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CAMPUS VOTER ENGAGEMENT PLAN 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Civic Engagement is engrained into the culture at Frostburg State University (FSU) and is one of the institution's strategic priorities. As part of this effort, the Office of Civic Engagement (OCE) works to foster active citizenship amongst the student body through co-curricular activities and curricular partnerships. A key component of the OCE mission is to engage students in the democratic process, which includes voting. Frostburg State University's Campus Voter Engagement Plan is developed and implemented by the Office of Civic Engagement to guide its efforts in increasing student knowledge and participation in the voting process. The Democratic Engagement Advisory Group will guide the OCE efforts in implementing this plan.

Frostburg State University's Campus Voter Engagement Plan provides a structure for the institution's Voter Engagement activities and strategies that guide the OCE and partnering groups efforts to increase student knowledge and participation in the voting process through the 2024 elections. This plan will be implemented by the OCE and the Voter Engagement Team with input from members of the Democratic Engagement Advisory Group.

The OCE efforts over the past 10 years have led to improved voting rates among the student body. In 2020, NSLVE data shows that student turnout rose by 10% to 65.6%. Additionally, during the 2018 mid-term elections, voter turnout was 38.4%, a 20.1% increase from the 2014 mid-term elections. The OCE's efforts continue to build on its strengths and partnerships as we work toward the 2024 presidential elections, with efforts focusing on education, ballot access, registration, and student turnout.

GOALS

SHORT TERM (BY 2024)

- Increase Student Registration to 90%: Achieve a 90% voter registration rate among eligible students through targeted registration drives, integration of registration opportunities into campus activities, and use of TurboVote.
- Increase Student Voting Rate by 5%: Raise the student voting rate to 70.6%, up from 65.6% in 2020, as measured by NSLVE data. This will be achieved through enhanced voter education, mobilization efforts, and facilitating easier access to voting.
- **Receive All IN Democracy Challenge Gold Seal:** Meet the criteria to receive the All IN Democracy Challenge Gold Seal by demonstrating a high level of student voter engagement and participation.

- Increase Student Confidence in the Voting Process: Conduct educational programs to boost students' confidence in their understanding of and participation in the voting process.
- **Expand Democratic Engagement Programming:** Increase the number of events that partner with or are hosted by student organizations to foster a culture of civic participation and collaboration.
- **Targeted Voter Turnout Increase:** Focus on increasing voter turnout among students in low-turnout demographics and majors identified through NSLVE data, including Asian & Hispanic students and Natural Resources & Conservation, Law Enforcement, and Mathematics and Statistics majors.
- **Boost First-Year Student Engagement:** Aim to equalize first-year students' registration and turnout rates with upper-class students through targeted outreach and engagement programs.

LONG TERM (BY 2032)

- Implement an On-Campus Polling Location: Establish a polling location on campus to provide convenient access to voting for all students.
- Achieve 100% Student Voter Registration Rate: Work towards a goal of 100% voter registration and turnout among eligible students in national and local elections, ensuring all students have the opportunity and encouragement to participate.
- Integrate Civic Learning into General Education: Incorporate civic learning and democratic engagement into the general education curriculum for all students, ensuring that these principles are embedded in the academic experience and institutional culture.

COMMITMENT & LANDSCAPE

Frostburg State University is one of twelve institutions in the University System of Maryland and is located in the Appalachian region of Western Maryland, with many of its students coming from the greater Baltimore/DC area. FSU serves one of the most diverse student bodies in the system and has the highest minority population outside of the traditional HBCUs. The local region faces challenges, including increased poverty, limited public transportation, and reduced resources. FSU strives to engage students in the local community through volunteerism and national service to combat local issues while offering impactful experiences to our students.

The division of Student Affairs at Frostburg State University's mission is to provide opportunities for meaningful engagement to enhance personal and professional growth within supportive and inclusive environments, transforming students into leaders prepared for our complex and changing global society. In line with this mission, the Office of Civic Engagement is dedicated to fostering active citizenship and strives to build citizen leaders for the 21st century. As active citizens, students educate themselves about and become involved in their local, national, and global communities. Through democratic engagement, community organizing, and inclusivity, these active citizen leaders are enabled to combat public concerns at their core and strengthen their greater community.

