Barriers to Voting

A 2012 study found that 35 million potential voters have disabilities but vote 12% less often.

*Rutgers University, 2012*

A 2014 survey of voters in five states found that one of the greatest barriers reported by voters to a good voting experience was their own lack of education on candidates and issues (25%).

*Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE), 2014*
Barriers to Voting

Some voters with disabilities had issues with:

- filling out an absentee ballot
- getting transportation to the polls
- casting a private ballot
- using accessible voting equipment
- navigating polls in wheelchairs
- getting fair treatment by poll workers

SABE, 2014
Policy Issues

- New voting machines
- Absentee voting reasons and accessibility
- Voter registration – online registration, pre-registration, verification of voter rolls
- Voter IDs
- Cybersecurity, immigration, politics
Access Resources

- U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division Guides, https://www.ada.gov/ada_voting/ada_voting_ta.htm
- Election Protection Hotline, https://www.866ourvote.org/
Informed Voting 101

- Review the ballot
- Understand policies
- The informed vote
- Candidate forums
- Local voting
- National voting
- Isidewith.com
- Vote your conscience
Review the Ballot

• Where to get a sample ballot (Michigan SOS website and County Clerk’s websites)
• Read your sample ballot
• It can be confusing – ask questions
• Research the issues
Understand Policies

- What will people gain or lose?
- Research who supports the policy
- How will the candidate vote?
- How will this policy affect
  - You
  - Family
  - Neighborhood
  - Community
The Informed Vote

• Research policy platforms
• Visit your legislators website
• Fact check websites (non-partisan)
  • Politifact
  • Govtrack
  • Ballotpedia
  • Bridge Truth Tour
Candidate Forums

- Engage the candidate
- Ask questions if
  - You wonder how a policy will be carried out
  - They support a policy you oppose
  - Their voting record does not agree with their words
Candidate Forums, Cont’d

- Ask “how or “why” questions
- Listen carefully to candidates answers
- Weigh the pros and cons
Local Voting

- What is affecting your community
- Candidates ties to your community
- City Hall meetings
- Pros and cons
National Voting

• Identify national issues that will affect you
• National Politics are more partisan.
• What does the Presidential or congressional candidate propose?
• Do your research
Isidewith.com

- Not tied to any party
- Provides a quiz to learn about political positions
- About the quiz
Vote Your Conscience

• You have a voice

• Make informed decisions

• Vote for who and what you want
YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE

Disability issues matter. I vote.
Who We Are

• MPAS is the protection and advocacy agency serving all of Michigan
• There is a protection and advocacy organization in every state and territory
• We provide information and referral, facility monitoring, direct representation, systemic advocacy, and training
• Services are free and confidential
• We receive over 6,000 calls per year
Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service, Inc.

4095 Legacy Parkway, Ste. 500
Lansing, MI 48911

517.487.1755 (Voice)
517.374.4687 (TTY)
800.288.5923 (Toll Free)
www.mpas.org