate the dollars needed for 300 extra officers on our streets."  
(The candidate offers a specific problem and steps to address crime.)

5.

Example

## Potshot

"Being a Detroit leader is more than a family name. I'm here because of what I've done. My opponent is here because of what their daddy has done."  
(The candidate mocks their opponent for not having the skills to do the job.)



# WANT TO DO MORE?

**Work at a poll on Election Day if you're 16 or older.** You can get paid and learn new skills. Call the Department of Elections at (313) 876-0190 or visit their website at <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/elections>.

**Write a letter!** All of your lawmakers have public contact information. Write, call, or even text them to tell them about the issues and policies you care about.

**Go to a meeting** of lawmakers, such as a City Council meeting or a Mayor's town hall or a school board meeting. These are the people you will vote for (or not). Check out [detroitmi.gov](https://detroitmi.gov) for a full list of meetings.

Pick a **friend or family member** who doesn't vote and take the time to talk to them about why it's important to vote. It might take more than one conversation, but you will have changed a person and the country for the better. Or get your entire house to vote!

**Volunteer for a campaign or cause.** Spend time getting other people to learn about and support important decisions.

Use local apps such as **Improve Detroit** to get active in your community by reporting issues and **ETA Detroit** to see bus routes and schedules.





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