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america's
largest
high school
voter
education &
registration
program.



what is first vote?

first Vote is a nonpartisan,
classroom-based voter education,
registration, and citizenship pro-
gram for high school students.

**First Vote is the largest high school voter educa-
tion and registration program in the country;**



**thus far
in the 1990s,
some 400,000
high school
students at more**

**than 3,000 high schools have
registered to vote in their
American government and his-
tory classrooms. The program
helps to educate young people
about the importance of citizen
participation and voting, and
challenges them to get involved
in their communities.**

teaching citizenship

Where is First Vote?

People For the American Way has implemented First Vote in scores of cities by working directly with schools and social studies teachers, and by working with such groups as the Council of Great City Schools, an organization of school superintendents and school board members of the nation's largest urban public school systems. In addition, hundreds of smaller and rural school districts are participating in First Vote through statewide partnerships between People For the American Way and secretaries of state of both major political parties, state departments of education, and the National Council for the Social Studies and its state chapters.



Why First Vote?

First Vote is a response to "Democracy's Next Generation," a People For the American Way study that examined young Americans' attitudes toward citizenship and government. The study found, among other things, that the majority of young people felt disconnected from civic life and political participation, and did not equate voting with responsible citizenship. Social studies teachers who also were surveyed listed promoting their students' interest in democracy and voting as among their top priorities. These findings led to the creation of First Vote as a positive means of combating political apathy in America's youth. First Vote provides the opportunity for students and teachers to discuss what it means to be a citizen in a democratic society and the relationship between voting and other duties and responsibilities of citizenship.



implemen- tation

bringing First Vote into your high school or school district is easy. With the support of the Carnegie Corporation and other philanthropic organizations, and MCI Communications Corporation, People For the American Way provides materials and technical assistance *free of charge* to schools that make the commitment to implement and institutionalize First Vote in their classrooms. There are three simple components:

First Vote Video

The new 15-minute First Vote video dramatizes the power of voting and citizen participation and includes extensive historical footage focused on struggles for the right to vote—the suffragists, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Vietnam-era passage of the 26th Amendment, which gave 18- to 20-year-olds the right to vote. The video features the music of R.E.M., Aretha Franklin, and rap artist Young M.C., and explains the impact that young people can have on politics and the political arena if they exercise their right to vote. Beyond voting, it challenges them to get involved with their community and their society by showing them what other students are doing to make a difference. The video has been closed captioned for the hearing-impaired.



CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT JOHANNA, 18, SCOTT, 17, GRACE, 18,
FARRAH, 18, LATEASE, 18, JILLIAN, 18, MIKE, 18, AND CARMEN, 17



First Vote Curriculum Guide

This concise, easy-to-use curriculum is designed for use with high school seniors, most of whom will be eligible to register to vote during their senior year. It is suitable for use with students of diverse backgrounds and skill levels. Lessons cover a range of topics: attitudes toward voting; voting as a "rite of passage" to adulthood; becoming a contributing member of society; and the struggles for voting rights waged by African-Americans, women, and young people.

Classroom Voter Registration

Social studies teachers begin the process by obtaining a computer printout of all age-eligible students. After each student on the list gets an opportunity to fill out a registration form, the forms are then delivered to election officials. A school-wide tally is then sent to the local school board and to People For the American Way.

Photo Credits

Rick Reinhard:

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Mary Lou Foy:

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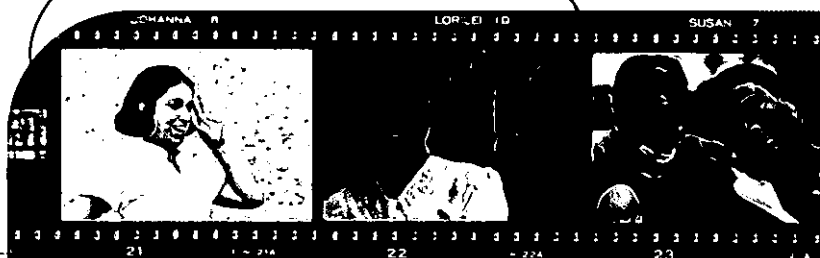
Johanna, Scott, Grace, Farrah, Latease, Jillian, Mike, and Carmen

winning accolades

“First Vote provides the perfect opportunity for students to learn and practice the responsibilities of enlightened democratic citizenship.”

— H. Michael Hartoonian,
President of the National Council for the Social Studies

“Since 1992, my office has implemented Ohio First Vote in more than 600 high schools. The results have been terrific! More than 174,000 students have registered to vote in their classrooms while learning about the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.” — Bob Taft, Secretary of State of Ohio



“First Vote provides teachers with a great chance to educate and inspire their students regarding the importance of voting and citizen participation.”

— Karen R. Todorov, Social Studies Education Consultant,
Michigan Department of Education

“Routinely we receive information from other youth focused programs and always come back to First Vote as the best... to put our energies into.”

— Stephanie Gonzales, Secretary of State of New Mexico

“The importance of First Vote goes beyond voter registration.” — *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*

who is
people
for the
american
way?

People For the American Way is a nonprofit, nonpartisan constitutional liberties organization dedicated to encouraging citizen participation and promoting the American ideals of freedom, pluralism, and equality.

Citizen Participation Project

Sanford D. Horwitt, Director

Margo Fox, Associate Director

Jennifer A. Kaplan, Project Coordinator

In a continuous effort to encourage young adults to register and vote, MCI proudly supports People For the American Way's First Vote program.



People For the American Way

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Washington, DC 20036

phone 202-467-4999

fax 202-293-2672

firstvote@pfaw.org

<http://www.pfaw.org>





Plan For Implementation

To bring First Vote to your high school or school district... complete the following

name _____

title _____

school/district _____

address _____

city · state · zip _____

phone # _____

fax # _____

e-mail _____

Please detach, add postage, and return to:
First Vote
People For the American Way
2000 M Street NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036

1 How many teachers will be participating in First Vote activities?

2 Who will be designated as the First Vote coordinator responsible for implementing First Vote activities at your school and returning the completed voter registration cards to election officials? (Give name.)

3 Approximately how many students will be eligible to register to vote in your classes?

4 When will you (or the First Vote coordinator) contact local elections officials to obtain mail-in voter registration cards? (Please give date.)

5 What are the dates (state week or month) for First Vote in your high school?



PLACE
STAMP
HERE

*Erwin
Larson*

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FIRST VOTE
PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY
2000 M STREET, NW
SUITE 400
WASHINGTON, DC 20036