

#MomsVote

Voting Discussion Toolkit



Voting!! Most everyone KNOWS they should vote but even during a Presidential election year, as many as 40% of people don't vote. 40% of people are no shows - yikes! And the rates of voting are even lower among younger adults, communities of color, and people with less formal education.

It doesn't have to be that way!

We (ahem, YOU!) can help turn out the vote and have a big impact! Believe it or not, many elections are decided by as few as a hundred votes and sometimes less! So taking a moment to remind people to vote could have a bigger impact than you imagined. Plus, we're a powerful voting block: Women, people of color and young adults are a growing and particularly critical voting block in every election. Women vote at higher rates than men and the "women's vote" is considered critical for many candidates to win. Additionally, there are expected to be 27.3 million Latino citizens who will be eligible to vote this November, including 3.2 million young newly eligible Latino young adults.

Here's where YOU come in! One of the most powerful actions you can take this election is to gather your friends, family, and larger community in a conversation about register to vote and turning out on November 8th (or before).

We know what you might be thinking – "My friends are voters, there's no need to involve them" or "I really don't want to start a political fight!" Have no fear!

We have answers to these legitimate concerns!

- **All of my friends already vote - we're covered here!** Don't worry! You know non-voters! If up to 40% of eligible voters aren't casting ballots in Presidential elections as stats show, then you definitely know SOMEONE who isn't voting (they just might be quiet about their non-voting status) People don't often admit they blew it, but life happens and extra planning always helps. In fact, studies show that people who pledge to vote are significantly more likely to vote on Election Day. Finally, one of the key discussion topics we've outlined in this MomsMeetup toolkit involves discussing, "How can we get other people in our community registered?" In this way, this gathering will be relevant for even the most dedicated voter.
- **Ugh – please, I'd rather not start a political battle in my living room!** Great news, we've crafted discussions that you can have without even talking about candidates once if you don't want to! Seriously. We need people to be talking about how to register to vote, how to encourage other people to register & vote, and other non-controversial stuff like that. We can't guarantee people won't want to talk actual candidates, but you are the host so you can set the ground rules any way you'd like!

So this gathering is great for everyone – we hope you'll give it a go!

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SUGGESTED ELECTION MOMS MEETUP ACTIVITIES

The most satisfying Moms Meetup is one where the host (you!) and participants feel educated, engaged and inspired by the topic and conversation. Creating a welcoming, safe environment for people to share their concerns, values and questions is totally possible and some planning can definitely help.

To support your Moms Meetup planning, we have outlined some optional Meetup activities that you can mix and match to make the most effective gathering for your group size, the time you have and the attendees' interests.

The choice is yours!

SAMPLE AGENDA COMPONENTS

(Mix & Match to make an agenda that works for you!)

A. Welcome

(Recommended activity) – 15 minutes

- Welcome guests and share a few personal thoughts about why you are hosting and model the introduction activity (see below for that activity)
- Invite each person to introduce themselves and share something personal such as: the first person they remember voting for (if ever), any childhood memories they have about elections or voting, or what snack they'd bring if there is a line at the polls
- Briefly share the activities/agenda for the gathering and ask if there are any people who are especially excited or not interested in. This will give you the information you need to adjust your discussion topics on the spot if needed.

B. Voting & Your Community

(Recommended activity) – 15 minutes

Have a fun conversation about the mechanics of voting in your community. One of the cool but tricky things about elections is that each community's election looks different (who and what will be on the ballot) and states have different rules and deadlines around registering and voting.

- ➔ Open up the discussion by sharing info about voting in your community, including voter registration deadlines and process for voting, and then asking one or more of the following questions to the group:
 - Did any of this information surprise you?
 - Have you used any of these tools before?
 - Do you know people who would find these tools valuable? (If the answer is YES, be sure to have the **Spreading the Word** discussion outlined below).

Note: This is one discussion where some preparation work from you, as the host, is helpful but not essential. If you don't have the information ahead of time, you can divide up the below searching tasks among your guests and folks can check Google on their phones/computers: (on next page)

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B. Voting & Your Community Continued

- Figure out and share what your state's voter registration deadline is: <https://www.vote.org/voter-registration-deadlines/>
- Figure out and share if your state has early voting options and if so, when and where (early voting locations are usually different than election day voting locations). This resource also lists voting requirements/restrictions that may threaten access to voting in your state: <http://www.866ourvote.org/state>
- Figure out and share what/who will appear on your local ballot this fall using Ballotpedia: https://ballotpedia.org/Main_Page

C. Pledging & Registering to Vote (Recommended activity) – 10 minutes

The goal of this discussion is to make sure everyone at your gathering are registered to vote and sign a pledge to vote!

- ➔ Open up the discussion by doing a round robin of everyone saying if they would pledge to vote and if they have a plan to vote (that plan could include bringing a child to vote with them).
Then:

- **Have everyone who isn't already registered start the process here:**

IN ENGLISH:

<http://moms.ly/2cZWqRi>

IN SPANISH:

http://moms.ly/LatinasVotan_es

- If your guests think they are registered, make sure they double check here: <https://www.vote.org/am-i-registered-to-vote/>
- Have everyone take a pledge to vote by using their phone to text VOTE to the number 747464!

Pledging to vote helps us send the message to candidates and all potential voters that on November 8th there will be a flood of voters! Once folks sign the pledge via MomsRising's text message platform, they will receive reminders and information about their polling location right on their phone – super convenient!

PLEDGE TO VOTE!

ENTER THIS NUMBER → **747464**

TEXT THIS MESSAGE → **VOTE**

We won't ever share your number.
Standard message rates apply.

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D. Voting Tales & Testimonies – 15 minutes

The goal of this discussion is to have fun and remind ourselves that life happens and sometimes we don't vote! And also, some fun and goofy things can happen at the polling place.

➔ Open up the discussion by asking one or more of the following questions:

- Do you have a voting tradition? Something you wear or do each Election Day?
- What is the craziest or most annoying thing that prevented you from voting or almost prevented you from voting? Give a prize for the craziest story!
- Have you ever had something awesome or bizarre happen while voting?

E. Making a Plan to Vote – 15 minutes

The goal of this discussion is to have every participant leave with a plan about how/when they are going to vote in this election.

➔ You could open up the discussion/planning with:

- Sharing with your guests that when voters make a plan to vote ahead of time, they are significantly more likely to show up on Election Day.
- Asking everyone to share their plan and back-up plan, if they are willing. Are they going to do early voting? If so, when? (You've checked early voting dates & locations so you are all set!)
- Ask if anyone in the groups wants to do early voting together or check in with each other before Election Day to make sure everyone is all set!

F. Voting Tools: Spreading the Word – 20 minutes

The goal of this discussion is to have a conversation about how your group can help register and turn out more voters in your community!

➔ Open up the discussion by asking one or more of the following questions:

- How could we share the following tools with our community?
 - Pledge to vote text opt-in
 - Voting registration link
 - Ballot information
 - NOTE: To receive links to these resources, simply go to www.momsrising.org/momsvote
- What are people willing to do before now and Election Day?
- Are you willing to host a gathering like this one?

G. Closing – (Recommended activity) 10 minutes

- Thank everyone for coming
- Ask everyone what stood out for them in the gathering – an inspiration, a new learning, new connections, a plan of action, etc.
- Take a group picture!
- Send your group picture to us via MomsMeetup@MomsRising.org or post it directly to www.facebook.com/momsrising.org