



Get Out The Vote 2014

A Voting and Election Guide for New Jersey Citizens
with Developmental Disabilities and their Families.



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2014 Get Out The Vote Guide

Voting is an important opportunity to make your voice heard about the candidates and issues that matter most in your life. While last year New Jersey citizens elected state representatives, this year the ballot is comprised of federal candidates who work to pass national legislation in Washington, DC. This includes members of the US House of Representatives and one of New Jersey's two US Senate seats.

The Get Out The VOTE 2014 Guide is a tool to help you learn more about the voting process, how to vote and where to learn more about who will appear on this year's ballot. It is essential to have information about the candidates and the process before you vote. Among other things, elected officials shape policy and make decisions about health care, education, justice and civil rights.

Whether you are a self-advocate or you care for a loved one with an intellectual or developmental disability, please use this Guide and cast your vote in person or submit a vote by mail before the polls close on November 4, 2014.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is voting?

Voting is your right. Voting is your choice. Voting is your voice.

Why should you vote?

Voting allows you to elect people that will represent you and fight for the issues you believe in.

Who can vote?

To vote you must be a citizen of the United States, at least 18 years old and registered to vote.

You cannot vote if you are in jail, on parole or on probation. You must also be able to understand what it means to vote. It is **not** legal to deny someone the right to vote based on the fact that he or she has an intellectual or other disability. Only a judge can declare that an individual lacks capacity to vote. It is **not** legal to deny someone the right to vote based on the fact that he or she has a legal guardian. It is **not** legal to deny someone the right to vote based on the fact that he or she lives in an institution, developmental center or group home. It is **not** legal to deny someone the right to vote based on the fact that he or she receives services or supports related to a disability.

When is voting?

Voting takes place on Tuesday, November 4, 2014.

How can I register to vote?

You can register to vote by mailing in the Voter Registration Application to your county clerk. You can also register to vote in person at the Office of the County Commissioner of Registration. The application can be printed from the New Jersey Division of Elections web site: www.state.nj.us/state/elections. You must register by October 14, 2014. Visit <http://www.state.nj.us/state/elections/voting-information-local-officials.html> to find your county clerk.

How can I vote by mail instead of in person?

If you want to vote by mail instead of in person, it is a 2-step process.

Step 1 - Complete and return your Vote By Mail Application. You can download a Vote By Mail Application online at: http://www.state.nj.us/state/elections/mail-in_doe.html or call the office of the New Jersey Division of Elections at [609-292-0034](tel:609-292-0034). After completing the application, mail it to your County Clerk. You can mail the application to the office of the County Clerk up to 7 days before the election. Or you can return your application in person to the office of the County Clerk until 3:00pm the day before the election.

Step 2 - Complete & return your Vote by Mail Ballot. (A Vote by Mail Ballot used to be called an absentee ballot.) After receiving your application, the County Clerk will send you the Vote by Mail Ballot. Follow the instructions on the ballot to vote. You must follow directions on the ballot EXACTLY or your vote may not be counted. For example, you have to sign the certificate attached to the back flap of the envelope after sealing it. To have your ballot count as a vote, you must return the ballot to the office of the Board of Elections before polls close on Election Day.

You can only vote ONE TIME in any election. If you have already asked for a Vote by Mail Ballot, you may NOT vote in person during that election.

What do I need to vote in person?

You must bring proof that you live in your county before you can register to vote and cast your vote on Election Day. Proof can include a driver's license, a student ID, a government issued ID or a document with your name and address on it such as a bank statement or government issued check like a Social Security check.

Where do I vote?

Polling places are typically set up at schools, libraries or firehouses in your town. Registered voters are assigned a specific location to vote. To find out where your polling place is and if you are registered, you can visit the NJ Division of Elections web site at www.state.nj.us/state/elections. The web site will also let you know if your polling place is ADA compliant or accessible.

What time is voting?

Voting starts at 6 a.m. and ends at 8 p.m.

What should I do if I go to vote and am told I can't because I have a disability?

If you have a problem on Election Day with being allowed to vote or getting assistance with voting, call Disability Rights NJ at 1-800-922-7233.

