

Voting Viva Voce

UNLOCKING THE SOCIAL LOGIC OF PAST POLITICS

TO REGISTER, YOU MUST

- Be a U.S. citizen;
- Be a Maryland resident;
- Be at least 16 years old*;
- Not be under guardianship for mental disability or if you are, you have not been found by a court to be unable to communicate a desire to vote;
- Not have been convicted of buying or selling votes;
- Not have been convicted of a felony, or if you have, you have completed serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment.

*You may register to vote if you are at least 16 years old but cannot vote unless you will be at least 18 years old by the next general election.

DEADLINE INFORMATION

- This application must be postmarked no later than 21 days before an election.
- If your application is complete and you are found to be qualified, a Voter Notification Card will be mailed to you.
- The submission of this form to an individual other than an official, employee, or agent of a County Board of Elections does not assure that the form will be submitted or filed in a timely manner.

YOU CAN USE THIS FORM TO

- Register to vote in federal, state, county, and municipal elections in Maryland.
- Change your name, address, or party affiliation.

INSTRUCTIONS

- If you do not have a current, valid Maryland driver's license or MVA ID card, you must enter the last 4 digits of your social security number. The statutory authority allowing officials to request the last 4 digits of your social security number is Election Law Article, § 3-202. The number will only be used for registration and other administrative purposes. It will be kept confidential.
- Complete Items 1–11 in Voter Registration Application. Sign and date Item 12. If you are registered to vote in another Maryland county or another state, you must complete Items A–B in Last Voter Registration.
- You must register with a party if you want to take part in that party's primary election, caucus or convention. Check one box only.
- Address and mail the application to your County Board of Elections, using the list on the back panel.

VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLACK INK

1	Are you at least 16 years old? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ARE YOU A U.S. CITIZEN? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If you answer NO to either question, do not complete this form.										
2	Check boxes that apply and complete Items 3–11. <input type="checkbox"/> New Registration <input type="checkbox"/> Name Change <input type="checkbox"/> Party Affiliation Change <input type="checkbox"/> Address Change										
3	Last Name First Name Middle Name Suffix										
4	Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female				5	Birth Date: Month Date Year					
6a	MARYLAND Driver's License or MVA ID Number MANDATORY (If you have neither see instructions) DONALD A. DEBATS										
6b	Social Security Number (last 4 digits)					6c	<input type="checkbox"/> Check here if you do not have either a current, valid Maryland driver's license / MVA ID card or a Social Security Number				
7	Maryland Residence Address:	Street Number	Street Name			Apt. No.	City or Town		Zip Code	County	
8	Mailing Address (if different from Item 7)										
9	You must register with a political party if you want to take part in the political party's primary election, caucus, or convention. Check one box only. Party (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Democratic Party <input type="checkbox"/> Republican Party <input type="checkbox"/> Libertarian Party <input type="checkbox"/> Green Party <input type="checkbox"/> Unaffiliated (independent of any party) <input type="checkbox"/> Other – Specify _____										
10	CONTACT INFORMATION Daytime Phone: Email (optional):										
11	<input type="checkbox"/> Check here if you need help voting. <input type="checkbox"/> Check here if you would like to be an election judge.										
Under penalty of perjury, I hereby swear or affirm: I am a U.S. citizen. ■ I am a Maryland resident. ■ I am at least 16 years old. ■ I have not been convicted of buying or selling votes. ■ I have not been											

Secrecy in Voting Today?
Not So Secret?

sociallogic.iath.virginia.edu

Public Voting

Secrecy in Voting Today?

Not so secret?

by
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When you vote in national, state and local elections, you go into the booth confident that no-one will know who you voted for. It's a secret.

Today, we look upon that secret ballot as an integral, almost sacred, element of voting. Robert Dahl wrote that “secrecy has become the general standard; a country in which it is widely violated would be judged as lacking free and fair elections.”¹

We assume there has always been a secret ballot and Americans have always voted secretly. That is, until we dig a little deeper....

Today, some votes are not secret—those of our elected representatives. And nor would we want them to be secret: we demand to know how “our” representatives vote because those representatives are accountable to us. This connection—between secrecy and accountability—turns out to be more important than we might have imagined (see “Secrecy in Voting in American History: No Secrets There” at: <http://sociallogic.iath.virginia.edu/node/9>).

Taking a closer look, we can also see exceptions to secrecy in the electoral behavior of the citizenry every day and all around us. For instance, many of us don't wish to keep our voting intentions secret. We delight in revealing

Cover and opposite

Maryland Voter Registration Application, 2016. Line 9 requires citizens wishing to vote in a party's primary, convention, or caucus to register with that party. This individual declaration, while not binding the voter to support that party in the general election, nevertheless becomes publically available information. Voters can download and mail in their voter registration applications; in some states, including Maryland, voters can register online. Three states—Washington, Oregon, and Colorado—conduct elections by mail. Ballots are mailed to every registered voter in advance of Election Day and in-person voting precincts are not available. Elections by mail appear to violate two of the three generally agreed upon principles of secret voting: 1) the ballot is printed at public expense, that all nominated candidates and proposals appear on that ballot; 2) the ballot is available only at official polling places; 3) the ballot is marked in secret. Other aspects of voting are also becoming more public.

