

Vote America!

Roll Out Guide

About the Project:

Today, adult American citizens regardless of race, gender, religion, or socio-economic status have the right to vote. However, this has not always been the case. The Vote America! project is a non-partisan public service project designed to educate students about the heroic efforts made to ensure equality and democracy for all. The Vote America! project video addresses the civil rights era, passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the 15th, 19th, and 26th amendments to the U.S. Constitution. This project is also designed to register eligible students to vote.

Project Format:

- 30 Minute Video on the TYLA website at <http://www.tyla.org/voteamerica>
- DVDs available from the TYLA office on request

Resources Available:

- Vote America! Trivia Questions
- Sample Letter to Schools
- Additional Topics for Discussion
- Handout Regarding Registering Students

TYLA Board Members to Contact:

- Britney Harrison: bharrison@gbfamilylaw.com
- Sara Giddings: sgiddings@giddingslawfirm.com
- Jenny Smith: jenny@cobbcounsel.com

Rollout Outline:

1. Opening Remarks (5-10 Minutes)
 - a. Introduce the presenters
 - b. Talk briefly about TYLA or organization briefly
 - c. Have each presenter give brief remarks on their experiences voting and why they believe voting is important
2. Show Video (30 Minutes)
3. Brief Discussion of the Video (5-10 Minutes)
 - a. Discuss aspects of the video in the presenter's own words
 - b. Pose discussion questions. Examples include:
 - i. Why do you think young people have played an integral role in the suffrage movement?
 - ii. Do you think the votes of certain minorities are being diluted today? How so?
 - iii. Why is it important to vote? In federal elections? In state elections? In local elections?
 - iv. How do you plan on continuing the suffrage movement in the future?
4. Trivia Questions and Final Q&A (5-10 Minutes)

5. Closing Remarks with pertinent contact information

Optional:

1. Constitution Day/Week. Combine this rollout with Constitution Day and Constitution Week. Constitution day ensures that the signing of the Constitution on September 17, 1787 is commemorated in schools receiving federal funding. (Note, this year constitution day is September 16th). Further, the Texas Education Agency requires that schools have Constitution week, which guarantees that Texas public school students are educated “about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of this country and the values on which the country was founded.”
2. Registration Drive. Register any eligible students and other audience members to vote. Please note that if you would like to register people to vote, you will want to secure a Texas Volunteer Deputy Registrar to attend the event. If you contact party chairs in your city or county, they will likely each be able to provide one.
3. Mock Debates. The discussion can be expanded upon to include mock debates or more in-depth discussions on various issues that are reflected in voting.

Report your Rollout:

- Upon completion of your rollout be sure to report your rollout to Sara Giddings at sgiddings@giddingslawfirm.com
- Your report should include the location of rollout, number of young lawyers presenting, number of students at the presentation, and number of students registered to vote.

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Trivia Questions

This quiz can be used to engage students after the video. These questions are taken directly from the Vote America video. We suggest that you give candy or prizes to those who answer the questions correctly to engage the audience and wake up any students that might have drifted off.

Easy:

- ★ What constitutional amendment abolished slavery?
13th Amendment
- ★ What constitutional amendment granted citizenship to those born or naturalized on US soil, including slaves?
14th Amendment
- ★ What constitutional amendment, ratified in 1870, states that the right to vote is not conditioned on race, color, or previous condition of servitude?
15th Amendment
- ★ What constitutional amendment granted women the right to vote in 1920?
19th Amendment
- ★ What constitutional amendment granted the right to vote citizens 18 and older in 1971?
26th Amendment
- ★ Who was the President when women gained the right to vote?
Woodrow Wilson (1920)

Medium:

- ★ What was “Freedom Summer”?
Summer of 1964 where people of all races began to come together to promote the right to vote. (See “Difficult” question below)
- ★ What is the nickname for March 3, 1965?
Bloody Sunday. 600 peaceful civil rights marchers were assaulted in Selma, Alabama in one of the worst unprovoked attacks in history.
- ★ This is deemed the single most effective piece of civil rights legislation ever passed by Congress?
Voting Rights Act of 1965—Protects 15th Amendment rights.
- ★ What was the name of the convention that began the women’s suffrage movement in 1848?
Seneca Falls

★ This woman succeeded in casting a ballot in 1971, but was subsequently arrested, found guilty, and ordered to pay a fine of \$100?

Susan B. Anthony

★ What was the last state to ratify the 19th Amendment?

Tennessee

★ In the early 1970s, Hispanic students organized a walkout of their high school in this Texas City?

Crystal City, Texas

Difficult:

★ The Civil Rights Act was passed in what year?

1957

★ The killing of 3 men, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, during 1964's "Freedom Summer" led to what?

The first successful federal prosecution of a civil rights case in Mississippi.

★ In 1920, at 91, this woman and sole surviving attendee of the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention, exercised her newfound right to vote?

Charlotte Woodward

★ These two terms for gerrymandering represent the drawing of boundaries to prevent the election of Hispanic officials?

Packing—redrawing the boundaries of a district to allow only one Hispanic representative to be elected.

Cracking—Splitting influential Hispanics in one district into multiple district so as to lessen the influence

★ What 1973 United States Supreme Court case ordered Texas to remedy its past discriminatory practices?

White v. Register

★ In what year was the Voting Rights Act Amended to prevent discrimination of language minorities?

1975

★ What are the practical implications of the Voting Rights Act of 1975?

In a voting jurisdiction, if a group of citizens that make up 5% of the population (or 10,000 people) does not speak English, ballots have to be made available in the citizen's native language.

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Additional Topics for Discussion

- ★ Why do you think young people have played an integral role in suffrage movements?
- ★ Although we no longer have a poll tax, are similar techniques being used today?
- ★ Are events similar to those in Selma happening today?
- ★ Do you think the votes of certain minorities are being diluted today? How so?
- ★ Under what circumstances is civil disobedience the right thing to do?
- ★ What does packing, cracking, and gerrymandering do to the democratic process?
- ★ What is the legacy of *White v. Register*?
- ★ Do you think there is a movement to repeal or overrule the Voting Rights Act?
- ★ What are some ways in which voter suppression occurs today?
- ★ How do you plan on continuing the suffrage movement?
- ★ Why is it important to vote in local elections?
- ★ What discriminatory effects do you think Voter ID laws have?

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Registering Students to Vote

In addition to showing the Vote America video, we encourage you to register eligible students to vote. In order to do this, please keep the following in mind:

★ You will need a Voter Registrar in order to register students.

- The Secretary of State's website provides a list of County Voter Registration Officials: <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/votregduties.shtml>.
- You can also contact party chairs in your city or county, they will likely each be able to provide one.
- Alternatively, you can become qualified as a Texas Volunteer Deputy Registrar. You will need to contact your County Voter Registration Official to determine the steps necessary in order to do this. Each county has different guidelines regarding training.

★ Eligibility to Register

- Citizen of the United States
- At least 17 years and 10 months old to register, and 18 years on Election day
- Cannot be a fully convicted felon
- Must not have been determined to be totally mentally incapacitated or partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote

★ Supplies

- Pens
- Clipboards
- I registered to vote stickers. You can get these stickers from the TYLA office.

★ Additional

- You may also consider bringing a list that states the ID requirements in Texas.
- Also consider bringing a list of polling location and early voting dates, if you know them