



CELEBRATE AMERICA BY RECOMMITTING TO ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

By Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose

On July 4, 1776, America declared its independence from the British monarchy. On November 3, 2020, voters across Ohio and across the country will head to the polls to participate in the very self-governing that our founders envisioned in Philadelphia 244 years ago.

That day a bold and courageous idea about justice, equality and human freedom became a nation -- the first nation founded on an idea. We know that for much of our 244 years of history we have failed to live up to those lofty ideals of our founding. We know that for more than half of our history women and people of color were excluded from the franchise and even systematically subjugated by the laws enacted by those in power.

As with any human endeavor, this nation has always been imperfect, but unlike most others we are also empowered with ways to make it better -- and each American generation since the founding has done just that. The preamble to the US Constitution speaks of creating a more perfect union and that's exactly what we as Americans do. We try to leave it a bit better than we found it and many times that includes improving the very functioning of our democratic processes. This year we mark the centennial of women's suffrage and celebrate the brave activists who worked to bring it about. As we see the fight against racism and for true equality continue to this very day, we're reminded of the fight for voting rights. Just 55 years ago visionary leaders utilized nonviolent protest for the very right to vote -- a right which too many now take for granted. Through their efforts our nation was truly made more perfect.

That work of making America more perfect continues, and now it's our job.

The bare minimum is to take your citizenship seriously and vote - it's never been easier and in Ohio you will have the same three choices you've had for years. In the Buckeye state we're blessed to have lots of options so regardless of lifestyle, preferences or even pandemic related concerns there is a style of voting for you. For this fall's general election you can choose: four weeks of in-person early voting including evening and weekend hours, four weeks of convenient absentee voting from the safety and convenience of home, or in-person election day voting at a convenient location close to where you live. Of course you have to be registered and you can do that in just minutes at VoteOhio.gov. You can also go to VoteOhio.gov to check your address and ensure

your registration is current and accurate. Consider being a voter registration evangelist and passing this along - perhaps to a young Ohioan you know so they can be a voter also! These four months leading up to the November 3rd election are a time for every Ohioan to consider ways that they can serve and help strengthen our democratic republic. One way is to answer the call to be a poll worker. Elections are run locally at each of Ohio's 88 county boards of elections where four board members, two Republicans and two Democrats, rely on hundreds, if not thousands, of poll workers on election day. On average it takes over 35,000 poll workers across the state to open the polls by 6:30 A.M. and serve voters at the polling location until 7:30 p.m. Now with a pandemic that is disproportionately affecting the elderly, and considering that the majority of poll workers in Ohio are seniors, this call to duty takes on a new urgency. If you want to defend democracy and serve our state and nation, go to VoteOhio.gov/DefendDemocracy and sign up to be a poll worker.

Rest assured that on November 3rd, polls will open in Ohio. Unlike when in-person voting was scuttled for the March primary election by a last minute order from the Ohio Department of Health. Ohio will be prepared to observe appropriate social distancing and to use personal protective equipment, sanitizer and safety practices to keep voters and poll workers healthy as we conduct in-person voting.

This nation is not perfect, but there is no nation on earth that has done more than America has to advance the cause of human freedom - and we have the power to make it more perfect. Celebrate America by recommitting to active citizenship! Social media posts alone won't do it - be a voter and be a poll worker. Get started by visiting VoteOhio.gov!