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STATE OF ALABAMA

DON SIEGELMAN
SECRETARY OF STATE
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 38130
(205)832-3570

September 24, 1980

RE: Your Vote Makes A Difference
Public Service Announcements

Dear Program Director:

The September 2 primary and the September 23 run-off provide us with still more examples of declining voter participation in Alabama.

In an effort to increase participation in Alabama's elections and to make voters aware of the importance of their vote, my office is working in coordination with the boards of registrars on a special statewide voter education and registration project.

Your medium can help enormously. In a few days you will be receiving a tape of three public service messages prepared and produced in cooperation with Educational Television at Auburn University. By running these messages frequently, you can alert the citizens of your community to the importance of all citizens exercising the right to vote.

We may not be able to reverse this discouraging trend overnight, but if we are ever to begin, the time is now. I look forward to your support in this endeavor to make everyone aware that their vote really does make a difference!

If you do not receive your media materials in a few days or if you would like more information, please do not hesitate to call Jon Morgan, Coordinator of this project, at 832-3570 .

Yours very truly,

Don Siegelman
Secretary of State

DS:jm

**NEW
DOCUMENT**

PROPOSED IDEAS

1) Postage Meter Slugs:

Bearing our logo, these can be used effectively and easily. Call Pitney Bowes at 277-9710 (Montgomery) to order at a cost of approximately \$22. (See enclosure)

2) Billboards:

If you have billboard space reserved and will swap out with one of ours, we will send you the paper. To order the paper for your boards, call Eddy Sokol, Russell Corporation, Alex City, 329-8401.

3) Use the enclosed art work on mailings to association members and suggest they do likewise. For more copies of the art work call Mayard Layman, Decatur Daily, 353-4612, 353-4655, or Eddy Sokol, 329-8401.

4) Brochures:

To order more brochures giving facts regarding how to register and vote, contact Charles McDevitt, Brown Printing Company, Montgomery, 277-4700. The cost per thousand is roughly \$75.

5) Newspaper Advertising:

While the Alabama Press Association and your local newspapers are expected to run free Public Service type ads, using the logo, you may want to use the enclosed art work in your own

ads to tie in with the free publicity.

6) Posters:

If you will be willing to put up a poster so the public can see it, contact Jon Morgan, Secretary of State's Office, 832-3570.

7) Registration at your place of business:

Efforts are being made by Eddy Sokol, State Citizens Chairman, and Don Siegelman, Secretary of State, to coordinate voter registration activities in each county. If you would like to have the local Board of Registrars come to your place of business to register your employees to vote, contact your local Board of Registrars at the County Courthouse. If the Board members cannot come, ask if they will deputize someone from your office for that purpose.

**NEW
DOCUMENT**



EDWARD A. SOKOL
Director, Public Affairs

TO: Alabama Business Leaders

A statewide effort is now being made to inform citizens of Alabama of the importance of registering and voting in this year's elections. To provide a coordinated program which will have the greatest impact and spinoff benefits, a standard "logo" has been suggested. I have enclosed the actual art work of the logo for your use. However, a full color version will be available and used in brochures, billboards, posters and other public service advertising.

There are several ways in which you may play a part in the statewide effort. These are outlined in the accompanying list of ideas which were proposed at a recent meeting of business and community leaders.

Of course, some money will be needed to pay for billboard paper, brochures, and, hopefully, limited other expenses. The Alabama Council of Association Executives has generously offered to handle the contributions. It is my hope that you will join with us in this endeavor to educate the general public as to the importance of participating in the electoral process. You may mail checks payable to ACAE to:

J. B. Brand
P. O. Box 31005
Birmingham, Alabama 35222

Please feel free to contact me regarding any questions or suggestions you may have. I hope to hear from you soon in this regard.

Sincerely,

Encl.

*This Card was included
in every pay check
envelope.*

Your Vote Makes A Difference



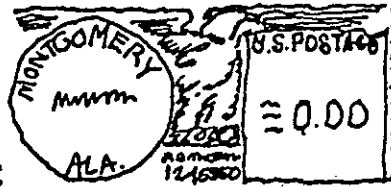
YOUR VOTE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

**YOU MUST BE REGISTERED
TO VOTE**

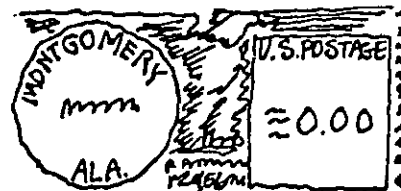
CONTACT YOUR COUNTY PROBATE
JUDGE'S OFFICE FOR INFORMATION
ON WHEN AND WHERE TO REGISTER



YOUR VOTE MAKES A DIFFERENCE



**YOUR VOTE
MAKES A
DIFFERENCE**





YOUR VOTE MAKES A DIFFERENCE



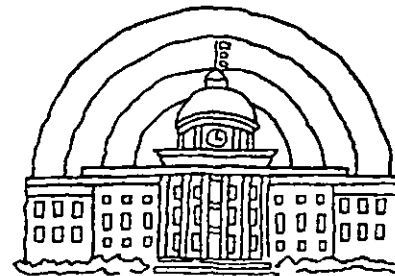
**YOUR VOTE
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YOUR VOTE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

**NEW
DOCUMENT**

BOARD OF REGISTRARS: SPEECH

On behalf of the _____ County Board of Registrars, I thank you for this opportunity to come before you to speak about the importance of voting.

