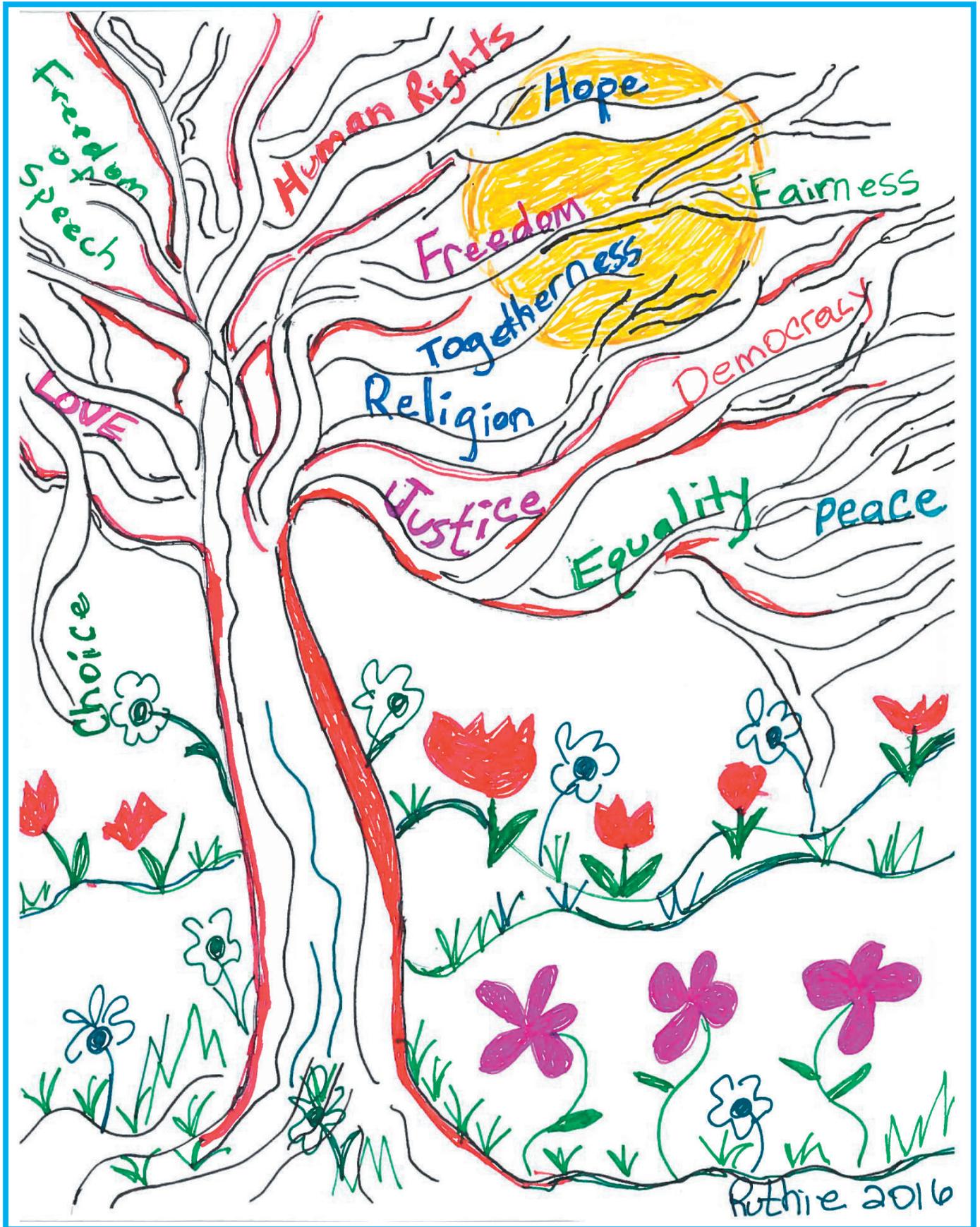


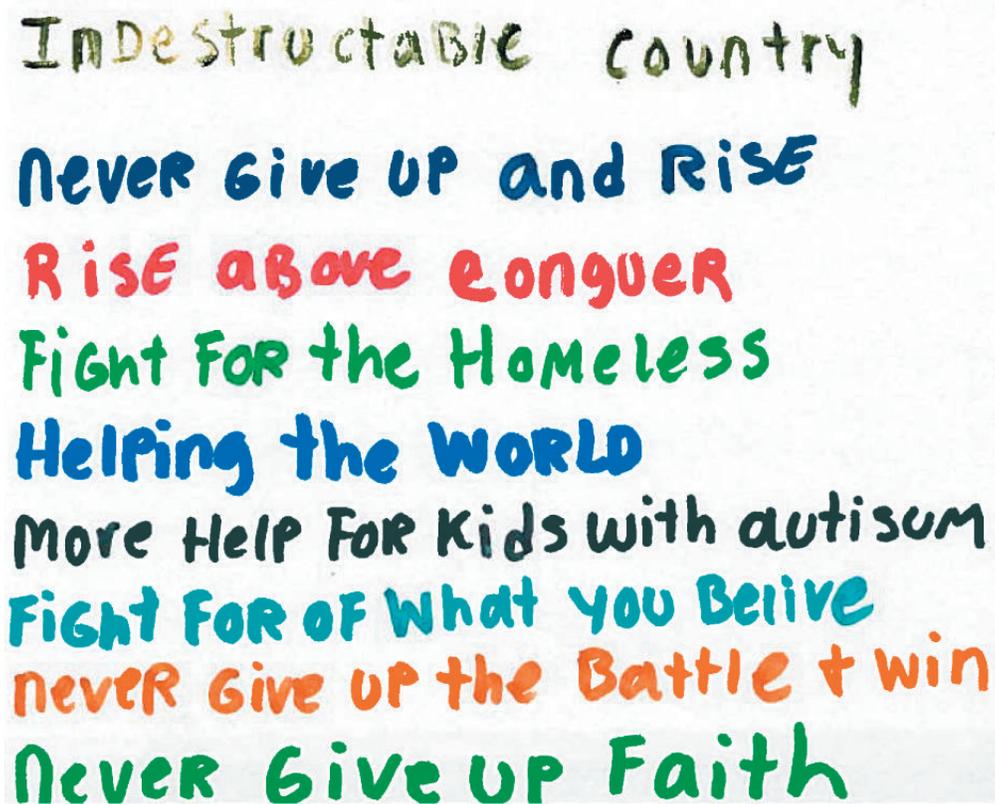
# YOUR VOICE : YOUR VOTE



KENTUCKY PROTECTION & ADVOCACY

Individuals with disabilities created all of the artwork and graphics in this publication. The artwork expresses what voting means to all Americans. Protection & Advocacy is honored to share it with you.

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INDESTRUCTIBLE country  
NEVER Give UP and RISE  
RISE ABOVE CONQUER  
Fight FOR the Homeless  
Helping the WORLD  
More Help FOR Kids with autism  
Fight FOR OF What YOU Believe  
NEVER Give UP the Battle + win  
NEVER Give UP Faith

The information contained in this booklet reflects the current laws on the date it was written.  
March 2016

## Why vote?

What is voting? Simply put – it’s a time for you to say who you think would be good leaders in your city, county, state, or country. It’s also a time for you to say if you think laws need to change or stay the same.

Every vote counts equally. It doesn’t matter what you look like, how much money you have, or where you live. Because of this, a single vote can make a difference.

Voting is truly your voice. How you vote is your own business. No one can tell you how to vote or force you to vote in a way you don’t want.

You don’t have to tell other people how you voted. Your voting ballot is secret.

Your Voice: Your Vote was written to help people learn about voting and the voting process. The more we know about this, the better self-advocates and citizens we can be.

## Voting terms

There are many laws – both federal (United States) and state (Kentucky)– that address voting rights. The laws have terms that you need to know to help you understand the process.

Candidates are people who are running for leadership positions. These positions are also called offices.

Caucus is a special election that is run by a particular political party to narrow down the list of candidates for a certain office. In Kentucky, caucuses don’t happen very often but when they do, they happen before the Primary Election.

