



Get Out the Vote!

Join Weinberg Tzedek Hillel in getting the vote out to college campuses and surrounding communities. If your Hillel is interested in conducting voter registration drives and helping to get people to the polls for the 2004 presidential election, contact Jessica Beitch, Weinberg Tzedek Hillel Fellow at jbeitch@hillel.org or 202-449-6593 for support, ideas, and resources.

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www.tzedekhillel.org

I. Registering to Vote

In the U.S. we gain the right to vote at the age of 18 but it is up to you to exercise that right. Unfortunately, for some people, registering to vote is a process that seems too complicated and time consuming to complete. You can conduct quick, easy, efficient registration drives to help raise the number of registered voters on your campus. Here's how...

- A. *Voter Registration Team:* Create a committee of people committed to making this happen. Together, brainstorm who your target group is, where and when voter registration will happen, publicity, and how to get others to volunteer. Meet with your Hillel Professional for support and ideas.
- B. *Where and When:* Find times and places where you will catch the attention of as many students as possible. Set up tables during opening Hillel events, orientation week, in front of dorm buildings, dining halls, etc. or even catch first year students as they wait in line for their photo ids. Hold multiple registration drives, split up into teams and have a prize for who can register the most people. Be sure to conduct voter registration drives **at least 5 weeks prior** to an election so that everyone who registered will be eligible to vote.
- C. *Setting Up:* Compile a list of everything you'll need – tables, chairs, pens, signs, t-shirts, volunteers – and start seeking out these materials. Additionally, during the registration drive, you can also target students who have already registered by preparing *voter mobilization cards* with name, e-mail address, phone number, state registered in, etc. so that when it comes time to vote, you can remind people of their polling places, dates, and times and hopefully increase voter turnout.
- D. *Forms:* Download and print out national voter registration forms at <http://www.fec.gov/votregis/pdf/nvra.pdf>. There is also a universal form that can be used for any state. Remember to check your state's rules regarding preferred ID numbers.
- E. *Absentee Ballots:* Some students may want to vote in their hometown. They will need to request an absentee ballot. Make sure that this is done **well in advance** of the election so that every vote will count. If a majority of your students come from three to five states, have these absentee ballot request forms on hand. <http://electionimpact.votenet.com/declareyourself/absentee.cfm>
- F. *Registration:* Once your voter registration team has set up the logistics, recruit as many volunteers as you can get to help out! Have signs, flyers, bright t-shirts, anything that will call attention to what you are doing. Have a few people stand in front of the table and flag people in to get registered. Volunteers at the table should first find out what state the student is from, and if s/he would like to register back home or at school. Use the voter mobilization cards or their contact information to create a list of people to contact with reminders, updates, program information, or in case of mistakes found on the forms.
- G. *Completed Forms:* Write a cover letter to the Secretary of State with Hillel's name, contact information, and briefly explain our purpose. Send the letter with all of the voter registration forms ASAP – they must arrive within two weeks of

registering. Find the addresses for each state's forms at the end of this document, under "State Addresses."

- H. *Partner:*** It is always best to work with partner organizations, either on campus or off. Contact other faith-based groups, social action groups, political groups, cultural groups and/or community outreach organizations interested in getting the vote out. For instance, most Greek chapters have philanthropy or social action chairs who might want to support voter registration, as do feminist organizations, and the Black Students Association. Look for the *Partners* page in this guide for more ideas off campus. *Remember, these should all be non-partisan drives.*
- I. *Using Computers:*** Consider conducting an on-line voter registration drive. There are many organizations that make it extremely easy to register and vote online, such as Declare Yourself! or Hillel's website. Of course, you would need to have a good number of accessible computers. Set up a voter registration week in your computer lab or get volunteers to bring laptops to places which have wireless internet access. A wireless café would be ideal. Check with the café first and see if they would donate coffee for those registering.
- J. *Voter Registration Guide:*** The above-mentioned steps provide good overview and will hopefully help to get you started. For a more comprehensive guide on how to conduct successful campus voter registration drives, go to Harvard University's, Institute of Politics' Voter Registration and Mobilization Guide: http://www.iop.harvard.edu/programs/natlcampaign/voter_registration_guide.pdf. You can also check out KESHER's guide at <http://www.rac.org/pubs/vote04.html>.

