



September, 2021

**Secretary Benson, partners launch MI Vote Matters
high school challenge on National Voter Registration Day**

Program aims to increase young voter knowledge and participation

On National Voter Registration Day, Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson announced a new program with nonpartisan partner organizations seeking to increase young voter knowledge and participation by ensuring that eligible high school seniors register or pre-register to vote.

The **MI Vote Matters** High School Voter Registration Challenge encourages high schools across Michigan to help connect students with their right to vote through civic education and nonpartisan voter registration drives. Schools can strive for the highest voter registration rate and earn recognition from the Secretary of State for the percentage of eligible seniors who have registered or pre-registered:

- Gold for 90% and above
- Silver for 70% and above
- Bronze for 50% and above

“All high schools in the state are invited to participate in the MI Vote Matters challenge and to encourage students who are eligible to register to vote,” Secretary Benson said. “When young people empower themselves as voters, they make our democracy stronger.”

In Michigan, teenage residents who are U.S. citizens and at least 17.5 years old can pre-register to vote and then automatically become active voters once they turn 18. Some students will have their first opportunity to vote in the Nov. 2, 2021, election.

In the MI Vote Matters program, once students have registered or pre-registered to vote, they will submit a pledge to vote card either online or by paper in order for their registration to count toward their school’s participation numbers. The deadline for students to register to vote under the challenge is May 27, 2022.

The Secretary of State’s Office is partnering with several nonpartisan organizations that already have standing high school voter registration programs, including:

- Inspire2Vote, a program of Project High Hopes
- League of Women Voters of Michigan
- Michigan Center for Civic Education
- When We All Vote, an initiative within Civic Nation

“The Michigan Center for Civic Education (MCCE) celebrates the Michigan Department of State for recognizing the importance of engaging all voters, especially those in their most formative years, in the importance of voting,” said Ellen Zwarenstejn, Executive Director of the MCCE.

“Young adult engagement is critical and their perspectives are vital as they help to shape their world as it is now while imagining their own preferred futures. This program integrates the knowledge and the skills for vibrant and healthy civic communities.”

High school administrators can request an action kit at Michigan.gov/MIVoteMatters and will be provided with all the materials needed to get started. The League of Women Voters of Michigan also has a voter registration presentation that is available for use or League members can present the program in person if requested.

"The League of Women Voters is happy to participate in this project, which promotes voter registration among students" said Paula Bowman, Co-President of the League of Women Voters of Michigan. "Young people have a stake in our future and voting is the best and easiest way to participate in our democracy."

Stephanie L. Young, Executive Director of When We All Vote, said her organization also stands ready to help provide students with the tools to get registered and engaged so they are active members of their communities.

“At When We All Vote, we are developing lifelong voters, and that work starts in our high schools. Through our My School Votes program, we know that young people are eager to get involved in our elections and create change in their communities, so we are proud to partner with Secretary of State Benson to ensure Michigan high school students get registered or pre-registered to vote.”

We encourage schools to participate in the MI Vote Matters High School Voter Registration Challenge. By working together, we can educate students of all ages through civic participation.

Michigan high schools can sign up for the challenge at inspire2vote.org/MIVoteMatters.

For more information about the program, contact:
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