

Does voting matter? The clear answer is “yes!”

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Voting is a key element of civic engagement and a critical part of the democratic process. As the late civil rights icon and U.S. Rep. John Lewis said, “The vote is precious. It is almost sacred. It is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have in a democracy.”

Voting can change your life. Here are five reasons to vote:

In a democracy, you get a say in things that are important to you.

[Your vote holds elected officials accountable](#) for their actions. It forces them to listen to you and the issues that most concern you. Your vote is your report card on lawmakers. If you're not content with the job an elected official has done, you can use your vote to remove that official from office.

The policies shaped by elected officials affect your life.

While federal elections typically have the largest voter turnouts, voting in your state and local elections is just as important. What happens in your town, city and state will affect your everyday life. Laws at the local level affect taxes, health and public safety, education, recreation, economic development and more. States regulate issues like health care and tenants' rights. They determine how long children stay in school, manage infrastructure, spur job creation and do much more.

You pay taxes.

Your vote gives power to the people [who will spend your tax money](#). Help ensure that money is used in a responsible and efficient way by voting.

Rights are not necessarily guaranteed.

Voting is one of the many privileges of living in a democratic society. While every American citizen has the right to vote today, we are seeing [attacks on voting equity](#), including gerrymandering, voting restrictions, misinformation and election intimidation. Voting is a critical right we must protect, and that begins by exercising our right to vote in elections at every level of government.

You matter.

[Young voters](#) bring diverse points of view on issues affecting their generation. Engaging in the process early will help make it a habit throughout your life, providing you with the opportunity to shape the future.