Who are the candidates?

The November 2014 ballot will include candidates, from New Jersey's 12 congressional districts, who want to represent you in the US House of Representatives. To find out who is running in your local congressional district, visit New Jersey's Division of Election's web site: <http://nj.gov/state/elections/index.html>. In addition, candidates for one of New Jersey's two US Senate seats will also be on the ballot. The two major political party candidates are current US Senator and Democrat Cory Booker and Republican Jeff Bell.

Ballot Questions:

In addition to voting for candidates, New Jersey citizens will also be asked to weigh in on two ballot questions this November. Below are the two questions that you can review ahead of time. Learning more about them now will help you decide how you want to vote on Election Day.

1. Do you approve of amending the Constitution to dedicate certain State revenues each year for environmental programs? The Constitution now dedicates four percent of the money collected from the Corporation Business Tax to help pay for some environmental programs. This amendment raises the amount from four percent to six percent beginning on July 1, 2019. The money from the new dedication would be used: (1) to preserve and care for open space (Green Acres), farmland, historic sites, and flood-prone areas (Blue Acres); (2) to improve water quality; (3) to pay for polluted site cleanups; and (4) for underground tank removal and cleanup.
2. Do you approve of amending the Constitution to allow a court to order pretrial detention of a person in a criminal case? The Constitution currently requires a court to grant bail to a jailed person in a criminal case before trial. If the person posts bail, the person is released from jail pending trial. The amendment would give a court the option of ordering a person to remain in jail in some situations. The court could order such detention based upon concerns that the person, if released: will not return to court; is a threat to the safety of another person or the community; or will obstruct or attempt to obstruct the criminal justice process.

In Their Own Words: “Why I Vote”



Arthur King, Council One Self-Advocate

I have been a registered voter since 1990. There was a time that I did not vote because I was nervous and had so many questions on the voting process. After receiving support from my staff and family, I realized that I could ask questions and learn about the process before stepping into the voting booth. I believe that no one should miss out on exercising their right to vote just because they have questions or doubts. Voting makes you think about the future and it is an opportunity to support what is best for people. It is important to study the ballot and ask questions before you vote because you want to use your vote to support people who will support everybody. I hold a leadership position in my self-advocacy group, so I know how difficult it can be to make the whole group happy. I have learned that elected officials and leaders need to listen to the suggestions and concerns of the people who voted them into their position.



Carol Carter, Council One Self-Advocate

I moved to a group home with The Arc of Warren County in 1984. Shortly after moving into the community, I became a registered voter. I vote because I hope that the voice of the people will be heard. Voting is an opportunity to support people who will support your needs while making sure the services you use are properly funded and available. Before Election Day, a sample ballot will arrive in the mail; you should take the time out to study the ballot and ask questions about the candidates who are running for office. Even if the legislator you voted for does not win, I still believe that exercising your right to vote is very important and that voting the right people into office is a process.



Joan Migton, Parent

My daughter Barbara lives with the challenges of autism each and every day. As a result, our family focuses on public issues and policies that affect her and thousands of other adults with disabilities. Voting is an essential part of that advocacy. It is the simplest way to have your voice heard. Before an election, check the candidate's websites, voting records, interests, and backgrounds. If you still aren't sure where they stand on issues that are important to you, send an email or make a phone call; be sure that your friends and family get to the polls as well. Remember, if you tolerate it, it won't change. We have the power to promote and create change, but we all must act to make it happen. Advocacy is so important because both state and federal government agencies control funding for programs and services that greatly impact our loved ones. Those who make decisions on these matters are often elected officials who aren't aware of the struggles and needs of families such as our own; so it's important to vote and tell our stories. People who make policy decisions need to hear from us. We can make a phone call, send an email, attend a public hearing on a bill, ask questions at a public forum or town hall meeting, or testify at a budget committee hearing. Another way to be heard is to make an appointment with your legislator. If there is an issue of importance to you and your family, you can bet that there are thousands more who are also concerned.

For more information or additional help, email info@arcnj.org or call (732) 246-2525

ON NOVEMBER 4, 2014

YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE!!