

# #MomsVote

## Voting Discussion Guide



It's been a long road since the 2016 election. And so many of us #CantWait2Vote come November 6, 2018. This election, moms, dads, and families can make a "MOMumental" difference by turning out and turning up the vote. Are you with us?

As many as 40% of people don't vote. People don't vote for a variety of reasons: active voter suppression, lack of transportation, lack of time off from work to visit a polling location, or lack of information about where and how to vote.

It doesn't have to be that way!

We (ahem, YOU!) can help turn out the vote and have a big impact! Believe it or not, many elections are decided by as few as a hundred votes and sometimes less. So taking a moment to remind people to vote could have a bigger impact than you imagined.

Plus, we represent powerful voter influence: Women, people of color and young adults are mainstays of the voting population and our numbers continue to grow. Women vote at higher rates than men and the "women's vote" is considered critical for many candidates to win. Additionally, there are expected to be 27.3 million Latinx people eligible to vote this November, including 15.4 million Latinx people between ages 18 and 24.

**Here's where YOU come in! One of the most powerful actions you can take this election is to gather your friends, family, and larger community in a conversation about voter registration and turning out people to the polls on November 6th (or before).**

And we've put together this easy-to-use discussion guide to make your MomsVote meetup easy to organize, engaging, and impactful.

### What you'll find in this guide:

- A checklist to help you plan the who, what, and where of hosting a MomsMeetup
- A detailed discussion guide and activity ideas to lead a high-impact conversation with your friends and neighbors including resources to find the key election deadlines for your state's election
- Kid election-themed activities
- Questions for candidate forums

Your gathering can have something for everyone – give it a go and let us know what you discuss!

### Pick a Time & Location

Most importantly, pick a time and location that will keep your stress level low. Some people love to host at their home; others prefer to meet at another location in the community.

Some location options outside your home that you might consider include:

Library meeting room

Community center

Religious facility

Coffee shop/Café

Bar/Lounge

Business office

Restaurant

Youth House

Park/Playground

School cafeteria

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## Sign Up

Let us know you are organizing a gathering by emailing us at [MomsMeetup@momsrising.org](mailto:MomsMeetup@momsrising.org). If you're using the KeepMarching book as a conversation guide (and we HIGHLY recommend you do--it's an incredible resource and every cent of author proceeds go to MomsRising!), please sign up here: [https://action.momsrising.org/signup/KeepMarching\\_MeetUp\\_Guide/](https://action.momsrising.org/signup/KeepMarching_MeetUp_Guide/)

## Invite Others

Consider inviting friends, family, parents of kids in your children's classes or sports teams, neighbors, friends from your faith community, book groups (remember, Keep Marching is a great book to discuss!), and more. You can invite anyone you think may be interested!

### Sample subject line: #CantWait2Vote! How about you?

Dear Friends –

With the 2018 election just around the corner, it's time to come together, flex our democracy muscles, and get out the #MomsVote! That's why I am partnering with MomsRising to host a MomsVote Meetup at [location] on [DATE] at [TIME].

We'll be talking about what's at stake in the election, taking action to help get out the #MomsVote, and sharing resources about initiatives on this year's ballot. This will also be a great opportunity to get to know other MomsRising members in the area. We'll have refreshments and fun, election-themed activities for the kids who come so they can learn more about the importance of voting, too.

Here are the details:

**When:** [ ]

**Where:** [ ]

**Who:** MomsRising members, kiddos, and YOU!

**What:** MomsVote Meetup to learn more about what's on the ballot this year, meet other MomsRising members, and VOTE! We'll have food and refreshments as well as fun, election-themed activities for the kids.

RSVP by replying to this email. Hope to see you soon!

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## **A couple of important safety notes:**

1. *Public gatherings must be in public places: If you would like to organize a public event where you will not personally know all the guests, please hold it in a public place, such as a bookstore, library community room or restaurant. If you would like MomsRising to invite other MomsRising members in your area to your gathering, you must hold it in a public place since it's impossible for MomsRising to vouch for everyone who may receive our emails.*