II. Voter Mobilization

People need to be registered in order to vote, so convenient voter registration drives are essential! Registering someone to vote, however, does not ensure that they will vote. Help encourage your campus to vote by doing the following:

- A. *Publicize elections*** (not just presidential, but smaller primaries as well). It's a good idea to publicize by state. Some people do not know when or where their primaries are. Check out this website for the most up-to-date information: <http://electionimpact.votenet.com/declareyourself/electiondates.cfm>
- B. *Transportation:*** Many students will want to vote in their college community, so let them know that this is possible – even if they were previously registered elsewhere. First, find if there will be voting booths on your campus. If not, provide transportation to and from the polls regularly on election days. Many colleges have bus/van services that you may be able to use. This is a great time to partner in order to both mobilize more students and to lower costs – speak with the Dean of College Life, faculty, staff, and other campus groups.

III. Partners

AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps integrates work for social change, Jewish learning, and community building. The AVODAH Alumni Community has developed a FUN and EFFECTIVE voter registration card targeting college students. The card includes a universal voter registration form and can be distributed to students during orientation, High Holidays, or at any Hillel event! To view and order the card, visit www.avodah.net or call Stosh Cotler at (212) 545-7759.

Strive For Five: This innovative initiative encourages people to commit to bringing five new people to the polls. It teaches the importance of voting and is very concerned about the demise of democracy. Do your part in preserving our political structure. Read all about it at: www.striveforfive.com

Be sure to check out these other partner organizations:

- ✓ Black Youth Vote: <http://www.bigvote.org/byv.htm>
- ✓ Harvard University Institute of Politics: www.iop.harvard.edu
- ✓ Hip-Hop Team Vote: <http://www.hsan.org/content/main.aspx?pageid=30>
- ✓ Meetup: www.meetup.com
- ✓ the NAACP: <http://www.naacp.org/>
- ✓ National Council of La Raza: <http://www.nclr.org/>
- ✓ New Voters Project: <http://www.newvotersproject.org/>
- ✓ Project Vote Smart: <http://www.vote-smart.org/>
- ✓ Youth Service America: <http://www.ysa.org/>
- ✓ Youth Venture: <http://www.youthventure.org/>
- ✓ Youth Vote Coalition: <http://www.youthvote.org/index.cfm>

IV. Programming

Elections are not just about voting, but should also incorporate education and awareness. Partner with the College Democrats and Republicans and hold a debate on a particular issue; invite faculty that students know and admire for a brown bag lunch forum; hold an action day with the community service group and chaplains organization to combine issues, service and religion.

- A. *Be Creative!* On the day of, host a party and watch the results of the presidential election, creating a social, educational, fail-proof program. For other ideas, go to the program exchange on www.hillel.org and type in keyword “vote” to see what other Hillels have done to encourage voter participation.
- B. *Use Slogans:* Come up with creative slogans and catch phrases that Hillel can use. For example, contact a car company, such as Scion, and ask them to either run test drives for students, or offer free t-shirts to students as they register to vote. Publicize with the slogan “Don’t be caught in neutral – register to vote.” Or partner up with a clothing company and use the slogan “Get in gear – register to vote.” Ask local movie theatres, cafés, stores, etc. for discounts, coupons, or free merchandise to donate to students once they register to vote. These kinds of opportunities are great publicity for Hillel, for the company you are advertising,

and will draw in students to get registered. Be creative – think outside of the box. Try to remember what caught your attention during orientation week or as a first year student.

- C. *Educate*: Do not stop at registration...educate! Hold a session where both students and other newly registered voters can attend. Bring in people who are knowledgeable to speak about the different candidates and the importance of voting. Ask government professors or even the leaders of the student political groups on campus.
- D. *Get Out the Vote through Music*: Justice Through Music presents “ROCK YOUR RIGHTS, Volume 1,” a DVD featuring interviews with famous bands and students discussing many of today’s pressing issues – the Iraq war, the drug war, freedom of expression, the death penalty, gay marriage, women’s issues, the Patriot Act and youth voting. These interviews, interspersed with live concert footage from Smile Empty Soul, Boy Sets Fire, Vendetta Red, Lamb of God, Strike Anywhere and STUN, connect with young people everywhere because they speak in a language that youth understands, rather than the adult/political speak that they readily tune out. The DVD has get-out-the-vote PSAs for TV and Internet featuring these bands and Sleater-Kinney, Indigo Girls, Yellowcard, O.A.R., Violent Femmes, Anti-Flag, Cypress Hill, Dilated Peoples, Living End, Ashes Rise, Mike Park, Epoxy, Darkest Hour, Roman Candle and Lunachicks. This is a great new resource for students, campuses, activists and music fans. Go to www.jtmp.org to order the DVD or contact Justice Through Music at jtmpinfo@comcast.net.
- E. *Funding Your Drive and Mobilization*:
1. Get \$1,000 and Get Out the VOTE! Prove that young people can be a deciding factor in the coming election. Start a voter registration project and receive MTV-Youth Venture grants of up to \$1,000 each for your initiative. As part of the "20 Million Loud" Campaign, MTV and Youth Venture are challenging young people to launch their own new sustainable organizations to register young people to vote and influence the election of 2004. MTV's "20 Million Loud" is a national campaign of organizations mobilizing young adults age 18-30 to vote and be a deciding factor in the 2004 presidential election. Go to www.chooseorlose.com and find out how you can be part of this exciting initiative.
 2. mtvU will help fund campus initiatives from community service based, student run organizations. mtvU wants to help you make the world – or your campus – a better place. Grants of \$1,500 are available. For more information, go to <http://www.youthventure.org/index.php?tg=articles&idx=More&topics=5&article=257>
 3. A good way to fund your project is through campus resources. Ask other groups to partner with you and split the costs. Also, it never hurts to talk to deans and the members of the Board of Trustees and Directors for funds. If you present a comprehensive plan with a specific budget, it is easier to find sponsors. Put some thought into it before you proposition groups and people.

