

WHO'S WHO? in Virginia Politics



NATIONAL LATINA
INSTITUTE FOR
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH
Salud | Dignidad | Justicia

**STRONG
FAMILIES**



Voting is a public way of saying, “Our families count, and our voices matter!”

Civic engagement means getting everyday folks involved in the decisions that affect our families and communities. Election season is an especially important time for us to speak up, and there are many ways we can all get involved in the process, regardless of our citizenship status or whether we can vote.

Elections matter because elected leaders can make decisions that can either help or hurt our families. Politicians pay more attention to communities who participate in elections. By getting our entire community engaged in the election process, we can make a difference for our families.

If you need to register to vote, sign up for an absentee ballot, or receive reminders about upcoming elections, register at: <https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/> or call (800) 552-9745.

IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES

ELECTION DAY Tuesday, November 8, 2016

Last Day to Register to Vote: Monday, October 17, 2016

The last day to apply for an Absentee Ballot by Mail is Tuesday, November 1, 2016. The last day for In-Person Absentee Voting is Saturday, November 5, 2016. If you have questions about voting absentee by mail, please call (800) 552-9745 or email info@elections.virginia.gov.

FEDERAL ELECTED POSITIONS

US PRESIDENT

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Heads the executive branch of the federal government. Serves for four years with a two-term (eight years) maximum.

- Nominates the heads of all executive departments and federal agencies including Department of Homeland Security.
- Proposes the federal budget for approval by Congress.
- Has the power to veto (reject) bills passed by Congress; Congress can overturn a veto with a two-thirds majority vote.
- Serves as the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.
- Appoints federal judges and nominates Supreme Court justices.



The President sets enforcement priorities for immigration laws. For decades, presidents of both parties have deferred the deportation of millions of people who entered the country without documentation.



Recommends funding levels for programs such as childcare, health-care, and domestic violence services.



Nominates lifetime appointments of federal judges and justices, who rule on issues such as equal rights and privacy.

US Congress • Congress is made of two separate bodies: the House of Representatives and the Senate. Together they form the legislative (law-making) branch of the Federal Government. There are no limits on the number of terms that a member of Congress can serve.

US REPRESENTATIVES

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

There are 435 members of the House of Representatives. All seats in the House are up for re-election every two years. The number of representatives from each state is based on population. Currently Virginia has 11 representatives.

- Makes and passes federal laws.
- Allocates money to federal programs in yearly budget.
- Determines federal tax guidelines.
- Can propose changes to the Constitution.
- Has the power to declare war.



Chooses how programs such as Head Start, Medicaid, Cash Assistance, Social Security, relief for victims of natural disasters, military spending, child care, healthcare, and domestic violence services are funded or cut.



Creates all federal-level laws, including laws governing immigration, healthcare, education, criminal justice, student loan interest rates, labor and environmental protections.

CAN I VOTE EARLY?

Currently, there is no early voting in Virginia. Voters may vote by absentee ballot but must provide a reason. You must either request your ballot by mail before Tuesday, November 1, 2016, or vote absentee in-person in your local city or county office by Saturday, November 5, 2016. A valid excuse includes if you are unable to vote during the set times scheduled due to work schedule.



LOCAL ELECTED POSITIONS

LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

There are 227 Virginia school divisions, and each one has a locally elected school board. Generally, school board members serve staggered terms so that the entire board is not up for election at the same time.

- Adopts policies to guide the school district.
- Hires and evaluates the superintendent for the district.
- Approves the annual budget.



Decides what is taught in local public schools, including health education and family planning.



Makes decisions about school district police security.

BALLOT MEASURE

In Virginia, the State Legislature must refer any constitutional amendment to a vote of the people. Because they are often confusingly worded, it can be hard to tell what you are voting for or against. We wanted to highlight one measure that is of particular concern to our families.

MEASURE

WHAT IT DOES

DOES IT SUPPORT STRONG FAMILIES?

WE URGE YOU TO

QUESTION #1

Makes anti-union language a permanent part of the state constitution

This measure sounds like it protects workers, but it's not true. Virginia should be protecting families, not corporations so that the economy works for everyone, not the wealthy few, which is the opposite of what Question #1 would do. Most states with similar measures are near the bottom in quality-of-life indicators, including average wages for workers.

VOTE NO



WHO CAN VOTE?

You must be 18 and a US citizen to vote. Individuals convicted of a felony who have completed their sentence, parole, and probation, may be eligible to have their voting rights restored. You can check your status online and apply for restoration with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Regardless of your voting status, you can still make a difference!

- Encourage and educate people who can vote.
- Share this guide at your church or with your neighbors.
- Write letters to your local paper about issues you care about.
- Meet or send a letter to your representatives.
- Get involved at the local level—city council, town halls, and more.



WHAT TO BRING TO VOTE

Virginia law **requires** you present an acceptable form of identification (ID) that includes a photo when voting in person at your polling place. Acceptable IDs include:

- Virginia Driver's License or ID card
- Virginia DMV issued Veteran's ID card
- US Passport
- Other government-issued photo identification cards (must be issued by US Government, the Commonwealth of Virginia, or a political subdivision of the Commonwealth)
- Tribal enrollment or other tribal ID issued by one of 11 tribes recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia
- College, university, public or private school student photo identification card (must be located in VA)
- Employee identification card containing a photograph of the voter and issued by an employer of the voter in the normal course of business.

All of the acceptable forms of photo ID can be used up to a year after the ID has expired. If you arrive at your polling place **without** an acceptable form of photo ID, you will be asked to vote a provisional ballot. For more information, contact or visit your nearest Virginia Voter Registration Office or contact the Virginia Department of Elections at (800) 552-9745 or info@elections.virginia.gov.

THE NATIONAL LATINA INSTITUTE FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH is the only national reproductive justice organization dedicated to building Latina power to advance health, dignity, and justice for 28 million Latinas, their families, and communities in the United States through leadership development, community mobilization, policy advocacy, and strategic communications.

NLIRH is a member of **STRONG FAMILIES**, joining more than 170 groups working to change how we think, feel, act, and make policy about families. Strong Families is a project of Forward Together.

For more information, contact: NLIRH VA Latina Advocacy Network at **(571) 436-5673**.

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