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In 1976 it still is!
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In 1776
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a revolutionary idea.

In 1976
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What difference does that make to the people at the top? The political disclosures of the past year show that the only thing politicians are interested in is increasing their own power. Right?

Wrong. Some are. That's true of every kind of activity. But what those disclosures really show is that the system is strong and healthy enough to discover the wrong-doers and deal with them.

But the system works only for people who have influence and the time for politics, right?

Right. And whether you realize it or not, you do have influence. If you have enough interest to take the time to read up on issues, speak your mind and, above all, register and vote.

Votes carry weight. Voters wield influence. Nobody has ever successfully stood against a sizeable group of informed American voters. Those who wrote the Constitution trusted a free electorate.

They were confident of the power of the ballot, 200 years ago. The excitement of self-government was running through America. The air was alive with political ideas; everyone was eager to exercise his new political muscles. The rights of the American citizen were not a burden — they were an exciting challenge.

In 1776 voting was a revolutionary idea — one that created a miracle of government.

It can renew that miracle at every election.

But only if we understand the promise that our system offers. And respond to it. We've got to do better than we have done. In 1974, less than half the eligible voters in America took the trouble to cast a ballot. A system based on citizen involvement can't operate at that level of participation. The promise of self-government cannot be fulfilled unless we really want to govern ourselves by thinking and voting.

But if we respond — by informing ourselves, by going to the polls and by working actively in politics if we're inclined that way — the American political system will be responsive, productive, effective.

It will accomplish whatever we want to do.

What's wrong with politics? Nothing that voters can't cure.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Your work, your influence, your vote count.

In New Hampshire the 1974 Senate election was so close (only two votes separated the winner and loser) that for the first time in U.S. history a special election was ordered to select a United States Senator.

John F. Kennedy was elected President of the United States by less than two-tenths of one percent of the votes cast. Had a mere 75,814 votes gone the other way in the right states, Richard Nixon would have won.

A recent race for Governor of Minnesota was decided by 46 voters. That's less than one vote in each county.

You can change the course of Politics. If you really want to make a change. The system is delicately balanced. The weight you throw one way or another can shift the direction we move in any election.

And in the party selection of candidates, you can make your influence count with maximum impact. The vote you cast at a precinct caucus, party election or town meeting, for instance, can exert terrific leverage all the way up the party structure. Working with party organizations at any level gives your ideas their greatest clout.

What you want to do can make a difference. That's what our political system is for.

How do you do it? Learn, work, register, vote.

BEYOND PARTY POLITICS

Our political structure provides both a context and a tool for helping you express your point of view and swing others to your way of thinking. But there are other effective ways to work, as well.

Outside the party, and between elections, you can continue to work on public issues in several ways:

Write your congressman. The Mayor. The President. Letters count in bringing your influence to bear where it will do the most good. Most public officials watch their mail carefully.

Organize political action groups of your friends and others who hold your point of view. Such groups have been very effective in recent years — in pollution abatement programs, for instance, and in voter registration drives and in influencing tax and housing policies.

Hold meetings and rallies to get public attention for your cause.

Meet with community leaders, political organizers and office-holders and with those who influence private and public agencies. You'll find that the vast majority of these leaders will welcome the chance to talk with you, will appreciate your interest, will be glad to have an opportunity to learn your views and to express their ideas to you.

Form a Third Party — or a Fourth or Fifth one. If the traditional parties don't give your point of view an adequate representation, set up in business for yourself. It has been done successfully — particularly on the local and state levels.

The political process in the United States is largely a process of organizing opinion on public issues. It is the business of getting more and more people to think the way you do. No matter how acute your ideas may be — and no matter how sincerely they may be held — they will not effectively influence issues unless you can persuade others to your point of view. Our society, for the most part, is what the majority of us says it should be. Party politics — and the work you do outside the parties — is designed to make the majority responsive to individual needs. And to make the whole society responsive to problems identified by majority opinion.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH POLITICS?

All of us know of some governmental problems that ought to be solved but nobody seems able to solve. Or jobs that ought to be done but somehow don't get done. Issues that should be settled, policies that ought to change, plans that must be made.

But there's not much that ordinary people can do about it, right?

Wrong. Ordinary people can change politics completely.

How? The political action is in Washington or the state capitol or county courthouse — somewhere remote and out of reach, right?