This commitment has been strengthened by our more recent emphasis on experiential learning. Our work has also been guided by National Campus Compact, the Corporation for National and Community Service, NASPA's Civic Learning & Democratic Engagement initiative, the American Democracy Project, and the Association of American Colleges and Universities' Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative. The overarching theme of our Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement initiative is to foster informed and engaged citizen leaders within their community. Our goals are achieved through our four pillars of Civic Engagement: Democratic Engagement, Volunteerism, Service-learning, and National Service. Through these four programmatic components, we work to

engage students in their community; educate them on the political process, and foster life-long involvement as citizen leaders.

LEADERSHIP

Frostburg State University engages individuals and groups both on and off campus to support our Voter Engagement and education efforts. On campus the Democratic Engagement Advisory Group works together to strategically plan on-going democratic engagement efforts and programming including specific efforts focused on voter engagement. In addition to this group, each election year, the office of civic engagement convenes a Voter Engagement Committee to help organize resources, plan events, find guest speakers, and develop marketing strategies to engage students in the voting process. The group begins meeting on a monthly basis in July leading up to the election. Finally, the University works with multiple State and National partners to ensure the use of best practices, to identify resources, and to report on our efforts.

DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

- Dr. Artie Travis, Vice President for Student Affairs
- Robert Cooper, Assistant VP for Student Engagement
- Patrick O'Brien, Director of Civic Engagement
- Timothy Magrath, Political Science Professor and Director of J. Glenn Beall Institute for Public Affairs
- Rachael Michalski, President Student Government Association, Transform Mid-Atlantic Civic Fellow
- Hailey Unger Vice President Student Government Association

VOTER ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Participants in this group regularly consist of representatives from organizations such as:

- Office of Civic Engagement
- J. Glenn Beall Institute for Public Affairs
- Allegany County Board of Elections
- League of Women Voters
- Women's Action Coalition
- NAACP
- Student Government Association
- Student Athletic Advisory Committee
- Fraternity & Sorority Life
- Voter Engagement Student Employees
- Student Civic Leaders
- FSU Faculty & Staff
- Lewis J. Ort Library Staff
- Student Organizations

NATIONAL PARTNERS

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

Ask Every Student

Transform Mid-Atlantic

Campus Vote Project

Students Learn Students Vote Coalition

<u>TurboVote</u>

NATIONAL STUDY OF LEARNING, VOTING, AND ENGAGEMENT (NSLVE)

Frostburg State University's voter engagement efforts have led to increased voter turnout across all ages, genders, and races/ethnicities, as well as the majority of the different fields of study. FSU's goals and strategies aim to continue this positive trend while focusing on participation gaps in specific fields of study that have shown decreases and bringing all student demographic groups to an increased and equitable voter registration and turnout rate.

VOTER REGISTRATION AND TURNOUT RATES:

- Registration Rate: The registration rate at Frostburg State University was 86.3% in 2020, showing a slight increase from 85.4% in 2016. This is marginally below the national average for institutions, which was 87%.
- Voting Rate: The voting rate for Frostburg State University students was 65.6% in 2020, which represents a significant increase from 55.6% in 2016. This is close to the national average voting rate of 66% for all institutions.
- Voting Rate of Registered Students: The yield rate (percentage of registered students who voted) was 76.0% in 2020, up from 65% in 2016, aligning closely with the national average.

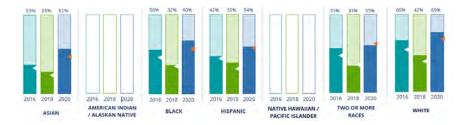


DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN:

By Race/Ethnicity:

• Asian Students: Voting rate increased from 33% in 2016 to 51% in 2020.

