

For Immediate Release

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RELEASE: Coalition of Texas groups launch a high school voter registration campaign leading up to the 2018 elections

Own Our Vote seeks to empower young Texans to get registered to vote and help them become active in their communities

For more information about the Own Our Vote Campaign, visit <http://www.ownourvote.org/>.

September 6, 2018 — The Texas Freedom Network, the Texas Civil Rights Project, the League of Women Voters of Texas, the Children’s Defense Fund, along with more than 20 partners are launching a campaign to register eligible high school students to vote ahead of the October 9 voter registration deadline in Texas. The campaign will urge students, parents, principals, teachers, and other community members to empower young Texans to register to vote and encourage their colleagues, family, and friends to do the same.

The campaign takes advantage of a unique state law that requires high schools to register eligible students to vote at least twice a year. Each year, nearly 340,000 young Texans should be given the opportunity to register to vote in their senior year of high school. To kick-start these efforts, the Own Our Vote campaign sent out a [new, easy to use toolkit to more than 1,600 high school principals in Texas](http://ownourvote.org/toolkit/) [link to <http://ownourvote.org/toolkit/>] showing them how to empower students in their schools to register to vote.

“Voting is a critically important civic responsibility, but turnout among young people has historically been far too low in Texas. High schools across the state can help change this and ensure that a rising and diverse generation of young Texans is engaged and participating in our democratic process,” **said Rae Martinez, outreach and field manager for the Texas Freedom Network.** “So we’re ready to work with principals and teachers to register all eligible students to vote.”

The Own Our Vote campaign will kick off a series of events, public education efforts, and voter registration drives in Texas in order to increase the rate of voter registration among eligible high school students and ensure that all high schools are complying with state law.

“The League is proud to partner with TCRP in the Own Our Vote campaign to empower high school voters.

The League's beatexasvoter.org curriculum, which is included in the toolbox, meets TEKS social studies requirements,” **said Grace Chimene President League of Women Voters of Texas.** “30 Leagues across Texas are ready to assist high schools to comply with Texas election statutes.”

“We know that when young people are engaged in voter registration early on they have a greater chance of becoming lifelong participants in our democratic process. It’s our responsibility to ensure that our schools and students have the resources they need to get involved” **said James Slattery, senior staff attorney with the Texas Civil Rights Project.** “Thankfully there’s a unique state law designed to do just that. We’re committed to helping every single high school principal and teacher in their efforts to register eligible students.”

“Texas is in the unique position of having both a younger and more diverse electorate than the national average, and yet, in the last presidential election, only 32 percent of Texans aged 18-24 voted. We know that the future of our state demands that we engage these young people in civic decision-making,” **said Michelle Castillo, youth civic engagement coordinator with the Children’s Defense Fund Texas.** “The ‘Own Our Vote’ campaign, together with partners statewide, is dedicated to giving students, schools and educators the support they need to ensure young Texans are registered to vote, and active members of the democratic process.”

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