



FEMINIST MAJORITY FOUNDATION

## CHOICES CAMPUS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

WORLD'S LARGEST PRO-CHOICE STUDENT NETWORK

# GET OUT HER VOTE 2017

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## IT'S TIME TO GET OUT HER VOTE!

The Feminist Majority Foundation's Get Out Her Vote Campaign (GOHV) is the nation's only student-led voter education and registration initiative aimed at increasing young women's voter participation. There is so much at stake at the polls – we are underrepresented at all levels of government, including campus student governments, and the policies we vote on will affect us and women around the world.

## WHY HER VOTE COUNTS

The mobilization of progressive students has the potential to change the political landscape across the nation. In Virginia—a state once plagued by TRAP laws—the 2014 Attorney General's race was decided by about 1,000 votes. As a result, the AG worked with the Governor to prevent the closure of numerous health clinics, thus protecting access to abortion.

Participating and voting in every election – federal, state, county and municipal – is incredibly important. Typically in off year nonpresidential elections, voter turnout is significantly lower. That means those elections are determined by much smaller margins of votes and your participation is even more impactful!

Students and young people must turn out to vote in every election and forge a habit of voting that will continue to develop with age. When women's turnout increases, our voices become even more powerful. There are 49 million eligible young voters, outnumbering 45 million eligible seniors, 65+. Though young voters comprise 21% of the eligible voting population in America, turnout has been consistently low. Among women, 18-24-year olds vote less than any other age group. But when we turnout to vote, we influence results!

## THE GENDER GAP

Increasing voter participation among young women has the power to transform politics. The measurable difference in the way women and men vote and view issues is called the gender gap. The gap can be quite significant and since 1980, has frequently determined the outcome of elections. In 2012, women's votes were decisive in reelecting President Obama and determining the outcomes of the equal marriage

ballot measures. The gender gap is also intersectional. A very large portion of the gap is made up of African-American and Latina women, single women and women who self identify as feminist. Gender gaps have also been decisive in many congressional and gubernatorial races since 1982.

## WOMEN ARE UNDER-REPRESENTED

As result of the 2016 election, women now represent 21% of the Senate and 19.1 percent (or 83 members) of the House of Representatives. While women make up more than half of the US population, only 19.4% of Congress (104 women total). Of state legislatures, women make up only 24.8%. The numbers are clear—there's still lot of work needed to increase women's representation in Congress and at the state and local levels.

## HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1998

Colleges and universities have an obligation under federal law to make voter registration and voting available to all students. The federal Higher Education Act of 1998 (HEA) requires that all institutions of higher education must make a "good faith effort" to provide voter registration forms for all enrolled students. However, most colleges and universities do not live up to this mandate. Students have the right and power to educate your administrators on the existence of this provision in the HEA and hold them accountable for implementing it!

**"The institution...will make a good faith effort to distribute a mail voter registration form, requested and received from the State, to each student enrolled in a degree or certificate program and physically in attendance at the institution, and to make such forms widely available to students at the institution."**

**--Higher Education Act, 1998**

The HEA should be the foundation of your plan of action. Your goal is to partner with your administration, student government and student groups to fulfill the spirit of this critical law and to increase voter education, mobilization and turnout on your campus.



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## YOUR VOTE COUNTS!

Feminist students need to register, vote, and run for government in record numbers. Under-representation begins in student governments, so run for office on your campus and GOHV in 2017 and beyond!

## WHAT IS VOTER SUPPRESSION?

Voter suppression can be defined as any effort that is put in place to disenfranchise or discourage certain groups within the electorate from exercising their constitutional right to vote. While voter suppression sounds like a thing of the past, there have been increasing attacks on voting access for people of color—particularly Black and Latinx voters, low income people, students and elderly women. According to Ballotpedia, 31 states enforced voter identification requirements in 2016, with 18 states requiring voters to give photo identification and 15 accepting another form of identification. The 2016 elections were the first national elections that felt the effects of removal of essential protections in the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Many were affected by targeted voter suppression which harmed the electorate in various ways.

## WHO IS AFFECTED BY VOTER SUPPRESSION?

Voter suppression affects the whole political process, but has particularly severe effects on Black and Latinx voters, low income people/families, the elderly, women, and students. By taking certain voters out of the democratic process, it is the clearest way to ensure that discriminatory laws, policies and procedures are passed and kept in place only to benefit a very small percentage of the population.

An example of the law being used to suppress the vote are the new voter ID laws many Southern states passed following the removal of Section Four of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in 2013. The Supreme Court case, *Shelby County v. Holder*, held that it was unconstitutional for certain states with a history of voter disenfranchisement to go through a process of prior approval from the Supreme Court before they could make any changes to their voting laws. With the removal of this key section, many of these states passed laws to suppress the vote including reducing the time of early voting, reducing the number of polling places, and passing restrictive voter ID laws.