- Black Students: Voting rate increased from 50% in 2016 to 60% in 2020.
- Hispanic Students: Voting rate increased from 42% in 2016 to 54% in 2020.
- White Students: Voting rate increased from 60% in 2016 to 69% in 2020.
- Two or More Races: Voting rate increased from 51% in 2016 to 55% in 2020.



By Age:

- 18-21: Voting rate increased from 50% in 2016 to 55% in 2020.
- 22-24: Voting rate increased from 55% in 2016 to 63% in 2020.
- 25-29: Voting rate increased from 62% in 2016 to 66% in 2020.
- 30-39: Voting rate increased from 68% in 2016 to 72% in 2020.
- 40-49: Voting rate increased from 77% in 2016 to 81% in 2020.
- 50+: Voting rate increased from 85% in 2016 to 66% in 2020.

By Gender:

- Female Students: Voting rate increased from 61% in 2016 to 63% in 2020.
- Male Students: Voting rate increased from 49% in 2016 to 56% in 2020.

By Education Level:

- Undergraduate Students: The voting rate was 61% in 2020.
- Graduate Students: The voting rate was 75% in 2020.

By Field of Study (Largest Changes):

- Biological and Biomedical Sciences: Voting rate increased from 46% in 2016 67% in 2020
- Natural Resources and Conservation: Voting rate decreased from 68% in 2016 to 54% in 2020.

Data from the Frostburg State University 2020 NSLVE Campus Report

STRATEGIES

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT STUDENT STAFF

With funding support from the Office of Civic Engagement and Student Engagement, a Civic Engagement Student Staff member will be hired each year to help with voter education, registration, dialogue events, and marketing. In the Fall semester, including the election, additional Voter Engagement Ambassadors will be hired to increase voter engagement efforts leading up to the election. These students will host voter registration tables, work with our Social Marketing Team to develop a series of social marketing campaigns, and present voter information in classes and at student organization meetings.

VOTER REGISTRATION

BOBCATS VOTE WEBPAGE

The <u>Bobcats Vote</u> webpage is a centralized location for student voter information. This page includes upcoming deadlines, links to voter registration, including TurboVote, our voter engagement plan, NSLVE data, and information on polling locations, mail-in voting, early voting, and election day shuttles. The website also contains information about how to be more engaged in the voting process, including how to become a poll worker for upcoming elections.

TURBOVOTE

FSU partners with <u>TurboVote</u> to offer students an online platform for all their voting needs, no matter where they are registered to vote. TurboVote helps students register to vote, obtain absentee ballots, and offers email and text message reminders about upcoming elections, polling locations, and other important voter information.

VOTER INFORMATION TABLES

Each semester, at least one voter registration drive will occur on campus. During the 2024 Fall Semester, the office of Civic Engagement, with help from the Voter Engagement Ambassador Student Staff, hosts weekly voter information tables in the Student Union, the Lane University Center. At these tables, students can learn more about the voting process, register to vote, obtain absentee ballots, find polling locations, and information about early voting and election day activities.

FIRST-YEAR STUDENT INITIATIVE

To encourage first-year students to engage in voting and the democratic process, a voter engagement table will be held at the first-year student convocation and organization meet and greet event at the beginning of the Fall 2024 semester. Additionally, voter engagement ambassadors will be available to present to the Introduction to Higher Education classes, a course required of all first-year students.

CIVIC HOLIDAYS

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

Each year in September FSU hosts National Voter Registration Day on campus. Activities for the day include an email from Vice President Artie Travis, a social marketing campaign, voter registration & absentee ballot activities in the Lane University Center and more. Partners for this event include the Office of Civic Engagement, the Allegany County Board of Elections, the Student Government Association, Community Organizations, and student organizations.

VOTER EDUCATION WEEK

Each October, FSU takes part in Voter Education Week and promotes action items through social media each day of the week to prepare students to vote. These action items include Registering to vote, requesting a mail-in ballot, making a plan to vote, learning what's on the ballot, and getting more involved in the voting process.

VOTE EARLY DAY

In October, FSU promotes Vote Early Day to educate students about the early voting process, where they can vote early, when early voting is available, and resources about their ballot. This effort is put out via social media as well as in the student union at one of our many voting tables throughout the semester.

