

10.2 Right to Vote

Government and Politics

Essential question for this unit

- *What is the role of the people in Government?*

Voting Rights in the U.S.

- Soon, you will be eligible to vote—but will you exercise that right?
- Hopefully you will but many others will not!
- The success of democratic government depends on popular participation and, in particular, on the regular and informed exercise of the right to vote.

Voting Rights in the U.S.

Main themes

- the growth of the American electorate and
- the struggle to extend voting rights
 - History of the Vote examples
 - suffrage / franchise
 - 15th / 19th / 24th / 26th Amendments
 - literacy / religious tests and poll taxes
 - Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - Voting Rights Act of 1965

The Five Stages of Expanding Suffrage

EARLY 1800s

Religious, property, and tax qualifications begin to disappear in every State.

EARLY 1800s

1860

1870

15th Amendment prohibits voting restrictions based on race or color.

1890

1920

19th Amendment removes voting restrictions based on sex.

1920

1950

1965

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 enforces racial equality at polling places.

1971

26th Amendment sets the minimum voting age at 18.

1980

Suffrage was gradually expanded over nearly 200 years.

Voting Qualifications and the Federal Government

- The history of American suffrage has been marked by two long-term trends.
 - You've already read about the first—the gradual expansion of the electorate.
- Second, a significant share of what was originally the States' power over the right to vote has been gradually assumed by the Federal Government.
- While the Constitution reserves the power to set suffrage qualifications to the States, several constitutional provisions do limit the role of State governments in this area.

Universal Criteria for Voting

- Are you qualified to vote?
- Today, every state requires that any person who wants to vote must be able to satisfy qualifications based on three factors
 - 1) *Citizenship*
 - 2) *residence* - must be legal resident of state
 - 3) *Age* - 26th Amendment: minimum age 18

RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

WHERE YOU LIVE DETERMINES WHERE YOU VOTE



In order to **VOTE** in elections today, voters must be citizens with established residence in their voting **LOCATIONS**.

- States require voters to be residents.
- A person can have only one residence.
- Some States require voters to have lived in a place for a certain time period.
- Naturalized citizens are eligible to vote.



The Federal Government does not set any voting qualifications based on residence, but the States can and do set such requirements. What is the purpose of residency requirements?

Voter Registration Process

- One other significant qualification, registration, is nearly universal among the States today.
- **Registration is a procedure of voter identification intended to prevent fraudulent voting.**
- It gives election officials a list of those persons who are qualified to vote in an election.
- Several States also use voter registration to identify voters in terms of their party preference and, thus, their eligibility to take part in closed primaries.

★ REGISTERING TO VOTE ★

WITH A REGISTRAR

Most voters register **LOCALLY** at the county clerk's office or with an officer usually called **REGISTRAR OF ELECTIONS**.



AT EVENTS

VOTER REGISTRATION also occurs at concerts, raffles, rallies, fairs, or shopping centers and on **HIGH SCHOOL & COLLEGE CAMPUSES**.



WHILE GETTING A LICENSE

Since 1995, **THE MOTOR VOTER ACT** has allowed people to register when applying for or renewing driver's licenses. During the 2012 election cycle, nearly **20.3 MILLION** applications, **32.4%** of the more than **62.5 MILLION** total voter registrations reported, were submitted to State offices that issue **DRIVER LICENSES**.



BY MAIL, FAX, E-MAIL

Use of **MAIL, FAX, OR E-MAIL** to submit forms increased in the **2012 ELECTION CYCLE**, with **23.3%** of registration forms being delivered through these means.



Source: U.S. Election Assistance Commission

Registering to vote has become more convenient in recent years. What is the purpose of 'streamlining' voter registration?

Voter Registration Process

- Registration controversies
 - Voter ID laws
 - require people to prove their identity when they seek to register or vote
 - Do they discriminate against any group and thus violate Equal Protection Clause of 14th Amendment
 - Initial amendment proposal failed in MN - 2012

MN Voting Eligibility Requirements

- Minnesota's official voter resource
- United States voting information

MN Voting Eligibility Requirements

- To be eligible in Minnesota you must
 - be at least 18 years old on election day
 - be a citizen of the United States
 - have resided in MN for 20 days immediately preceding election day
 - have any felony conviction record discharged, expired or completed
 - not be under court-ordered guardianship where a court has revoked your voting rights
 - not have been ruled legally incompetent by a court of law

Should voter qualifications exist?

- Respond to the following on a separate piece of paper
- **What is the role of the people in government? Do voter qualifications interfere with OR enhance that role in any way? Pick one of the following qualifications to focus on when writing your response**
 - a. citizenship
 - b. residence
 - c. age
 - d. registration

Review/Reflection

- Review lesson legislative overview