

GUIDELINES FOR NONPARTISAN PARISH VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES

(Deadline for completed Voter Registration Forms to be received by the State Board of Elections is, **Monday, October 11, 2016**)

Preliminary Announcements:

- A flyer is enclosed for use in parish bulletins (or in the back of church) the weekend prior to the Voter Registration Drive being held at the parish. *Parishioners may also register to vote online at www.votespa.com.*
- Suggested Pulpit / Bulletin Announcements are also enclosed for use on the weekend before and the weekend of the Voter Registration Drive.

Logistics and Location:

- Proceed only with approval of parish pastor.
- Remember that all efforts must be completely nonpartisan – no candidates or issues are to be mentioned. This drive is solely about fulfilling one's civic duty and being a faithful citizen.
- Provide open space to accommodate lines of people.
- Where possible, stay in the church near every entrance/exit.
- If weather permits, set up tables and chairs on sidewalk by every entrance/exit.
- If space does not permit either arrangement, move to a convenient nearby area.
- Use long folding tables and a supply of folding chairs so people can sit down to write.
- Tables should have smooth, undamaged surfaces for easy writing.

Materials Needed:

- Ballpoint pens or fine point markers (no pencils).
- A magnifying glass or a reading glass; the print on the registration form is very small and some applicants might appreciate a magnifier.
- Clipboards for folks who can fill out forms while standing or while sitting on chairs.
- A supply of Voter Registration Applications. One copy of the Pennsylvania Voter Registration Application is enclosed. Photocopies will have to be made at the parish as needed.

Personnel:

- The volunteers DO NOT have to be registered voters, but are encouraged to also register.
- The Knights of Columbus will conduct training this summer throughout the state. Training for at least one volunteer at each site is highly recommended.
- Other volunteers can include high school students as well as interested adults from various networks. All volunteers must be told that this is a nonpartisan voter drive.
- Duties of volunteers:
 1. Assist applicants who are seated at the tables.
 2. Assist applicants who choose to use clipboards.
 3. Maintain a nonpartisan atmosphere- do not mention specific candidates or issues, but focus on being a faithful citizen.
 4. Appoint a “captain” to supervise the process for you at each Mass; could be any volunteer already on-site.

Who Can/Should Register:

- A citizen of the United States for at least one month before the next primary, special, municipal, or general election.
- A resident of Pennsylvania and the election district in which (s)he wants to register and vote for at least 30 days before the next primary, special, municipal, or general election.
- At least 18 years of age on or before the day of the next primary, special, municipal, or general election.

When to Register:

New registrations for the upcoming General Election must be submitted by Monday, October 11, 2016. Therefore, the Knight in charge of each parish must submit registration applications to the county prior to that date. It is recommended that the forms be mailed or dropped off the Monday morning following the registration drive.

On the Day of the Registration Drive:

- As each person completes the Voter Registration Application, a volunteer should check it quickly for completeness and legibility before the person leaves. **Make sure that each Application is signed.**
- Captains should collect all completed and unused Voter Registration Applications. If anyone insists on mailing the completed Voter Registration Application her/himself, they should be mailed directly to the State Board of Elections address, noted on the bottom of the application instructions. Otherwise, collect all forms for group mailing and processing.
- All completed Voter Registration Applications should be mailed to the appropriate county office- which appears on the final page of the application
- Each parish should submit the post-drive project report to the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference via email to info@pacatholic.org or via mail to:

Pennsylvania Catholic Conference
223 North Street, Box 2835
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Cautions:

The nonpartisan nature of this campaign is in line with Catholic tradition – we do not tell people for whom to vote, but rather that they should inform their conscience and fulfill their civic duty to vote. Further, both IRS and the Federal Election Commission permit Catholic organizations to sponsor voter registration drives provided that no bias for any candidate, political party, or voting position is evidenced. Such bias would be indicated by distribution of partisan literature or materials indicating the organization's positions in connection with the voter registration drives, by targeting registration drives toward individuals who support the organization's positions or a particular candidate or party, or by coordinating with candidates or their committees, etc.

Therefore, it is important to direct your volunteers that they must not discuss particular issues or candidates during their service time. Make every effort to keep the objectives of the weekend neutral and civic-minded.