ELECTION HERO DAY

In November, for Election Hero Day, FSU will be recognizing students, faculty, and staff who take the time to act as poll workers and will be working to put together interviews to be shared on the Bobcats Vote page and social media of poll workers discussing their experience, and why they choose to volunteer.

OFFICE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT WALK-INS

OCE staff act as an ongoing resource for voter information for students. Staff will be trained in the most up-to-date information and regulations on voter registration, absentee ballots, polling locations, and more. Any student at FSU can come into the OCE located in the student union and receive voter information and assistance with their voting needs anytime during regular business hours.

VOTER EDUCATION

TIMES TALKS & NEW YORK TIMES SUBSCRIPTION PROGRAM

As part of its efforts to increase student awareness and education in current events, FSU has purchased a campuswide subscription to the New York Times. This subscription has allowed the OCE, in partnership with the J. Glenn Beall Institute for Public Affairs, to host weekly Times Talk Events. Every week, students, faculty, and staff meet to discuss a current topic focused on politics. A student, staff, or faculty member picks a recent NYT article to act as the basis of discussion. These discussions allow for students to voice their opinions, learn the opinions of others, and take part in a rigorous discussion about the topic for the week.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

In collaboration with the J. Glenn Beall Institute of Public Affairs and the Student Government Association, the OCE hosts three Town Hall Meetings every semester for large group discussions. Each town hall has an overarching theme, but topics for discussion are left up to the students who participate. For the Fall 2024 semester, the themes for these town halls will focus on the upcoming election. The first town hall will be focused on local and state issues, the second on national and global issues, and the third will act as a candidates' forum, where students can come to discuss who they are supporting, their platforms, and why they believe that candidate is the best suited for the position.

CANDIDATE & BALLOT EDUCATION

To ensure students are confident when they vote, the OCE will host a special information table during the two weeks leading up to the election. At this table, students can obtain sample ballots from every county in MD, along with some adjacent counties in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. There will also be information on how to find details on candidates' platforms for multiple issues, including resources like Ballotpedia and Vote411.

CONSTITUTION DAY

In partnership with the Ort Library, the J. Glenn Beall Institute for Public Affairs, and the OCE, FSU hosts Constitution Day every year. Events include voter registration information, constitution trivia, and free pocket constitutions. Each year, a special constitution event is planned as part of the day's activities. Past events have included historical reenactments from Ben Franklin and George Washington and a virtual event from a storyteller co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters, Allegany College of Maryland, and Hagerstown Community College.

DEBATE WATCH PARTIES

The OCE hosts watch parties for all the Presidential and Vice-Presidential debates in the student lounge of the Lane University Center. Student organizations are encouraged to co-sponsor the event and take part in leading discussions during breaks and at the close of the debate.

SPEAKER SERIES

Each year, the Office of Civic Engagement, in partnership with the J. Glenn Beall Institute for Public Affairs, hosts a series of democratic-focused speakers to discuss why they have become involved in the democratic process and the importance of voting. Guest for this series in the past has included U.S. Senator Benjamin Cardin, Sam Novey of TurboVote & Mile 22, an Alumni panel of political operatives, and more. Leading up to the primary and presidential elections efforts will be made to host candidates' forums or other election-related speakers on campus.

BALLOT ACCESS

TURBOVOTE REMINDERS

Students can sign up with <u>TurboVote</u> to receive reminders and information on polling locations, registration and absentee ballot deadlines, and election day information.

MAIL-IN BALLOTS

With many students registered at their permanent address in other counties in MD or other states, FSU focuses on educating students on the mail-in ballot process and assisting students in obtaining and turning in their mail-in ballots. As part of this initiative, For the first time for the 2024 Primary and General Elections, FSU will host the Board of Elections on campus once a week for four weeks leading up to the elections to collect Mail-In ballots on campus as well as answer questions and help students register and obtain Mail-In ballots.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

As student voter turnout has increased over the years, FSU and the Allegany County Board of Elections has worked together to better accommodate students on election day. At the closest polling location to the campus, the county has worked to obtain more provisional ballots, more provisional ballot booths, and developed a two-line system to better accommodate local and provisional voters. During election day, the OCE staff and the polling location stay in touch to help troubleshoot any issues that arise. Most recently, this partnership has allowed for discussions on potentially implementing a polling location on campus for future elections.