Election is the term used to say when people go to vote and also what kind of offices are being voted for on those days. These include:

1. Federal Election is one in which people vote for candidates running for United States offices. Examples are: President, U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative.
2. General Election is the voting time held in November in Kentucky. This is the final election in which to decide who takes offices and which laws will be changed.
3. Local Election is one in which people vote for candidates running for specific offices for cities or counties. It also is a time in which people vote on local (city/county) laws.
4. Primary Election is the voting time held in May in Kentucky. This is a time in which the list of candidates is narrowed down.
5. State Election is one in which people vote for candidates running for state offices. Examples: Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, etc.

The reason why it's important to vote is to have a good government, a good law and a good life.



## How do I get to vote?

Signing up to vote is called registration. You will need to fill out a special form to do this. In order to do register, you must:

1. Be 18 years old by the next General Election
2. Be a United States citizen
3. Have lived in Kentucky for at least 28 days before you register
4. Not claim the right to vote someplace other than Kentucky and
5. Not have had your voting right removed by
  - a. Being convicted of a felony crime (see page 7 for more information) or
  - b. A judge in guardianship court (see page 7 for more information)

## Where do I get voter registration forms?

There are a number of places where you can get the forms to get registered. They include:

1. Driver License Office
2. County Clerk's Office
3. State Board of Elections ([www.elect.ky.gov](http://www.elect.ky.gov))
4. Protection & Advocacy and
5. Agencies where you get services

## How many times do I need to fill out a form?

You only have to fill out the form once to get registered. However, later you will need to fill out a new form if there has been a change in your:

1. Name
2. Address or
3. Political Party

## What is a political party?

A political party is a group of people who have similar or the same beliefs in how government needs to work. When you register to vote, you will need to say which political party you choose to be a part of.

The two biggest parties in Kentucky are Democrat and Republican. For more information on the political parties, please visit their state headquarters' websites:

**Democrat:** <http://kydemocrat.com/>

**Republican:** <http://rpk.org/>

You have the option of saying that you are an Independent. This means that you choose neither Democrat nor Republican.

## Why do I need to choose a political party on the registration form?

Your political party selection will determine which primary election you will be able to vote in. For example, if you choose Republican, you will get help narrow down the Republican candidates for the general election. The same goes for Democrats.

If you register as an Independent, you won't be able to vote in the Primary Election unless:

1. There are candidates running for offices that don't indicate a political party (judges, school board, etc.)
2. There is a question about changing a law.

## What happens once I fill out the registration form?

After your form is turned in, you will get a note in the postal mail saying that you are registered to vote. This note will also tell you where you vote (polling place) on Election Day.

You can also use the voter center on the State Board of Elections website: [www.elect.ky.gov](http://www.elect.ky.gov) and click on the "Where Do I Vote?" icon.

## I'm registered...now what?

Before you vote, educate yourself! Make a list of the things that are important to you. Those things may include:

- What you like to do
- Your services
- Education
- Religion
- Military
- Your money and property
- Where you live (city, county, state, country)

Then, you'll want to find out about the candidates and the issues that may be on the ballot.

To find out who has filed to run for offices visit the Kentucky Secretary of State's website: [www.sos.ky.gov](http://www.sos.ky.gov). You will need to click on the link "Candidate Filings".

## Where do I find information?

You can find out information about candidates and issues from a number of places. These include:

- Newspapers
- Candidate websites
- Social media: blogs, Twitter, Facebook, etc.
- Candidate speeches/materials
- League of Women Voters (<http://lwvky.org/>)
- Vote Smart (<http://votesmart.org/>)
- Rock the Vote (<http://www.rockthevote.com/>).

Information about candidates and issues comes in two forms: non-partisan and partisan.

Non-partisan information about a candidate or issue doesn't take sides. An example of this is a group tabulating a candidate's voting record while in office.

Partisan information tries to convince you how to vote. An example of this is advertisements on TV.

# Going to Vote on Election Day

## Don't forget your ID

Before leaving to vote, make sure that you have an ID with you. In Kentucky, the below items are accepted as IDs:

1. An official photo ID
2. Credit Card and
3. Social Security card.

If the precinct election officer at your polling place knows you, you may not have to show your ID.

After finding your name in the poll book, the precinct election officer will have you sign your name or make your mark.

## Voting

Almost all of Kentucky's counties have two ways voters can cast their ballots – paper ballot and machine. All voters should be offered both options.