V. What is Jewish About Voting?

Jewish tradition recognizes that government is vital for preventing the disintegration of society into a state of constant warfare among factions and between individuals. As Rabbi Chaninah, the Deputy High Priest, taught:

Pray for the welfare of the government, for were it not for fear of it, people would swallow each other alive. (Mishnah Avot 3:3)

Even in lands where they had no voice in determining the policies of the ruling powers, Jews have felt a responsibility to work and pray for the welfare of the general society. For example, in the wake of the Babylonian exile, the prophet Jeremiah conveyed God's will that they should see their own fate as bound up with that of their neighbors:

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: ...Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace shall you have peace. (Jeremiah 29:4, 7)

All the more so is this true in democracies where Jews have not only an interest in seeking the welfare of their country, but also a responsibility.

Long before Locke, Hobbes and other enlightenment thinkers laid the theoretical foundations of American Constitutional democracy, the Jewish sage Hillel taught his disciples about the obligation to participate in determining communal priorities:

If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when? (Pirkei Avot 1:14).

Judaism teaches a this-worldly approach to life, encouraging prayer and faith as supplements to, but not substitutes for, doing everything in our power to work for the repair of the world. Voting is a part of that work, one instance of the way that Judaism expects us to recognize and use the tools we have for shaping a better world.

Finally, one ancient rabbi provocatively suggests that every generation gets the leader it deserves: *According to the generation, so goes the leader. (Arakhiu 7a)*

The lesson of that teaching is clear: stay inactive and abandon the most basic duties of democracy, and you open the door for leaders who respond to the increasingly narrow groups of citizens who cast votes for them and support their campaigns. By contrast, in a one-person-one-vote system, if you involve yourself and others, the candidates will have no choice but to pay attention.

Created by AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps

VI. In Your Community

There are people in your community who may not be registered to vote, so get out the vote in areas beyond your campus also!

- A. *Register*: If there are shelters, homes for battered women, or other places of communal living in your region, they may be a good place to contact. You should always connect with the director of the organization to find out the needs of the residents before planning anything. If you find out that many of the residents are not registered to vote, ask them how they would feel about having people come to help them register.
- B. *Mobilize*: Registration is only the first step. Mobilizing is just as crucial. Find out if people need assistance getting to the polls and see what you can do to help.
- C. *College Students and the Homeless...what do we have in common?* When it comes to voting, A LOT! Both people without homes and college students are less likely to vote than the general public. Not only this, but it is sometimes difficult to register to vote as a college student or a homeless adult due to state residency requirements. Students who go to colleges that are not in their home state and choose to vote in their school's district are considered "domiciled," as are the homeless. This means that they are living in a particular locality for a length of time, even though they have no permanent address within the district. Another factor that makes it difficult for both the homeless and college students to vote is that some states require a person to have resided there for a period of 30 days before being able to vote. Do not let all of this discourage you, instead let it empower you to make a difference and realize how important the right to vote is. Refer to the *National Coalition for the Homeless' 2004 Voting Rights Manual* as a guide for information:
<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/vote2004/index.html>.

Think of the impact you will make on campus, in your community, and nation-wide with each voter registration drive you conduct. Thank you for your dedication, perseverance, and commitment to Hillel and specifically to Tzedek, social justice, and advocacy. Good luck, keep us updated, and call or e-mail with any questions.

