

ELECTION **2010**

**A BROADCASTER'S GUIDE
TO GETTING OUT THE VOTE**



MAKING OUR DEMOCRACY STRONGER

In the 2008 general election, more than 131 million Americans voted, including an unprecedented number of young voters and minorities. As broadcasters, we can help continue this momentum.

Local media's commitment to informing civic participation is a powerful one. Americans look to their local broadcasters for election information. As broadcasters, we can engage, inform and energize voters.

Historically, only four in 10 eligible voters and one in two registered voters participates in midterm elections. Let's change that in 2010.

In this guide, you will find ideas on how your station can help increase voter registration, education and turnout. By making the issues the cornerstone of programming, your viewers and listeners can gain the political knowledge needed to cast an informed vote.

Thank you in advance for helping reach the 200 million voters who make up our electorate. Together, we can make our democracy stronger.



OPERATION REGISTRATION

Increasing voter registration is the first step in increasing voter turnout.

- **Broadcast Deadlines.** Contact local election officials to find out voter registration deadlines and procedures in your area or use the easy online tool at www.VOTE411.org. Use programming, public service announcements (PSAs), on-air mentions and your station's Web site to stress registration deadlines.
- **Tell Voters How Easy It Is.** In addition to registering in person, in many states you can register by mail. Point listeners and viewers to easy registration resources, such as the National Mail Voter Registration Form available online at www.eac.gov.
- **Participate in Voter Registration Drives.** Team up with local organizations for registration drives at community events and in areas that historically have low voter turnout. Promote registration events in advance and broadcast live from the event.
- **Lead by Example.** Do a series or a segment showing how easy it is to register. Interview local election officials and conduct "person on the street interviews" at registration drives.



- **Make Registration Your Tag Line.** Include "register to vote" plugs in your election-related coverage and on-air talk. Air voter registration PSAs heavily in the weeks leading up to your state's registration deadline.
- **Make Sure Voters Know the Facts.** Let voters know they need to update their registration if they have moved, even if the move is only a short distance. Voters can confirm registration with your local board of elections.



VOTER EDUCATION

Inform voters by bringing the issues and the candidates to your community.

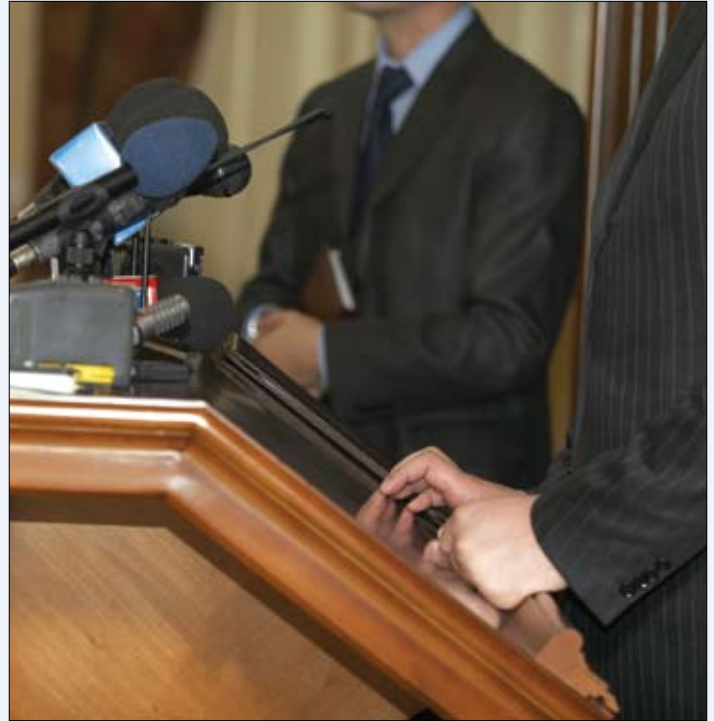
- **Become an Election 2010 Resource.** Dedicate a regular portion of your news or talk segments to election issues. Build an Election 2010 section on your station's Web site. Add podcasts or videocasts of station coverage, and include links to voter resources.
- **Go Local.** Cover state, city and county ballot issues and initiatives. Interview representatives from local organizations, community leaders and other area experts about key issues.
- **Let voters know the election is about them.** The best way to get people to vote is to show them they have a personal stake in our democracy. Develop content that helps your audience understand how issues on the ballot affect their everyday lives.
- **Run Candidate Profiles.** Inform voters about their Election Day choices by airing regular profiles on those running for office. Make key candidate profiles accessible from the election resource section of your station's Web site.
- **Offer Candidates Free Airtime.** Give candidates on-air time to discuss their stances on the issues and address potential voters. Engage your community with an interactive "Ask the Candidate" format where listeners and viewers are invited to submit questions. Extend equal offers of free airtime to all candidates. Tell your listeners that this time is being provided by your station as a public service to the community.
- **Tell All Sides.** Help voters understand key ballot and referendum issues by bringing in experts who can offer non-partisan information and allow both proponents and opponents of initiatives to share their views.



GREAT DEBATES

On-air debates educate voters about where the candidates stand on issues.

- **Sponsor a Debate.** Give voters a sense of the issues at stake by sponsoring a debate between candidates running in a high-profile local race. For information on how to organize a debate, visit the Web site of the Commission on Presidential Debates at www.debates.org.
- **Organize a “Debate Watch.”** Assemble a diverse group of local residents to watch and discuss a scheduled debate. Feature the discussion live or edit it for newscasts.
- **Offer Debate-Watching Pointers to Your Audience.** Interview high school debate coaches, communication professors or political science experts about what to watch or listen for during debates.
- **Ask Your Audience.** Before the debate, ask local residents what issues they want to see the candidates address. Afterwards, ask your audience about their reactions. Did they learn anything new? Did the debate change their opinions about the issues or the candidates?