VOTER SHUTTLES

On election day, the OCE, in partnership with SGA's SafeRide program, hosts a voter shuttle from a centralized location on campus to the local polling location starting at 8:00 am and running every 15 minutes. Staff stay in communication with the shuttle driver and the local polling location and work to divert drop-offs to secondary locations if long lines begin to form, or if issues arise, such as voting machines going down, or if provisional ballots run low, to ensure students have the best voting experience possible.

ELECTION DAY CELEBRATION

STUDENT UNION ELECTION DAY CELEBRATION

On election day, with the help of the Lane University Center Centralized Tech Crew, the student union is transformed with election day regalia. Red, white, and blue lighting and balloons are utilized throughout the union, voter shuttle information is prominently posted, and information about the evening's election night viewing party is readily available.

WHY I VOTED ACTIVITY

As part of our Election Day celebration, the OCE hosts a table including a democracy wall where students can write statements about why they voted, and what issues are important to them. The table also includes red, white, and blue cookies and information about voting on election day. Students are encouraged to use the hashtag #BobcatsVote for the day.

ELECTION NIGHT VIEWING PARTY

On the evening of the election, the OCE hosts a viewing party in the ballroom where students can watch the election results live. The event includes lounge-style seating, food, a mock voting event, and a democracy wall.

EVALUATION & REPORTING

The Office of Civic Engagement (OCE) is committed to evaluating its voter programming and efforts both during implementation and after the election results. This evaluation process will play an important role in ensuring that our programs are effective in engaging and educating students, as well as in increasing voter participation. The evaluation efforts will include continuous data collection and analysis, allowing for timely adjustments to our programs and marketing strategies to better serve the student body. The evaluation plan will involve:

ONGOING EVALUATION AND DATA COLLECTION:

- **Post-surveys:** These will be conducted at all education-focused events to assess knowledge gained and voter confidence.
- Attendance Counts: We will keep detailed records of attendance at all voter engagement-related events.
- **TurboVote Tracking:** Utilization, voter registration, and Mail-In Ballot request counts will be monitored through TurboVote.
- Special Focus Areas: Specific tracking metrics will include:
 - Interactions and registrations during First-Year Student Convocation and student organization meet and greets.
 - Presentations and student attendance in Introduction to Higher Education classes, particularly for first-year students.
 - Presentations and student attendance in Natural Resources & Conservation, Law Enforcement, and Mathematics and Statistics related classes and student organizations.
- **Event-Specific Tracking:** This includes monitoring voter registration and student assistance during National Voter Registration Day and voter engagement tabling events.
- **NSLVE Participation:** We will actively participate in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) to gain insights from our university and national data on student voting behavior.
- **Polling Location Usage:** Student use of the three local polling locations and provisional ballots completed will be tracked in collaboration with the Allegany County Board of Elections.
- Election Day Shuttle: Usage of the Election Day Shuttle service will be recorded to evaluate its impact on student voter turnout.

ANALYSIS:

- **Purpose:** The purpose of our evaluation is to understand the effectiveness of our programs, identify areas for improvement, and measure progress toward our goals.
- Audience: The primary audience for our evaluation results includes campus administration, student organizations, community partners, and national partners. Additionally, evaluation results will be utilized to support our efforts toward the Carnegie Community Engagement classification, and be included in reporting for the MD Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act, and the Voter Friendly Campus Designation.
- **Responsibility:** The OCE will lead the evaluation efforts, with involvement from student organizations, faculty, and Student Affairs staff.
- **Timeline:** Evaluation will be ongoing, with key milestones before, during, and after the election cycle.
- Data Collection and Performance Measures: We will collect various data, including NSLVE reports, student surveys, attendance records, and program participation metrics. Key performance indicators will include voter registration rates, voter turnout, and student engagement.

