

Widmerline Jeune

Charlotte Amalie High School

11th grade

February 21, 2023

Why is it important for citizens to vote? By voting, citizens are participating in the democratic process. Citizens vote for leaders to represent them and their ideas, and the leaders support the citizens' interests. Participating in political decisions will ensure that you have a future to look forward to. If you want a future with a job, accessible healthcare, and materials that are especially important to you and your family, you need to fight for it. "Your vote is your voice do not be silent." Here are some ways we as a community can get involved in voting are Support a Candidate's Campaign, recruiting young students to help with elections, and social media.

Show your support in person by attending a campaign event near you. Hear directly from your candidate, engage with fellow civically minded community members, and invite family and friends to join. Campaign forums are a terrific way to learn more about the issues and ask your own questions. Follow your candidates, representatives, and local organizations to stay up to date on events and important dates. You can also volunteer for your local representatives by making fundraising calls or canvassing for their campaigns. Attending town halls or city council meetings is mandatory for ages 17 and older to meet their local candidates and to make their voice heard.

Engaging young people helps prepare the next generation to be civically engaged citizens. And when young people learn about election processes, they are more likely to trust the election system and have faith in their local election officials. The U.S. Virgin Islands Board of Elections recently established a subcommittee to educate students about their voting rights and options. The group will focus on registering students, familiarizing them with voting machines,

and encouraging them to get out and vote. The election office can consider creating a communications strategy to ask colleges and high schools to recruit both teachers and students. Recruiting high schoolers has so many benefits in an election. These younger poll workers tend to be more technologically savvy, and often serve as a major source of bilingual election workers. Election offices can offer payments or works with high schools and colleges to offer extra credit to keep them engaged.

Socializing young adults with politics plays a significant role in the development of their future political engagement. By running ads on diverse types of media, candidates can reach audiences that otherwise may not have been paying attention to the election and build name recognition, highlight critical issues, and call attention to the shortcomings of their opponents. Creating a different hashtag can be a wonderful way motivate young voters to spread the word and to vote. We can have election officials partner up with a local high school to create a #VotevoteV.I. campaign. Through this digital campaign, students, and everyone else are encouraged to register to vote and sign up to work in the poll if they are eligible. Politically engaged young people from all political and civic backgrounds use social media every day for sharing information, mobilization and to make their mark in political spaces.

Successful candidates must both persuade voters that they deserve their individual votes. To motivate voters to participate in an election, you must strengthen their feeling of being part of a social community and their ability to bring meaningful change through voter participation. Voting is an opportunity for everyone, club members, or residents within an association to have their say. Those are just some of the ways we as a community can engage in voting.