If you choose to have a paper ballot, the election officer will give you a piece of paper and direct you to a place where you can vote. After making your selections on the paper, you will then feed your ballot into a machine that will record your vote.

If you choose to use the machine, the election officer will direct you to the open machine. The election officer can show you how to work the machine. If you need to have headphones (for an audio ballot) or have your choice switch hooked up to the machine, ask the election officer for help.

## Voting must be accessible to all people, regardless of disability

This means that people should be able to:

1. Park in accessible spaces, if needed
2. Get to the polling place door easily
3. Get through the polling place door with little to no help
4. Have election officers communicate with them in a way that they understand
5. Sign/mark the poll book easily and
6. Use the machine or mark paper ballot with or without help

County clerks/boards of election may use “temporary solutions” to make polling places accessible. This means that they can use

- Temporary signs to indicate parking
- Temporary ramps
- Adaptors for doors
- Ballot Call buttons (call buttons that tell election officers that someone needs help with a heavy door)
- Signature guides
- Pen/paper for writing notes to communicate with someone who has difficulty with oral questions

## Frequently Asked Questions

### I have a guardian. Can I still vote?

Ask your guardian what the guardianship order says. If you were appointed your guardian before June 26, 2007 it's very likely you lost your right to vote. It used to be an automatic loss of voting rights when a guardian was appointed.

If you got your guardian after June 26, 2007 and the order doesn't say your right was removed, you are able to vote.

If you got your guardian before June 26, 2007 or the order says that your right was removed, you can ask a judge for that right to be returned. This is called restoration.

### How do I ask for restoration?

You can ask for restoration in three ways:

1. Verbally tell the district court clerk that you want to have rights restoration,
2. Write a letter to the district court judge saying you want rights restoration, or
3. File a "Petition for Relief, Modification, or Termination" that you can get at the district court clerk's office or download at: <http://courts.ky.gov/resources/legalforms/LegalForms/795.pdf>.

There will be a hearing scheduled so that you can talk with the judge. The judge would then decide if you get your voting right restored.

### Someone is my Power of Attorney. Can I still vote?

Yes. Power of Attorney isn't the same a guardianship. You still have all of your legal rights.

### I've been convicted of a felony. Can I still vote?

In Kentucky, there is an automatic loss of voting rights when a person is convicted of a felony crime. However, you can apply for this right to be restored by Executive Pardon from the Governor. To qualify, you must:

1. Have a final discharge (either time served or probated),
2. Not be under any felony indictments or have any pending charges, and
3. Not owe any fines or restitution

Call your local Probation and Parole office for a form to start this process. You could also download a form by visiting: <http://corrections.ky.gov/communityinfo/Pages/Restoration-of-Civil-Rights.aspx>.

### Can I have someone help me to vote?

A precinct election officer can show you how to use the voting machine.

If you need more help than that, you can ask for it. The precinct election officer will have you fill out a form saying that you need permanent assistance. The people who assist you will also have to sign off on the form.

You can bring a person with you to be your voting assistant. That person can't be your boss or a representative of your employer or union.

If you didn't bring a person with you, two election officers will help you out.

Whoever helps you should mark your ballot however you tell him/her you want to vote. This person shouldn't question how you are voting or say your choices loudly so others can hear.

## **Someone tells me that they'll pay me for voting a certain way. What should I do?**

Don't take their money. This is a crime called voter fraud. Report him/her to the Kentucky Attorney General's Office Voter Fraud Hotline: 1-800-328-8683.

Remember, voting is your voice. Don't ever give your voice away!

## **Do I have to go to my polling place to vote?**

No. If you know that you will not be able to vote at your polling place on Election Day, contact your county clerk's office and ask if you can vote absentee. There are two ways to vote this way: 1) a mail-in ballot and 2) absentee machine

To get a mail-in ballot, you must be:

1. Unable to get to your polling place due to age, disability or illness,
2. Living overseas (outside of the United States) but still registered to vote in Kentucky,
3. A student temporarily living outside of your county of residence on Election Day,
4. In jail for a crime but not convicted of a felony,
5. Temporarily living outside of Kentucky but still eligible to vote here,
6. Unable to get to your polling place on Election Day and unable to get to the county clerk's office to vote by absentee machine, or
7. Participating in the Secretary of State's Crime Victim Address Confidentiality Program.