The most important political office is that of private citizen.
~ Justice Louis D. Brandeis

www.tzedekhillel.org

VII. State Addresses (in alphabetical order by state):

Office of the Secretary of State P.O. Box 5616 Montgomery, AL 36103-5616	Division of Elections State of Alaska PO Box 110017 Juneau, AK 99811-0017	Secretary of State/Elections 1700 W. Washington, 7th Floor Phoenix, AZ 85007
Secretary of State Voter Services P.O. Box 8111 Little Rock, AR 72203-8111	Secretary of State Elections Division 1500 11th Street Sacramento, CA 95814	Secretary of State c/o Elections 1560 Broadway, Suite Denver, CO 80202
Secretary of State Elections Division 30 Trinity Street Hartford, CT 06106	Commissioner of Elections 32 W. Loockerman Street, M101 Dover, DE 19904	District of Columbia Board of Elections & Ethics 441 4th Street, NW, Suite 250 Washington, DC 20001-2745
State of Florida Department of State Division of Elections 107 West Gaines Street, Room 231 Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250	Elections Division Office of the Secretary of State 1104 West Tower 2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr., S.E. Atlanta, GA 30334-1505	Office of Elections State of Hawaii 802 Lehua Avenue Pearl City, HI 96782
Secretary of State P.O. Box 83720 State Capitol Bldg. Boise, ID 83720-0080	State Board of Elections 1020 S. Spring Street Springfield, IL 62704	Election Division Office of the Secretary of State 302 West Washington Street, Room E-204 Indianapolis, IN 46204-2743
Elections Division Office of the Secretary of State Lucas Building-1st Floor 321 E. 12th Street Des Moines, IA 50319	Secretary of State 1st Floor, Memorial Hall 120 SW 10th Ave. Topeka, KS 66612-1594	State Board of Elections 140 Walnut Street Frankfort, KY 40601-3240
Secretary of State Attention: Voter Registration P.O. Box 94125 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9125	Elections Division Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions 101 State House Station Augusta, ME 04333-0101	State Board of Elections P.O. Box 6486 Annapolis, MD 21401-0486
Secretary of the Commonwealth Elections Division, Room 1705 One Ashburton Place Boston, MA 02108	Michigan Department of State Bureau of Elections P.O. Box 20126 Lansing, MI 48901-0726	Secretary of State 60 Empire Drive, Suite 100 St. Paul, MN 55103-1855

Secretary of State P.O. Box 136 Jackson, MS 39205-0136	Secretary of State P.O. Box 1767 Jefferson City, MO 65102-1767	Secretary of State's Office P.O. Box 202801 State Capitol Helena, MT 59620-2801
Nebraska Secretary of State Suite 2300, State Capitol Bldg. Lincoln, NE 68509-4608	Secretary of State Elections Divisions 101 North Carson Street Suite 3, Capitol Complex Carson City, NV 89701-4786	New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety Division of Elections PO BOX 304 Trenton, NJ 08625-0304
Bureau of Elections 325 Don Gaspar, Suite 300 Santa Fe, NM 87503	NYS Board of Elections 40 Steuben Street Albany, NY 12207-2108	State Board of Elections P.O. Box 27255 Raleigh, NC 27611-7255
Secretary of State of Ohio Elections Division 180 E. Broad Street — 15th Floor Columbus, OH 43215	Oklahoma State Election Board Box 528800 Oklahoma City, OK 73152-8800	Secretary of State Elections Division 141 State Capitol Salem, OR 97310-0722
Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth 210 North Office Bldg. Harrisburg, PA 17120-0029	Rhode Island State Board of Elections 50 Branch Ave. Providence, RI 02904-2790	State Election Commission P.O. Box 5987 Columbia, SC 29250-5987
Elections, Secretary of State 500 E. Capitol Pierre, SD 57501-5070	Coordinator of Elections Tennessee Tower, Ninth Floor 312 Eighth Avenue, North Nashville, TN 37243	Office of the Secretary of State Elections Division P.O. Box 12060 Austin, TX 78711-2060
Office of the Lieutenant Governor Elections 115 State Capitol Salt Lake City, UT 84114	Office of the Secretary of State Director of Elections 26 Terrace Street Montpelier, VT 05609-1101	State Board of Elections 200 N. 9th Street, Suite 101 Richmond, VA 23219
Secretary of State Voter Registration by Mail P.O. Box 40230 Olympia, WA 98504-0230	Secretary of State Building 1, Suite 157-K 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East Charleston, WV 25305-0770	State Elections Board 132 E. Wilson Street, Suite 200 P.O. Box 2973 Madison, WI 53701-2973