REPORTING AND SHARING RESULTS:

- Internal and External Sharing: The Campus Voter Engagement Report, along with NSLVE data and other evaluation results, will be shared with the campus community, including students, faculty, and staff, as well as with community partners. These reports will also be made publicly available on the FSU website.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** We aim to increase transparency and accountability by publicly sharing our action plans and evaluation results. This practice will help us engage more stakeholders in our efforts and reduce duplication of work.

• **Continuous Improvement:** The evaluation results will be used to make data-driven adjustments to our programs. This process will help ensure that we are continuously improving how we support students to engage as active citizens.

By implementing this comprehensive evaluation and reporting plan, the OCE aims to foster a culture of civic engagement on campus and ensure that our efforts are making a meaningful impact on student voter participation.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS & ACTIVITIES				
		2023		
January				
February	16	Times Talk Discussion		
	28	Town Hall Meeting		
March	1	Times Talk Discussion		
	14	Town Hall Meeting		
	16	Times Talk Discussion		
	28	Civic Engagement Table		
	30	Times Talk Discussion		
April	4	Civic Engagement Table		
	5	Times Talk Discussion		
	11	Town Hall Meeting		
	27	Times Talk Discussion		
May				
September	7	Times Talk Discussion		
	18	Constitution Day (Celebrated on Campus)		
	19	National Voter Registration Day		
	21 27	Times Talk Discussion Debate Watch Party		
October	2-6	National Voter Education Week		
	3	Town Hall Meeting		
	17	Town Hall Meeting		
	19	Times Talk Discussion		
	26	Vote Early Day		
	31	Town Hall Meeting		
November	2	Times Talk Discussion		
	6	Election Hero Day		
	7	ELECTION DAY		
	8	Debate Watch Party		

16	Times ⁻	Talk	Discussion

30 Times Talk Discussion

2024

January		
February	6	Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)
	15	Times Talk Discussion
	20	Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)
	27	Town Hall Meeting
	29	Times Talk Discussion
March	5	Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)
	12	Town Hall Meeting
	14	Times Talk Discussion
	26	Board of Elections Early Voting Ballot Collection Table (Student Union)
	28	Times Talk Discussion
April	2	Town Hall Meeting
	2	Board Of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union)
	2	Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)
	9	Board Of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union)
	11	Times Talk Discussion
	16	Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union)
	16	Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)
	23	Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union)
	25	Times Talk Discussion
NATIO		
May	TBD	Voter Engagement Committee Meeting
	2-9	Primary Early Voting – 7:00 am – 8:00 pm
	14	Primary Election Day
	14	Election Day Shuttle
July	TBD	Voter Engagement Committee Meeting
August	23	Voter Engagement Table at First-Year Student Convocation
September	3	Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)
	10	Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)
	12	Times Talk Discussion
	17	Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)
	17 17	Constitution Day Celebration National Voter Registration Day
	24	Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)
	24	Voter Engagement Table (Student Onion)

	26 TBD TBD	Times Talk Discussion Debate Watch Parties Voter Engagement Committee Meeting
October	1	Town Hall Meeting
	1	Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)
	1	Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union)
	7-11	National Voter Education Week
	8	Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)
	8	Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union)
	10	Times Talk Discussion
	15	Town Hall Meeting
	15	Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)
	15	Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union)
	22	Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)
	22	Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union)
	29	Vote Early Day
	24-31	Early Voting – 7:00 am – 8:00 pm
	24	Times Talk Discussion
	29	Town Hall Meeting
	29	Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)
	29	Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union)
	TBD	Candidate Forum
	TBD	Debate Watch Parties
	TBD	Voter Engagement Committee Meeting
November	4	Election Hero Day
	5	ELECTION DAY
	5	Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union)
	5	Election Day Table (Student Union)
	5	Election Day Shuttle
	5	Election Night Watch Party
	7	Times Talk Discussion
	21	Times Talk Discussion
	TBD	Voter Engagement Committee Meeting – Review and Wrap-Up