
BEDTIME VIBES
Harvest POLLEN
dry beans
BEES
TRIMMING CLEMATIS
CLEMATIS-PRUNED
SAVING ZINNIA SEEDS
PUT AWAY TOMATO CAGES
MOW
MOW
MOW

Selection from "What if Everyone On My Ballot is Equally Bad" by Sharon McMahon, The Preamble on Substack

What makes this election so consequential?

In these midterms, there's a high probability that the outcome will change which party is in power in the House of Representatives, the Senate, or both. If the party in power changes, a lot in Congress changes, including what legislators will vote on and what legislation could pass.

And if the party in power does NOT change, that is also consequential. That will signal to the president and the Republican leadership in both the House and the Senate that more voters approve of the job they're doing than don't. They will use that as a signal to keep doing more of what they're doing.

In addition to what's happening on the federal level, there are 21 governors around the country who are leaving office either because they aren't running again or because they're term limited. And that doesn't include 18 states where the current governor may or may not win their reelection bid. Altogether, that means that at least half of the states in the US will likely have new leadership by the time this election cycle is over.

States are microcosms of American democracy, and what is happening in one state often trickles into another and into Congress. That means the results of this election will have a real impact on people's lives — which is why it's so important to vote.

How can I encourage people to vote?

You have more influence than you think, especially on people you know in real life. It's helpful to tell them: "I am voting, and here is the method I'm using to vote (mail-in ballot, early voting, or in-person on Election Day), and I would be more than happy to answer any voting questions you have." You can also use social media to share legitimate resources like Vote411, where people can make sure they are registered. It's important to share things multiple times a week leading up to Election Day, since people won't always see every post.

It also helps to tell people *why* voting matters, and to provide practical resources like a ride to a polling place, childcare, or help figuring out which questions will be on their ballot.

Talk to your friends and family personally. It can be something as simple as a lighthearted text that says something like: "Election Day is fast approaching! I know voting matters to you. Are you voting early or on Election Day? Or have you already mailed your ballot in? Anything I can help you with?" Treating your friends and family like they already have an identity as a voter helps reaffirm that this is something they will do.

But this week, the biggest push needs to be for checking voter registrations. That way, people will have a chance to fix any errors in time.

What if my state's registration deadline has already passed?

You should still check, because some states might allow you to correct an error even if the deadline for first-time registration has passed. Also, be aware that some states will allow you to correct an error on Election Day if you bring the proper documentation. So it's important to know what the errors in your registration are, if any.

For example, if it's an incorrect address, you need to know how you would prove your new address with the right paperwork on Election Day, if not before.

Is there a way to see what questions and candidates will be on my ballot?

Yes, Google your state + Secretary of State + ballot, and you'll find a government website. From there, you should be able to enter your address, and the website will show you what's on your specific ballot. Screenshot it so you don't have to find it again, and then you can research candidates and ballot questions when you have a moment. You can even make notes in your Notes app so if you are voting in person, you don't forget the options you wanted to choose.

I'm concerned about voting by mail and in person. I want my vote to count. Which method is best right now?

Any method of voting is valid and safe. If you want to choose only one, I'd go for voting in person early. That way, nothing that happens on Election Day (weather/emergency/etc.) will prevent you from casting your ballot.

How can I convince my spouse to vote when they think "both sides are just as bad"?

Tell them this: In life, we are often stuck choosing between options we don't like: root canal or tooth extraction? (I prefer neither!) Do you want to pay for a new car or pay a lot to fix the one you have? (Neither — why can't my current car just work properly?) That's true of voting sometimes too. We've all been in the position of choosing between options where we are like, "How about none?"

But here's what I would say. Would you let a complete stranger choose between a root canal and a tooth extraction on your behalf? Would you let a complete stranger choose whether your child should get a tonsillectomy or do another round of antibiotics? No, right?

That's what you're doing if you don't vote. You are allowing complete strangers to choose for you. You're saying, "It's fine if Random Man Bob and Random Lady Pam choose who represents my district in the House. I'm sure their judgment is the same as mine." If you wouldn't let Random Bob make your medical decisions, you shouldn't let Random Bob make your voting decisions either.

Is there any scenario (other than Republicans winning) where the election results won't be disputed?

No. Plan on at least some results being disputed. And that should not dissuade anyone from voting.