## ACCESS TO VOTING EQUALS ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS, CIVIL RIGHTS, CLIMATE JUSTICE, HIGHER EDUCATION & LGBTQ RIGHTS!

*“The jurisdiction must establish that the proposed voting change does not have the purpose and will not have the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race or color or membership in a language minority group.”*

- Section Four, Voting Rights Act of 1965

## HOW DO AUTHORITIES SUPPRESS THE VOTE?

There are many ways that people can have their votes suppressed. Some methods of voter suppression are gerrymandering, passing harsh voter identification laws, eliminating early voting, Sunday voting and same day registration, reducing voting machines in targeted districts, moving voting locations to make them inaccessible to voters, voter roll purges and others.

Gerrymandering, or drawing legislative district lines to underrepresent a targeted constituency or favor a particular party serves to devalue a person's vote and violates the concept of one person, one vote.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

I'm glad you asked! There are many ways you can defend the right to vote in your state.

Make sure your campus is briefed on all materials they may need for voting, since the type of identification required varies from state to state. For detailed voter ID requirements by state, visit the National Conference of State Legislators at [ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id.aspx](http://ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id.aspx).



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Familiarize yourself with the Higher Education Act of 1998. This federal act requires higher education institutions to make a “good faith effort” to provide voter registration forms to all students. Work with your campus administration to ensure they are fulfilling the mandates put forth in the Higher Education Act. It’s your right!

Partner with local nonpartisan groups who are working on voter defense initiatives to get trained in voter defense and legal observation. Your testimony and witness could be used valuably if someone’s rights are being suppressed at the polls.

## HOW TO LAUNCH GOHV

GOHV activities will energize your group and help you become established as a powerful and visible multi-issue group on campus. As you increase the votes and voices of students this semester, you will also build key alliances with other student groups.

### STEP ONE: PREPARE (4-6 MONTHS BEFORE ELECTION)

1. Review the GOHV toolkit. FMLA leadership should designate GOHV chairs to coordinate the campaign and volunteers, and invite other student groups to join the campaign.
2. Work with FMF’s National Campus Organizers to coordinate GOHV efforts with nearby campuses.
3. Know the rules. Check out [rockthevote.com](http://rockthevote.com) for information on your state’s rules.
4. Build your GOHV campaign around political issues that will resonate with your group and campus.
5. Contact your county registrar to obtain voter registration forms, train to become poll workers, and petition for voting machines on campus. Download them from the internet, or call your Secretary of State or County Registrar to find the nearest location to pick up a large supply.
6. Immediately schedule trainings to walk through your state’s voter registration form, instructions, guidelines, and voter registration deadline.
7. Some states require you to become deputized in order to register others. This is usually just a process to make sure you understand how to properly register voters. Some states let you do it online. Contact your county registrar to see if this is a requirement for a voter drive.
8. The GOHV chairs can recruit volunteers at general membership meetings, events, tabling, etc. Have committee sign-up sheets, voter pledges and pens. Remind students that voting around the issues you’ve selected is an easy way to make a difference in their community.
9. Develop an action plan that includes special emphasis on registering feminists and students of color.

### STEP TWO: REGISTER

1. Volunteers should begin by registering people they know – have them register their friends and classmates
2. Table in high-traffic areas with voter registration forms and GOHV materials. Draw attention to your table with balloons, signs, and banners. Have plenty of registration forms, voter pledge sheets, and a list of polling stations on hand. (No materials should reference political parties or any candidate!) Don’t just sit behind the table – engage everyone passing by, and ask them to sign the GOHV voter pledge. Encourage students to register to vote using their local address, and tell them you will call them to remind them to vote before Election Day. If your state offers early voting, encourage students to vote as early as possible.
3. Contact the chairs of Women’s Studies and other departments that may be interested, like Political Science or Sociology. Ask professors to allow you to pass out voter registration forms at the beginning of class and explain how to fill out the form, collecting completed forms at the end of your presentation.
4. Talk about the issues without endorsing candidates or political parties, and let students know how to sign up to get paid as a county poll worker.



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5. Deliver voter registration forms the same day as gathering them. Although state laws vary, some states require same day delivery. If you don't turn in the forms properly, you could be violating very punitive state laws. You must know your state's requirements.

