

Legislative Toolbox



The Electoral Process - Why It's Important to Pay Attention and Get Involved

by Becca Pryse, Valerie Dosland and Dave Dederichs

Although many people do not pay attention to elections until a few short weeks before Election Day, it is important for associations and those wanting to impact the legislative process to pay attention. Summer is a good time to get to know your candidates and take the opportunity to educate those candidates about your interests and concerns.

Why should you pay attention and get involved in elections? Most importantly, it is an excellent way to get your voice heard. Candidates seek every opportunity to talk to voters and love to hear from voters. Secondly, it provides a good opportunity to educate candidates about issues in your community and profession. Finally, you can influence the outcome—every vote counts.

How to get your issues heard? Discuss your issues when a candidate is campaigning in your neighborhood, at the door or on the phone. You can also respond to legislative updates, candidate surveys and online polls on candidate websites.

In every election there is a host of candidate forums, town hall meetings, and neighborhood coffees. This is another great opportunity to meet the candidates. Attend these events and bring supporters. Ask the candidates questions about your issues and concerns.

Seek out the candidates — call or email the candidate and tell them about your profession, your legislative concerns and what is happening in your community. Ask candidates to tour your facility or program.

It is important to learn about the candidates. Check out their websites, read their campaign literature, legislative scorecards and local media coverage. Know your issues so you are prepared to discuss and debate with candidate when you see them in your community.

Volunteering on a campaign is another way to get involved. Candidates are always looking for dedicated volunteers and appreciate any help they get. If you choose to support a particular candidate, there are a number of ways to get involved. Volunteer in the community - doorknock, help distribute literature, make phone calls and participate in parades. Make a financial contribution. Host a coffee for the candidate and invite others from your association or community. Put a lawn sign in your yard or write a letter to the editor in support of the candidate.

Most importantly, do not forget to vote this November 7th!