**Nuts and Bolts of Voter Registration**

One of the things that people absolutely need to participate in elections is to be registered to vote.

People who haven’t registered to vote, haven’t voted in the last four years, or who have moved since the last time they’ve registered all need to fill out one of these cards.

Notable folks who can’t register to vote include people who won’t be 18 or older on November 6th of this year, Former felons who haven’t had their civil rights restored, and non-citizens. We really want to connect with all of those people to help them to be involved in other ways, but they can’t register.

Students who are away from home – we really encourage to fill one of these out using their campus address. Most of them will be at school on Election Day and they’re much more likely to be able to vote if they can walk right down the street and do it on Election Day.

We usually start someone out by giving them a registration card and a pen and asking them to answer the top two questions, the set of boxes on the left, then the Social Security line and on down and simply ask them to ask if they have any questions along the way.

* They must provide a social security number unless you’ve worked out an agreement with the appropriate County Clerk’s office.
* They **must** also choose a party. If they choose “other”, that’s fine. But you should let them know that they can’t vote in partisan primary elections unless they are registered either Democrat or Republican. You cannot suggest a party, even if they don’t know. Saying something neutral like “If it helps, George Bush and Mitt Romney are Republicans and Barack Obama is a Democrat” is perfectly fine.
* Check every card turned in to make sure that they filled everything out (including the 2 boxes at the top and the social security number line, the most overlooked areas). Also, make sure that the information is consistent (county matches up with address, etc.)
* Thank everyone for registering to vote and let them know that they’ll get a notice in the mail close to the election letting them know where to vote. We usually also like to give them a publicity piece about the local chapter, inviting them to get more involved and to stay in contact if they have any questions about voting.
* The last day to register to vote is October 9th.

After someone has registered to vote, our job isn’t done. We want to hold on to those cards and guard them safely. We want to record the name and contact information of everyone we register as well as information about where we registered them so we can keep in touch to remind them to vote later.

After we’ve copied the cards or recorded the information, we need to get these in to the local County Clerk and mail the out of county cards to the appropriate counties or to the State Board of Elections.

We absolutely need to turn in every card we collect by October 9th. Not turning them in does a tremendous disservice to our democracy… and could be considered a felony as well. Keeping cards safe and getting them in is a high priority.

You can reach Dave Newton, KFTC’s Voter Empowerment Organizer, at any time with voter registration questions. His cell phone number is 859-420-8919.