### STEP THREE: MOBILIZE

1. If your state offers early voting, publicize it widely. Disseminate information about early voting locations, ID requirements, and times through tabling, classroom visits, social media, and posters. Organize transport for students to get to the early voting locations.
2. Leading up to Election Day, blanket campus with information about where and when students can vote. Leaflet with the GOHV FAQs handout to help students who may have questions.
3. Some states allow voter registration on Election Day. Research and know the laws for your state (check [www.feminist.org](http://www.feminist.org)), and pass out flyers reminding students who have not registered to vote before the deadline that they may do so on Election Day.
4. On the day before Election Day, volunteers should set up a phone-bank to call students who signed voter pledges, remind them to vote, and let them know poll locations. If the main student polling location is off-campus, find out if the student needs a ride.
5. Election Day – Organize voting rushes on Election Day to rally and lead hundreds of students to polling locations. Host an election watch party after the polls close.

### HOW TO SPREAD THE WORD

1. Create GOHV Ads, Posters, Flyers and Stickers. Use posters to advertise GOHV meetings, registration events, and Election Day activities. The more students see your materials, the more likely they are to read them and take action!
2. Voter Educational Materials: Use GOHV materials for leafleting and at your voter registration tables. Provide as much information as possible and let everyone know what's at stake for the upcoming election. Also use facts as talking points.
3. Press: Designate an FMLA media chair to do interviews. Invite press to cover GOHV activities on campus. Submit letters to the editor and op-eds to your campus newspaper about the importance of voting and about your GOHV activities. Ask the campus radio and newspaper to run a series on student voting rights and the issues at stake in the election. Ask the school newspaper to run your posters as a PSA to urge students to get registered and vote.
4. Sponsor voter events. Some ideas:
  - Vote-a-palooza: Student Voter Registration Week: Organize a week of voter registration activities on your campus the week before registration ends in your state. Table outside the cafeteria with voter registration forms during meals. Work with professors to register your classmates to vote. Recruit women's athletic teams, sororities and resident assistants to collect registration cards and vote.
  - Countdown to Election Day: Host rallies, teach-ins, dorm storms, and more to mobilize students to vote on Election Day! Tell students where to vote!
  - Vote-In: Host an event at a central place on campus, like your student center, and invite students to stop in to register and pledge to vote. Supply food if you have the funding, and make it an exciting event. This is an opportunity not only to get students registered but also to educate them about the issues at stake in the election.
  - Organize a march to the polls: If you will have polls on campus, organize voting rushes on Election Day to rally and bring students to the polls.



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## STUDENT VOTING FAQs

Voting rules vary from state to state, but this sheet should answer some of the most common questions. As always, don't hesitate to contact your county registrar of voters, Secretary of State, or your FMF campus organizer for further assistance.

### **Q: CAN I REGISTER TO VOTE WHERE I GO TO SCHOOL?**

**A:** YES. In the 1979 U.S. Supreme Court decided in *United States v. Symm* that you have the right to register and vote where you go to school, even if you don't intend to reside there permanently or live in a dorm room. Depending on the state, certain identification is required when you register to vote the first time. Your Social Security number or a driver's license number should be sufficient. You may also be able to use your college ID card or other picture ID for verification. You can use a recent utility bill or bank statement as proof of your current street address.

### **Q: WILL MY FINANCIAL AID OR STUDENT LOANS BE AFFECTED IF I REGISTER TO VOTE AT AN ADDRESS DIFFERENT FROM MY PARENTS' ADDRESS?**

**A:** NO. Where you register to vote has no effect on your scholarships, student loans, health and car insurance, or tuition payments. If you hear otherwise, challenge the information source and contact an FMF organizer.

### **Q: SHOULD I REGISTER AT MY PARENTS' HOME ADDRESS AND VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT?**

**A:** We always urge students to register to vote where they will be living on Election Day so there is no chance of missing the opportunity to vote. You have a vested interest in voting where you go to school, live, and spend nine months or more out of the year. Although you can vote by absentee ballot, you shouldn't rely on your parent(s) remembering to send your application for an absentee ballot or risk requesting an absentee ballot too late. Make your vote count in the state and county where you live.

### **Q: WHAT KIND OF ID WILL I NEED TO SHOW WHEN I GO TO VOTE ON ELECTION DAY?**

**A:** The type of identification required varies from state to state. Know the rules in your state. For detailed voter ID requirements by state, take a look at the resources available from the National Conference of State Legislators: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id.aspx>.

### **Q: WHAT DO I DO IF I REGISTERED TO VOTE AND MY NAME IS NOT ON THE ROSTER AT MY POLLING PLACE WHEN I GO TO VOTE ON ELECTION DAY?**

**A:** Demand a provisional ballot and vote. According to federal law, you are guaranteed a provisional ballot. If the election is close, the state is required to verify and count all provisional ballots.