Courtesy of the Maryland State Board of Elections

- ! After This Form Is Filled Out, You Must Sign And Mail It To Your County Board of Elections.
● It Cannot Be Processed If It Is Faxed or E-mailed, Because It Requires An Original Signature.

MARYLAND VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION

TO REGISTER, YOU MUST

- Be a U.S. citizen;
- Be a Maryland resident;
- Be at least 16 years old*;
- Not be under guardianship for mental disability or if you are, you have not been found by a court to be unable to communicate a desire to vote;
- Not have been convicted of buying or selling votes;
- Not have been convicted of a felony, or if you have, you have completed serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment.

*You may register to vote if you are at least 16 years old but cannot vote unless you will be at least 18 years old by the next general election.

DEADLINE INFORMATION

- This application must be postmarked no later than 21 days before an election.
- If your application is complete and you are found to be qualified, a Voter Notification Card will be mailed to you.
- The submission of this form to an individual other than an official, employee, or agent of a County Board of Elections does not assure that the form will be submitted or filed in a timely manner.

YOU CAN USE THIS FORM TO

- Register to vote in federal, state, county, and municipal elections in Maryland.
- Change your name, address, or party affiliation.

INSTRUCTIONS

- If you do not have a current, valid Maryland driver's license or MVA ID card, you must enter the last 4 digits of your social security number. The statutory authority allowing officials to request the last 4 digits of your social security number is Election Law Article, § 3-202. The number will only be used for registration and other administrative purposes. It will be kept confidential.
- Complete Items 1–11 in Voter Registration Application. Sign and date Item 12. If you are registered to vote in another Maryland county or another state, you must complete Items A–B in Last Voter Registration.
- You must register with a party if you want to take part in that party's primary election, caucus or convention. Check one box only.
- Address and mail the application to your County Board of Elections, using the list on the back panel.

VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLACK INK

1	Are you at least 16 years old? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ARE YOU A U.S. CITIZEN? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If you answer NO to either question, do not complete this form.							
2	Check boxes that apply and complete Items 3–12. <input type="checkbox"/> New Registration <input type="checkbox"/> Name Change <input type="checkbox"/> Party Affiliation Change <input type="checkbox"/> Address Change							
3	Last Name		First Name		Middle		Suffix	
4	Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female			5	Birth Date:		Month	Date
6a	MARYLAND Driver's License or MVA ID Number MANDATORY (if you have neither see instructions)							
6b	Social Security Number (last 4 digits)				6c	<input type="checkbox"/> Check here if you do not have either a current, valid Maryland driver's license / MVA ID card or a Social Security Number		
7	Maryland Residence Address:	Street Number	Street Name	Apt. No.	City or Town	Zip Code	County	
8	Mailing Address (if different from Item 7)							
9	You must register with a political party if you want to take part in the political party's primary election, caucus, or convention. Check one box only. Party (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Democratic Party <input type="checkbox"/> Republican Party <input type="checkbox"/> Libertarian Party <input type="checkbox"/> Green Party <input type="checkbox"/> Unaffiliated (independent of any party) <input type="checkbox"/> Other – Specify _____							
10	CONTACT INFORMATION Daytime Phone:				Email (optional):			
11	<input type="checkbox"/> Check here if you need help voting. <input type="checkbox"/> Check here if you would like to be an election judge.							
12	Under penalty of perjury, I hereby swear or affirm: I am a U.S. citizen. ■ I am a Maryland resident. ■ I am at least 16 years old. ■ I have not been convicted of buying or selling votes. ■ I have not been convicted of a felony, or if I have, I have completed serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment. The information in this application is true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.							
	Signature (required)				Date			
	X							

LAST VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION (if applicable)

A	Name on Last Registration:	Last Name	Title (Jr., Sr., etc.)	First Name	Middle Name	Date of Birth	
B	Address on Last Registration:	Street Number	Street Name	Apt. No.	City or Town	Zip Code	State

UNDER
The 19th
Amendment
I CAST MY
FIRST VOTE
Nov. 2nd, 1920

Harding
Coolidge
The Straight
Republican
Ticket

Lancaster, Pa.

our political votes and views to all and sundry. Millions of us attach bumper stickers to our cars, visually proclaiming to one and all our party preference, our candidate choices, and our policy positions on every imaginable issue; we use bumper stickers before elections to tell everyone on the road with us how we are going to vote. We pound yard signs into the lawn in front of our homes, associating our political views with our place of residence and our neighborhood: yard signs are literally much closer to home, and far more revelatory than a bumper sticker on an anonymous car speeding by!

