

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Dear _____

We are writing to express our hope that colleges and universities will take a more active role in educating students in the federal electoral process. While students are expected to come out to the polls to vote in great numbers this year, more can be done to eliminate the potential barriers that students may face in November.

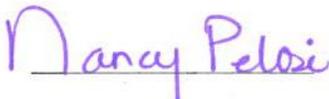
Historically, students have faced unique barriers to the polls that have discouraged participation, or prevented individuals from voting entirely. Restrictive residency and identification requirements, inconveniently located polling places, inadequate distribution of voting equipment and false, misleading and sometimes intimidating information have created difficulties for college students trying to exercise their right to vote. With state voting registration laws constantly changing, it is increasingly important that students be supplied with complete and correct information about registering to vote and voting. While we have worked to eliminate these restrictions and obstacles, many remain. As the leader of an institution for higher education, you are in a unique position to facilitate student participation in the electoral process.

Importantly, student voters are often first time voters. Studies have shown that if voters cannot register and vote the first time they attempt to exercise this fundamental right, they will be less likely to vote in subsequent elections. To ensure that all eligible students have an opportunity to vote, we suggest you consider providing voter registration information and voting guides for first year students during their initial registration or orientation. Facilitating student voting can be done as easily as including the current registration and voting guidelines in your Student Handbook.

We also suggest that you consider reaching out to local and state election officials to help students with registration and residency requirements. Local election officials can not only provide you with the necessary materials and resources, but may be able to come to the campus to talk directly with your students about these important issues. Further, you may wish to look at ways to turn your campus into a voter registration site and polling place. Long lines have plagued polling locations for years. By working with your local and state election officials you may be able to decrease the amount of time required to cast a ballot, increase participation, and increase confidence in the voting process.

Educating students and easing voter registration and voting will provide the basis for students to not only participate in the federal electoral process while in college, but also increase the likelihood of civic engagement for the rest of their lives. Our goal of more voter participation and making sure that every person who wants to vote gets to vote starts with you.

Sincerely,



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Democratic Whip



Assistant Democratic Leader



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Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary

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