Wrong. The political action starts in your neighborhood. That's where the decisions are made that create the changes you want.

Must I Be Registered In Order to Vote?

Yes. In Minnesota you must be registered before you can vote. You may register in one of two ways:

- In most counties you may pre-register at any time up to 20 days before election;
- You may register as you vote on election day.

If you wish to register before election day, contact your city clerk or county auditor for proper registration forms.

If you wish to register on election day, you must present one of the following to the election judge as proof of your address:

- A valid drivers license with your current address;
- A valid non-qualification certificate with your current address;
- A registered voter residing in your voting precinct who will attest to your residency at your current address.

Once you have registered you will not need to re-register providing that you do not move or change your name and you vote at least once every four years.

Where Do I Register and Vote?

If you believe you can legally claim more than one place as a residence, for voting purposes you must determine which place you consider to be your permanent residence. It is for you to decide, but you may be registered and vote in only one precinct.

As a student living away from your original, family residence, you may choose to vote in the precinct in which your family's residence is located. Or, you may choose to vote at your school address while you attend school.

Employment or other circumstances may also provide you the option of selecting a voting residence from more than one location.

Your previous registration is cancelled when you change your residence and register in a new precinct.

Am I Eligible to Vote?

You are entitled to vote in any election if you:

- Are eighteen years old;
- Have been a Citizen of the United States for three months;
- Have been a resident of Minnesota for at least twenty days;
- Are properly registered.

You are not entitled to vote if you have been convicted of treason or a felony or have been judged mentally incompetent and are under guardianship. After serving a sentence for treason or a felony, a person's civil rights are restored and he or she may again qualify to vote.

May I Vote by Mail?

If you will be away from your voting residence on election day, are ill or are disabled you may vote by absentee ballot. Contact your county auditor's office to apply for a ballot.

Once you have received a ballot application, return the application within 45 days of an election but in sufficient time for the ballot to be mailed to you. Once you have received the ballot follow the instructions and mail it in time to have it counted.

What if I am in the Armed Forces?

If you are a member of the Armed Forces, to request an absentee ballot contact the county auditor in your home community or use the special postcard form available at military bases to request a ballot.

You can have a relative at home file a request for you. A request for a Primary Election ballot is considered to be a request for a General Election ballot also. These voting rights are also extended to U.S. Citizens temporarily living outside the country.

May I Take Time Off from Work to Vote?

You may take time off from your work to vote before noon on General Election Day or on the day of a special congressional election without penalty or loss of pay for the time off.

May I Offer Another Voter a Ride?

You may give rides to voters who might not otherwise have a way to get to their polling place. However you may not attempt to influence the voter toward a particular candidate, party or issue during the ride.

How Do I Cast My Vote?

When you vote you will be using one of three voting systems — a paper ballot, a lever-type voting machine, or a punch-card voting machine. If you are unfamiliar with the method used in your precinct, be sure to ask for help from the election judges. They are trained to help.

Sample ballots are posted in the polling place to help familiarize you with the location of the offices and the questions on the ballot.

When you vote, you may vote for whatever offices you choose from among those on the ballot. For any one office, you may not vote for more than the number to be elected or your vote will not be counted for that office.

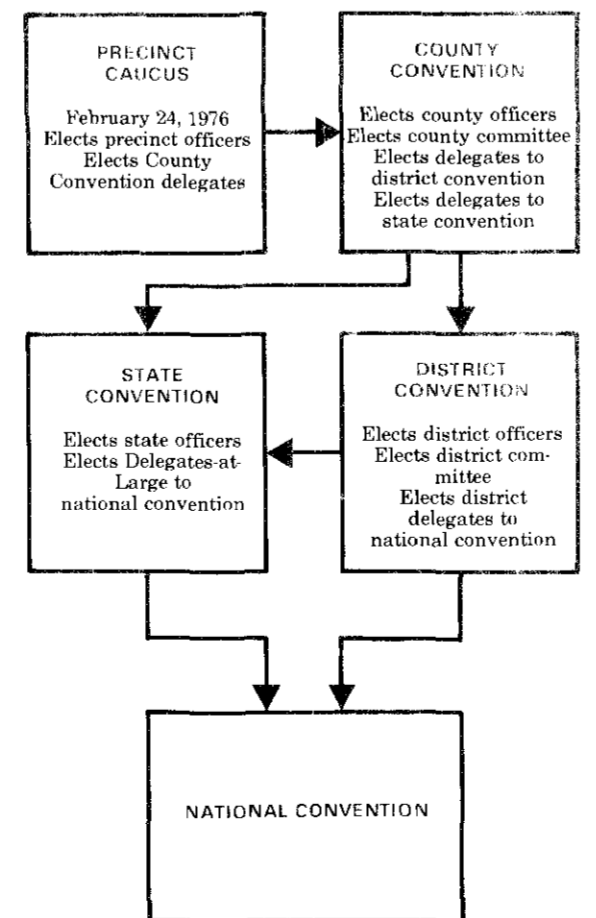
When amendments to the State Constitution are on the ballot, if you do not vote on the amendment, you are actually voting no. To pass, an amendment requires a majority of yes votes from all who vote in the election.