GET OUT THE VOTE

It all comes down to who shows up. Help turn up the turnout in your community.

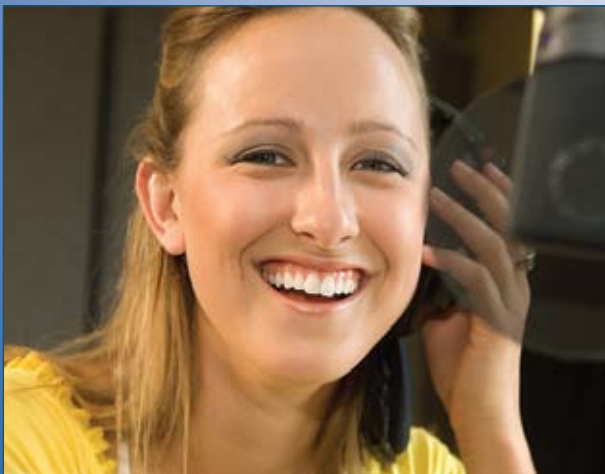
- **Share All Voting Options.** Millions of voters report that their schedules keep them from the polls. Make sure your listeners and viewers know all their voting options. Report on early voting and absentee ballots. On Election Day, share times when polling places are usually less crowded (10 to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.).
- **Tell Voters How to Find Their Polling Place.** Provide listeners and viewers with easy-to-use online tools, such as www.VOTE411.org, and contact information for your local elections office.
- **Walk Them Through It.** Create “how-to-vote” segments. Interview election officials about voting procedures. Include any changes from the last election. Spotlight accommodations for people with disabilities and people for whom English is a second language. Remind voters to bring a state ID, if required.
- **Reinforce the Message.** The more times people are reminded to vote, the more likely they will. Air PSAs. Add a call to action on the homepage of your station’s Web site. Send voter reminders to listener and viewer email lists. Include a “Vote on November 2” message in email signatures with a link back to your station’s online election resources.
- **Bring Out the Stars and the Stripes.** Have on-air personalities wear “I voted” buttons or t-shirts. Encourage them to talk on air about their voting experience. Enthusiasm can be contagious. When anchors and talk show hosts show they care about voting, others in the community will too.





EASY ELECTION CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Highlight important deadlines and dates** through programming, PSAs, on-air mentions and your station's Web site.
- ✓ **Let your listeners and viewers know:**
 - How to register
 - What is on the ballot
 - Where and when to vote
 - Why it matters
- ✓ **Involve popular on-air personalities.** Feature them in PSAs and have them broadcast live from registration events and polls on Election Day.
- ✓ **Use all venues available.** In addition to broadcasts, use listener and viewer email lists, as well as social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter to get word out about voter events.



PSA SCRIPTS

For the People: 10

Help keep our democracy a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Vote in the midterm elections. This is a public service announcement from (STATION).

Be a Decision Maker: 10

If you don't vote, you are letting someone else make decisions that affect your neighborhood, your community, your state and your nation. Make a difference. Learn the issues and vote. This is a public service announcement from (STATION).

Easier Than Ever: 10

It's never been easier. Get registered. Get educated. Get out and vote. Learn about the issues and the candidates at (INSERT STATION ELECTION 2010 WEB URL). This is a public service announcement from (STATION).

It's About You: 15

Elections are about you. Your family. Your neighborhood. Your community. Your state. Your country. Register to vote. Learn the issues. Cast your ballot. Vote on Nov. 2. This is a public service announcement from (STATION).

Calling All Americans: 15

Jobs, health care, education, the environment, national security – these are things that affect all Americans, which is why all Americans should vote. Exercise your right. Vote on November 2. This is a public service announcement from (STATION).

Because You Care: 20

Are you concerned about jobs? Then you should vote. Do you care about health care? Then you should vote. Does national security matter to you? Then you should vote. The only way to have your voice heard is to participate. Get registered. Learn the issues. Vote in the midterm elections. This is a public service announcement from (STATION).

Additional pre-recorded PSAs are available for download from the NAB's Public Service Web site. Go to www.NABSpotCenter.org.

RESOURCES

Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD)

1200 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Box 445
Washington DC 20036
202 872 1020
www.debates.org

League of Women Voters

1730 M Street NW, Suite 1000
Washington DC 20036
202 429 1965
www.lwv.org
www.Vote411.org
(League of Women Voters Education Fund's voter resource)

Project Vote Smart

One Common Ground
Philipsburg MT 59858
406 859 8683
888 VOTE SMART
www.vote-smart.org

United States Election Assistance Commission

1225 New York Avenue, Suite 1100
Washington DC 20005
866 747 1471
www.eac.gov

Youth Vote Coalition

1010 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 715
Washington DC 20005
202 783 4751
www.youthvote.org

SHARE YOUR PUBLIC SERVICE ELECTION EFFORTS.

Share Your Story

Log your station's donated airtime and election initiatives with NAB's online Station Debate Tracker and Log of Voter Education Activities at www.nab.org/electionlog.

Get Inspired

See what stations across the country have done to get out the vote at www.broadcastpublicservice.org/election.