Other breaches of secrecy in political matters are imposed on us—and, surprisingly, we accept them. In 20 states, citizens must declare their political affiliation and register with a party in order to cast a vote in the state’s primary elections for members of Congress. Another 16 states use closed or semi-closed primaries, only some of which allow independent or unaffiliated voters to participate. In only 14 states (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin) are citizens able to vote in primary elections for Congress without being required to declare a partisan affiliation. The number of states using open primaries in presidential elections is slightly higher at 17. [See: http://www.fairvote.org/primaries#open_and_closed_primaries]. Everywhere else the state, by law, is able to require us to reveal our partisan affiliation in order to vote in the primary elections held by parties.

Why does this matter? In part, because in so many places the power of incumbency is pervasive: in the 2014 election 90 percent of seats in the US House of Representatives were considered “safe” for the incumbent; at least 85 percent of incumbents have been returned to office in every congressional election over the last half century. In 2012, only six of 435 Congressional seats changed party hands; in the much-vaunted “wave” 2014 election, 19 of 435 House seats switched parties. The overwhelming majority of House districts are essentially one-party places where the primary election within the dominant party is far more important than the general election in determining who “our” representative will be.

Opposite

Women’s Voting Badge, 1920. This badge was worn during the first presidential election in which women could vote following the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in August 1920. Even in her first election, the woman who wore this badge wanted to declare her support for a straight Republican ticket

Courtesy of Smithsonian Institute, National Museum of American History

Today's technologies also erode political secrecy by enabling the stealthy discovery of partisan affiliations. This begins with some surprising public records: counties publish the names and addresses of all registered voters in their jurisdiction (including, in most states, party affiliation), which you may access, usually for a fee. In addition—in this era of mail-in-ballots—it is possible to obtain a list of registered voters who have lodged a postal vote, allowing pressure to be put on those who have not yet voted. In the past, hard copies of these records were vital documents for political operatives. Now “scrubbed” versions of state registration lists are sold by private companies in the form of software or internet applications. [See: <http://www.l2political.com/products/technology/votermapping/>].

Our postings on Facebook and other social media have delivered (if the user does not actively prevent it) a new treasure trove of political information, giving operatives the opportunity to deploy complex social network algorithms to send tailored political advertising to individual users. Social media commentators credit Facebook with employing some of the “best data scientists in the world”. Not surprisingly, social media postings have become the “third force” in political mass persuasion, alongside real news and paid advertisements.

In the run-up to the 2014 elections, “both parties have spent...two years scrubbing their voter files and other consumer data, trying to match specific persuadable supporters with their specific web habits”.² Vast back-room data operations further develop the party's “ground game” by comparing (with your permission) your Facebook friends list to registration lists so that you can be urged to electronically “guilt-trip” your friends into registering and voting. [See article: https://tctechcrunch2011.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/img_5842.png?w=680]. The high-tech use of data expands every election: sending friends to knock on the doors of other friends with political messages and targeted door stop spiels developed from research into on-line searches. If you live in a tightly contested place, partisan foot soldiers now arrive at your door to urge you to vote the way they know you are likely to vote. This happens because operatives have the data to operationalize a fundamental political truism: you are most likely to believe what your friends and neighbors tell you.

If you wish to keep your voting intentions secret it can be done—but it requires restraint and care. Any breeches of overall secrecy, of course, take place outside the voting booth: inside, and in that space alone, your actual voting choices become your secret, to be revealed or not—it's up to you. ■



Eisenhower Campaign Compact, 1952. A large variety of products are produced to announce loyalty to a particular candidate or party. In the presidential campaign of 1952 women could show their support of Eisenhower by powdering their noses using a rotary phone dial compact proclaiming "I LIKE IKE."

Courtesy of Smithsonian Institute, National Museum of American History

Endnote

1 Robert Dahl, *On Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000):96.

2 Darren Samuelson, "Tech Tally: What Campaigns Learned," *Politico*, November 10, 2014.

Voting Viva Voce

UNLOCKING THE SOCIAL LOGIC OF PAST POLITICS

Voting Viva Voce

Unlocking the Social Logic of Past Politics

sociallogic.iath.virginia.edu

Two mid-nineteenth century cities—Alexandria, Virginia and Newport, Kentucky—shared a common voting arrangement: both states required all votes in all elections to be cast in public by voice (viva voce). The poll books provided an official written record of every voter's spoken declaration. Professor Don DeBats presents and analyses this data on the website.

Public Voting. This project reveals the world of American politics at a time when every citizen's vote was public knowledge, and shows how social identity influenced votes.

Alexandria, Virginia | 1850s. On the Potomac just opposite Washington DC, Alexandria was a thriving commercial city based on slave labor in the late 1850's as the secession crisis loomed.

Newport, Kentucky | 1870. On the Ohio just opposite Cincinnati, Newport was, as the Panic of 1873 crashed down, a thriving industrial city based on immigrant labor.

Colophon

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Design | Anne Chesnut

Published by The Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities

In conjunction with the generous support of: Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, Flinders University, National Endowment for the Humanities, Australian Research Council, and Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities

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