This year it will be our responsibility to select not only our next President and Vice-President, but other important federal and state officers as well. These include United States Senator, United States Representative, Justices of the Alabama Supreme Court, the President of the Public Service Commission, and other offices.

I use the words "our responsibility" because we, as citizens, are ultimately responsible for the effective operation of our government. This civic duty of ours has been handed down to us from our founding fathers, who fought that they, and their descendants, would be able to be independent, self-sufficient, and wholly responsible for their lives and their government.

So, it is clear that Freedom necessarily Entails the Duty of the citizen to exercise it and protect it by Voting.

As we look around the world we see many who are deprived of their right to vote. The ballot box, the voting machine, and the sight of canvassing candidates are completely unknown to them. They have no voice in the way their government is run; nor do they have any control whatever in deciding who will make the decisions which affect their lives. But, of course they are not burdened with the responsibility of voting. And, they are not bothered by political ads and door-to-door campaigners who ask

for their support on election day.

To some, this may not sound like a bad situation. I submit that the following figures speak for themselves:

In the most recent statewide election, on March 11, the 1980 Presidential Preference Primary, 78% of the registered voters of Alabama did not participate. Only 22%---one fifth of the registered voters---cast their vote to help decide the Democratic and Republican nominees for the highest, most powerful office in the world. This means only 17% of the voting age population of the state of Alabama voted on March 11th.

Something is wrong. Don't you believe that the overwhelming majority of voting age citizens of this state care who the next President will be? However, we must all face the fact that the figures do not support this statement.

Voter apathy is not a phenomenon solely confined to Alabama. It is a nationwide problem. And seemingly it gets worse every four years. As Alabamians, we cannot solve the problem for the entire nation, but we can make some positive strides here in our own state.

How? By all of us of the Voting Minority making a concerted effort to encourage those of the Apathetic Majority to exercise their right to vote.

This can be done in several ways: Through advertisements, public service announcements, personal contact, and through the use of voter registration drives aimed at those who are not registered to vote. Part of our emphasis should be on encouraging registered voters to vote, since the majority of those who do not

vote are registered voters.

We all must realize that every vote does indeed count, not just because one vote may decide an election--which can happen--but because voting is a far more effective way of improving government than complaining.

In Alabama, rarely do we have an election year wherein some office is not won or lost by only a handful of votes. This year many of the political experts are predicting a close Presidential race---all the more reason why each vote is important.

However, close Presidential elections are nothing new. Many of you may recall the historic 1960 Presidential election in which John F. Kennedy won with 49.72% of the vote, as against Richard Nixon's 49.55%: a difference of only .17%.....Less than 2 tenths of a percent. It wouldn't have taken a vote-change by many to have changed the course of history.

Again, in 1968, the percentage difference between the two major candidates, Richard Nixon and Hubert Humphrey, was almost negligible: Nixon received 43.42% while Humphrey drew 42.72%..... a difference of only 7 tenths of a percent. Yes, this difference was almost negligible, but it decided who would be the President of the United States for the next four years.

These figures indicate how only a few votes can separate the winner and the loser. But, it is important to keep in mind that every vote is important in all elections, whether the winner wins by less than 1% or by a landslide. Each vote represents a voiced petition of how government should be run. And this method of lodging our opinions can obtain results much more effectively than

idle complaining.

Idle complaining did not choose the Democratic and Republican nominees for President.

We are a democracy of the people: We cannot afford to become a government of the few, by the few, and for the few. If we want the elected officials of this country to respond to the wishes of the majority, the majority must show their concern by voting. Furthermore, if we want our country to remain strong, we must strengthen ourselves internally.

While voting statistics show that people are frustrated, cynical and distrustful of politics, government and politicians, one thing is certain: That if we want to change we will have to work for it.

Nothing comes free or easy. Things will not get better by themselves. And, if we want good government, we will have to work for it.

Too often people sit around the kitchen table discussing issues or cursing politicians for doing nothin, or for doing things wrong. They discuss the complex, seemingly insolvable problems of inflation, energy, jobs, welfare, clean air, clean water, etc. Then they curse the elected officials for not doing the obvious, the so-called "easy things" such as fixing the roads or what-have-you.

All this negative energy should be harnessed and turned toward positive change. One thing is certain, and that is that nothing will change unless we the people change it. Things will not get better, but rather worse unless we do something.