What's the Role of Political Parties?

Political Parties play an important part in the election system through:

- Endorsing and supporting candidates for office.
- Passing resolutions, thus helping to develop the party platform.
- Electing officers and committees to manage the party's business from year to year.

The goal of the political party is to win voters for the policies and the candidates it supports — thus putting into action its philosophies of government and its views on matters of public concern. The two major parties differ in ways of accomplishing this objective, but the major elements of operation are the same in both parties. This is outlined in the diagram below:



Technically, to be considered a political party under Minnesota law, an organization must have presented, at the most recent general election, at least one statewide candidate who received at least 5% of the total vote cast for all candidates at that election.

The only two parties which consistently meet the legal definition in Minnesota are the Republican and the Democratic-Farmer-Labor parties.

Other parties or groups may place one or more candidates on the General Election ballot by submitting petitions signed by 2,000 voters for a statewide office, 1,000 voters for U.S. Representative, or 500 voters for a county or legislative office.

How Do I Get Involved in Political Party?

A good way is to attend your precinct caucus.

Precinct caucuses are neighborhood meetings of persons who agree with the principles of a particular political party. There, you and your neighbors will encourage candidates to seek office, adopt resolutions on issues, and select officers and delegates to county and district conventions.

All precinct caucuses in Minnesota for both the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party and the Republican Party will be held on Tuesday, February 24, 1976, beginning at 8:00 PM.

You may attend the caucus in your precinct if you will be a qualified voter by the next general election — November 2, 1976. You will need to decide which party's caucus you wish to attend since you may not participate in more than one party's caucus in any year.

No prior party affiliation is required but you must declare your intent to affiliate with the party and to support its candidates at the next election when you arrive at your caucus.

To find out the location of the caucus in your precinct contact your county auditor any time after February 3, 1976.

Election '76 Calendar

- Today — Register to vote
- Tuesday, February 24 PRECINCT CAUCUS DAY
- Tuesday, July 6 to Tuesday, July 20 Filing period for elective office
- Tuesday, August 24 Last day to pre-register for the Primary Election

Tuesday, Sept. 14 STATE PRIMARY ELECTION

Tuesday, Oct. 12 Last day to pre-register for the General Election

Tuesday, November 2 STATE GENERAL ELECTION

The strength of the American political and governmental process lies in large part on broad-based, responsible political parties. Parties provide a way to seek out, endorse and elect qualified candidates. They help to identify issues and inform voters. Through their elected candidates and party platforms they address questions of concern to people throughout Minnesota.

By becoming informed, participating in politics and — importantly — by voting, you insure a more responsive, responsible government.

James A. Gilman
Chairman
Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party

Ruth Cain
Associate Chairperson
Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party

Charles A. Selverin
Chairman
Republican Party

Carolyn M. Ring
Chairwoman
Republican Party



Minnesotans, we have the opportunity to truly celebrate two hundred years of citizen participation which began in revolution and continues in commitment.

As chief election official in Minnesota, I urge every citizen to participate fully in the 1976 election as evidence of present affirmation of the goals of our heritage.

If we begin Century Three of the United States with this personal pledge, the vote we cast November 2, 1976, will be the greatest participation known in this state. We honor the heritage of two hundred years when we preserve freedom by responsibility.

We acknowledge recognition by the Minnesota-American Revolution Bicentennial Commission as we distribute this poster, which has been declared an official Bicentennial Event in Minnesota.

Joan Anderson Grove
Secretary of State

