

Talking Points about student voting, 2024

George Mason University

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Election Context

- Election Day is November 5, 2024
- Thousands of elections are taking place in the US in 2024. All elections occur at state and local levels (including president).
 - President
 - All 435 seats in the US House of Representatives
 - 34 of the 100 seats in the US Senate
 - 11 of 50 state Governors
 - 85 of 99 state legislative chambers, across 44 states
 - Judges, ballot measures, municipal offices, and more
- George Mason University has a strong record of student turnout. In past federal elections, Mason students have turned out to vote at the following rates, all of which exceed the national average for college students:
 - 2016: 65%
 - 2018: 52%
 - 2020: 72%
 - 2022: 36%

Student Voting

- College students face more barriers to voting than most citizens because they often live at temporary addresses, have less experience navigating election rules, and are not well-connected to their communities.
- Students who have a permanent (or home) address and a temporary address, like on-campus, can choose where they want to vote. Of course, each person can only vote once, even if you're legally eligible to vote in more than one jurisdiction.
- Students with a valid Virginia driver's license and a social security number can register to vote online using the [Virginia Citizen Portal](#).
- Students without a VA driver's license can register to vote in Virginia using a paper form.
- If you've moved to Virginia from out of state and do not have a Virginia's driver's license, you can still register to vote in Virginia.
- You must register to vote with the address where you want to vote. If you've moved since the last time you voted, you need to re-register.

- A GMU student ID (physical or virtual) is a valid ID for voting.
- Students who live on campus can register to vote using their campus address (but completing the forms is tricky—see the examples and screenshots at <https://jvictor.gmu.edu/index.php/choice-is-yours/>. Seek the help of a student Voting Ambassador.
- If you're registered to vote using a campus address, your polling place is in Merten Hall. Polls will be open on Tuesday, November 5 from 6am to 7pm.
- If you're not registered to vote using a campus address, you cannot vote at Merten Hall.
- The voter registration deadline is October 15, 2024.
- If you miss the voter registration deadline, you can use "same day registration" at your local polling place and cast a provisional ballot.
- If you plan to vote using your home address using an absentee or mail ballot, we strongly recommend you apply for the ballot early. Mail delays can invalidate your vote. In Virginia, the last day to apply for an absentee ballot is October 25.

Why is Voting Important?

- The chances that any individual's vote will be pivotal in an election outcome are almost zero. This is not a compelling reason to vote.
- Many people have different reasons for voting. There is no one reason, or right reason, to engage in voting.
- While there are many ways to participate in democratic society, voting is an opportunity to share a civic experience with peers, neighbors, and your community. Research shows that shared civic experiences are essential building blocks of democratic societies.
- For some people, it makes more sense to think about voting as something you do for others, rather than for yourself. It's a simple way to show you care about your community, state, or country.
- You cannot have a democratic society without elections and joint faith in an electoral process. Voting is essential to building a self-governing, more just society.