

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & LEGISLATIVE OUTREACH

ENGAGING OUR YOUTH: ACTIVE SIMULATED ELECTION VOTING

Simulated voting programs offer young people an interactive, hands-on introduction to democratic engagement, transforming civic education from passive learning into active practice. By simulating real elections, the youth learn how to evaluate candidates, understand balloting procedures, and analyze public issues before they reach voting age. Participating in these practice polls demystifies the electoral system and builds early civic confidence, instilling lifelong habits of voter participation.

Beyond the ballot box, simulated voting inspires youth to examine local community issues and see firsthand how government decisions impact their daily lives. School-based and youth group elections encourage civil debate, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue among peers with differing viewpoints. Empowering young citizens to express their voices through simulated elections strengthen civic literacy and prepares the next generation to serve as thoughtful, active contributors to American democracy.

HOW TO:

LawForKids.org is a non-partisan civics education initiative administered by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education (the charitable arm of the State Bar of Arizona). Through its signature “Kids Voting AZ” program, the organization collaborates with community partners -- including local schools, public libraries, and youth groups --to immerse young people in hands-on election simulations. By guiding the youth through voter registration, policy research, and realistic ballot processes, LawForKids.org has vast ways to support this **call to ACTION!**

- ◆ **Multiple Department Chairmen:** Remember, when organizing an event, or program, the more American Legion Auxiliary members we involve, the stronger our impact -- let's share the workload!
- ◆ **Invitation:** Reach out to fellow chairmen within your Unit to collaborate. For example, the Department Chairmen of Legislative, Children & Youth, and Community Service are currently partnering to plan a simulated election process. Once details are finalized, we encourage all ALA Units to participate by reporting through LawForKids.org, so results can be combined. Let us know how your Unit is taking part!
- ◆ **Alternative Resource:** Partnering with your local county recorder's office allows Auxiliary Units to host hands-on simulated elections that give young participants a complete, realistic voting experience. By using official voting equipment, authentic ballots, and standard election procedures, youth gain direct insight into civic participation, electoral integrity, and the power of their voice in a democracy.

- ◆ **Testimony of Youth Engagement:** An auxiliary member serving as Head Judge during a recent primary election helped make a young girl's dream a reality. While waiting in line with her father, the nine-year-old girl eagerly anticipated casting a ballot; however, upon learning she was ineligible to vote, she became visibly upset. To keep her enthusiasm for the democratic process alive, the Head Judge received her father's permission to let her simulate voting on a real ballot, turning a potential disappointment into a meaningful moment of civic engagement.
- ◆ **Updates:** As developments happen there will be updates to the October bulletin; therefore, please check back soon!

For God and Country

JoJo Baldwin
Department of Arizona
Community Service Chairman

Barbara Whitney
Department of Arizona
Legislative Chairman