To vote by absentee machine, you must be:

1. 117A.010
2. A student temporarily living outside of your county of residence on Election Day,
3. Surgery/hospital
4. Temporarily living outside of Kentucky but still eligible to vote here,
5. A "uniformed-service voter confined to a military base on Election Day and who learn of that confinement within seven days or less of an election and are not eligible for a paper absentee ballot, or
6. A woman in your last trimester of pregnancy.

Contact your county clerk's office as soon as you find out that you won't be able to go to your polling place. There are deadlines for absentee requests.

## **I can't get into my polling place. What do I do?**

Call your county clerk or Protection & Advocacy. Tell them what makes you unable to get in the polling place. They will work to see what can be done to help so that you can still vote.

## **What do I do if there's a problem at my polling place on Election Day?**

You should be able to get into your polling place and cast your ballot without any problems. If you:

1. Can't get into your polling place,

2. Have your right to vote questioned,
3. Find that the accessible machine isn't set up or not working properly,
4. Don't get other accommodations you request, or
5. You aren't allowed to vote by yourself

### **Speak up!**

Ask to speak with the poll sheriff. This is the person at the polling place that is in charge. If the problem can't be fixed by that person then you may call:

1. Your County Clerk's office,
2. Protection & Advocacy at 1-800-372-2988, or
3. The State Board of Elections at 1-800-246-1399

## **Voting Laws**

There are quite a few state and federal laws about voting and voting rights. This booklet briefly summarizes a few regarding discrimination.

### **The Kentucky Civil Rights Act**

The Kentucky Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination based on disability in places of public accommodation that receive government funding, which includes polling places. If you believe your rights under this law have been violated, you can file a complaint with the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights. For more information, visit: <http://kchr.ky.gov/filingcomplaints/Pages/default.aspx>.

### **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The ADA is the most comprehensive federal law that protects the rights of people with disabilities. Title II of this law prohibits government operated programs and services from discriminating on the basis of disability. It also entitles people to reasonable accommodations that allow people to participate in programs and events, including every part of the voting process. The ADA applies to all elections – local, federal, and state. It also applies to special elections by political parties, called caucuses.

### **The Help America Vote Act (HAVA)**

HAVA is the most recent federal law about voting. It says that all voters have the right to vote independently and privately in federal elections. In addition to giving states/territories money and guidance to make their elections accessible to all, HAVA says:

1. Each polling place must have at least one voting machine that is accessible to anyone with a disability
2. Each polling place has to be set up so that every voter can get into it and move around easily
3. Voting materials at the polling place must be provided in alternate formats and languages so that every voter can understand and use them
4. Voters must be able to change their answers before the ballot is cast and counted
5. Voters can get replacement ballots if mistakes are made on them
6. States have to make improvements in their absentee voting for U.S. military and overseas voters
7. When there is a question about a voter's eligibility to vote, the voter should be given a provisional ballot upon which to vote and a way to find out if the vote was counted

Want more information on voting in Kentucky? Please contact:

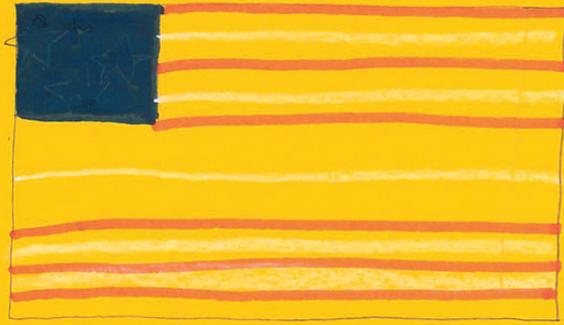
Kentucky Protection & Advocacy: 1-800-372-2988 or visit: [www.kypa.net](http://www.kypa.net)

Kentucky State Board of Elections: 1-800-246-1399 or visit: [www.elect.ky.gov](http://www.elect.ky.gov) or

Your County Clerk. Find yours at: <http://elect.ky.gov/contactcountyclerks/Pages/default.aspx>



VOTE for



America and  
god Bless America



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