Tips for Making Your Vote Count

By Tara Jackson

As we approach election season, here are tips for making your vote count.

1. **Vote in the Primary**: Most legislative districts are predominantly Republican or Democrat which means that most elections in Arizona are decided in the primary. Because so few people vote in the primary, those who do get the biggest bang for their buck.

2. **For Independents, Choose the Primary With the Greatest Impact on the Elections:** If you are one of the growing number of Independents, select the party that dominates in your area. For example, if your district is predominantly Republican, choose the Republican primary. If your district is primarily Democrat, choose the Democratic primary. Independents can choose which primary they want to vote in at the polls or request an early ballot for the primary of choice by contacting the Secretary of State's office. For more information go to https://voter.azsos.gov/VoterView/Home.do

3. **Make it Easy to Vote:** Sign up to automatically receive a mail-in ballot (which you can also drop off at any polling place on election day) by registering for the Permanent Early Voting List at https://voter.azsos.gov/VoterView/Home.do;jsessionid=Ux-9jl3G-NgSKGHrwpRIGP9N.undefined

4. **Voting for the Best Candidate:** Ignore all T.V. and mail ads. Instead research candidates using nonpartisan national websites like www.votesmart.org . The Arizona Republic also just launched an interactive website that gives Arizona candidate information based on your address at http://azvotes.azcentral.com/build.do . Pay attention to *how* candidates say they will solve a problem. Is it realistic? Does it model the leadership style you believe to be the best for the state? What do organizations who champion the causes you support say about the candidates?

5. **Judges:** Most Arizona judges are subject to an intense evaluation process by a nonpartisan, independent group called The Arizona Commission on Judicial Performance Review. Use their analysis in selecting whether to vote to retain judges subject to Arizona's Merit Selection System http://azjudges.info/ For other judges (those in smaller counties and Justices of the Peace, at least check to make sure that they have not been subject to discipline by the Arizona Commission on Judicial Conduct at http://www.azcourts.gov/azcjc/ArizonaCommissiononJudicialConduct.aspx .

IMPORTANT DATES

July 28, 2014 at midnight Deadline to Register for the Primary Election

October 6, 2014 at midnight Deadline to Register for the General Election

July 31, 2014 *Primary Election Early Voting Begins

August 26, 2014 Primary Election Day

October 8, 2014 *General Election Early Voting Begins

November 4, 2014 General Election Day

- Your early ballot must be received (POSTMARKS DO NOT COUNT) by 7:00 p.m. on Election Day in order to be counted. Click here for an Early Voting FAQ

HELPFUL VOTING LINKS

1. Official government site for information about upcoming elections and voter registration https://voter.azsos.gov/VoterView/Home.do
2. General overview of Arizona candidates and races http://www.politics1.com/az.htm
3. To learn which districts are dominated by one party http://www.azcleanelections.gov/docs/default-source/helpful-links-documents/2014-dominant-party-calculations
4. General overview of races and candidates and to learn which district you are in http://votesmart.org/
5. Information about Arizona judges http://www.azcourts.gov/azcjc/ArizonaCommissiononJudicialConduct.aspx http://azjudges.info/