Thomas Jefferson said:

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves. Whenever the people are well informed, they can be trusted with their own government; whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied upon to set them to rights."

Yet, in order for the people to be able to have that positive affect on government, they must be able to participate, they must be able to have their voice heard and their will felt. Our ultimate recourse, to right wrongs, is our right to vote.

While our problems may be great, while there may be world turmoil which we as a single voter may not be able to correct, I believe that we can solve our problems no matter how complex they may seem.

I believe that we can have a government that is just as good, decent and honest as the American people.

I believe that we can meet the demands of the 1980's and the challenges of the future.

However, it will take all of us working together to make it happen.

We must be willing to register our opinions by registering to vote, and voting for those people or political parties which best represent our views.

We must be willing to spend a little of our time, the same as we do for our church or civic organizations, to make our government work the way we all know it can and should.

Therefore, I call on all of you to join me and the other Boards

of Registrars in this effort to reverse the trend of declining voter participation. We can improve our government and we can make our officials more responsive to our needs. To do this we have to jump into the process and vote and work within the political system.

REMEMBER: YOUR VOTE DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

**NEW
DOCUMENT**

ELIGIBILITY TO REGISTER AND VOTE

Must be 18 years of age.....Provided no conviction of certain crimes
(17-3-1) and not insane. (Sec. 182 of Ala. Constitution)

Residency.....Ten (10) days before he or she may become
eligible to register to vote.
(Attorney General's opinion dated July 25,1977)

Deadline to register before
election.....No person may be registered as a qualified
(17-4-4) elector within 10 days prior to any election.
Jefferson County - 21 days prior to
any election.

ABSENTEE REGISTRATION

1. Registration by Mail.....*Members of the armed forces of the U.S.,
(17-4-80) persons employed outside the U. S., and the
spouses and children of such persons. Eligible
to register in counties where they were
residents prior to entering the above status.
**Persons who are absent from the county of
their residences because of attendance at an
institution of higher learning and their
spouses and children.
2. Request for applicationRequest must be done in writing and filed
(17-4-81) with the Board of Registrars of the county
in which the elector resides.
3. Questionnaire must be subscribed
and sworn to.....*By a commissioned officer of the armed
(17-4-81) forces of the U.S., or any officer authorized
to administer oaths and take affidavits.
**Presence of an officer authorized to
administer oaths and take affidavits.
4. Denial of registration may be
appealed. (17-4-102).....Within thirty days after denial, by filing
a complaint in the circuit court in the
county in which he or she seeks to register.

ABSENTEE VOTING

1. Persons eligible to vote absentee
ballot (17-10-3).....Any qualified elector of this state and
any person who, but for having moved from
the state within the 30 days immediately
preceding the election, is a qualified
elector of this state who will be unable
to vote at his regular polling place because
of his absence from the county of his
residence on the day of any election, or who
because of any physical illness or infirmity

which prevents his attendance at the polls, whether he is within or without the county on the day of the election, may vote an absentee ballot.

2. Time for filing for application.....Must make application in writing not more than sixty (60) nor less than five (5) days prior to the election.
(17-10-3)

3. Postcard application for certain military personnel and wives.....An applicant who is a member of the armed forces of the U. S., including the Ala. National Guard, the United States naval reserves, the United States air force reserves and the United States military reserves on active duty training or an applicant who is the wife of any member of the armed forces may make application for absentee ballot by filling out the federal postcard application form. (17-10-3)
(17-10-3)

4. Form and contents of applicationForm need not be in any particular form, but must contain sufficient information to identify the applicant as the person he claims to be. Must include: applicant's name, age, sex, address, precinct in which he last voted and the address to which he desires the ballot to be mailed.
(17-10-3)

5. Who application must be filed with....Register or register in chancery. If no register in a county, the clerk of the circuit court.
(17-10-4)

6. Assistance in filling out application.....Any applicant may have assistance in filling out the application but must be manually signed by the applicant. If he signs by mark, the name of the witness to his signature must be signed thereon.
(17-10-4)

7. Doctor's certificate required for physically disabled.....Any elector unable to go to the polls on account of any physical disability, the application shall have attached thereto a certificate signed by a licensed practicing physician of this state, certifying where the applicant is confined and describing his or her physical condition and stating that he or she will be physically unable to go to his or her polling place on election day.
(17-10-4)

8. Absentee ballot must be sworn to before a notary public or other officer authorized to acknowledge oaths, with the exception of.....A person confined on account of physical disability to a hospital, nursing home, rest home, or sanitarium may in person execute the affidavit on the ballot before the authority in charge.
(17-10-6)

A person who is a member of the armed forces of the U. S., etc., may make the affidavit on the ballot before any officer authorized to administer oaths or before the commanding officer or other authority in charge.

9. When ballots, envelops, etc. delivered to clerk or register.....Not less than twenty-one (21) days prior to the holding of any election.
(17-10-12)