2. *By undertaking this activity, you agree to the following statements:*

- I agree that neither MomsRising Together nor MomsRising Education Fund, other partners, nor any of their respective officers, directors, employees, agents, or consultants (the "Releasees") shall be responsible for any injury to my person or property occurring during or in connection with this activity.*
- I hereby and forever release and discharge the Releases from and against any and all costs, damages, and liability for death, injury to person, injury or damage to property, or other damages, costs, losses, or expenses of whatsoever nature, caused during or by reason of my participation in this activity. I am 18 years of age or older. If I am a parent or guardian of an individual under 18 years of age, I make this agreement on behalf of myself and that individual.*

## **Accessibility**

Make sure you list accessibility information about the location you choose, so guests with disabilities can plan their visit to your event. For example: include information about the location such as the availability of ramps or stairs, elevator and wheelchair accessibility, parking information (i.e. how far is the parking lot from the entrance to the building), and public transportation options. You can learn more about creating an accessible event listing here: <https://moms.ly/2FoCRzQ>. This way your event will be safe, welcoming, and accessible to everyone you invite.

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## SUGGESTED ELECTION MOMS MEETUP ACTIVITIES

The most satisfying MomsMeetUp is one where the host (you!) and participants feel educated, engaged and inspired by the topic and conversation. Creating a welcoming, safe environment for people to share their concerns, values and questions is totally possible and some planning can definitely help.

To support your MomsMeetUp planning, we have outlined some optional Meetup activities that you can mix and match to make the most effective gathering for your group size, the time you have and the attendees' interests.

The choice is yours!

## SAMPLE AGENDA COMPONENTS

(Mix & Match to make an agenda that works for you!)

### A. Welcome

(Recommended activity) – 15 minutes

- Welcome guests and share a few personal thoughts about why you are hosting
- Invite each person to introduce themselves and share something personal such as: the first person they remember voting for (if ever), any childhood memories they have about elections or voting, or what snack they'd bring if there is a line at the polls
- Briefly share the activities/agenda for the gathering and ask if there are any people who are especially excited or not interested in. This will give you the information you need to adjust your discussion topics on the spot if needed.

#### **GOT KIDS AT THE PARTY? Great!**

- Show them the activities at our Kids Voting Activities Guide, right here:  
[https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.momsrising.org/images/Kids\\_Voting\\_Activities\\_Guide.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.momsrising.org/images/Kids_Voting_Activities_Guide.pdf)
- You can print coloring pages ahead of time, borrow kids' books on voting from the library, and have kid-friendly snacks on hand– carrots, hummus, and fruit can be great, simple choices.

### B. Voting & Your Community

(Recommended activity) – 15 minutes

*Have a fun conversation about the mechanics of voting in your community. Each community's election looks different (who and what will be on the ballot) and states have different rules and deadlines around registering and voting.*

- ➔ Open up the discussion by sharing info about voting in your community, including voter registration deadlines and process for voting, and then asking one or more of the following questions to the group:
  - Did any of this information surprise you?
  - Have you used any of these tools before?
  - Do you know people who would find these tools valuable? (If the answer is YES, be sure to have the **Spreading the Word** discussion outlined below).

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## B. Voting & Your Community Continued

**Note:** This is one discussion where some preparation work from you, as the host, is helpful but not essential. If you don't have the information ahead of time, you can divide up the below searching tasks among your guests and folks can check Google on their phones/computers: (on next page)

- Figure out and share what your state's voter registration deadline is: <https://www.vote.org/voter-registration-deadlines/>
- Figure out and share if your state has early voting options and if so, when and where (early voting locations are usually different than election day voting locations). This resource also lists voting requirements/restrictions that may threaten access to voting in your state: <http://www.866ourvote.org/state>
- Figure out and share what/who will appear on your local ballot this fall using Ballotpedia: [https://ballotpedia.org/Main\\_Page](https://ballotpedia.org/Main_Page)

## C. Pledging & Registering to Vote (Recommended activity) – 10 minutes

*The goal of this discussion is to make sure everyone at your gathering are registered to vote and sign a pledge to vote!*

- ➔ Open up the discussion by doing a round robin of everyone saying if they would pledge to vote and if they have a plan to vote (that plan could include bringing a child to vote with them).

Then:

- **Have everyone who isn't already registered start the process here:**

IN ENGLISH:

<http://moms.ly/2cZWqRi>

IN SPANISH:

[http://moms.ly/LatinasVotan\\_es](http://moms.ly/LatinasVotan_es)

- If your guests think they are registered, make sure they double check here: <https://www.vote.org/am-i-registered-to-vote/>
- Have everyone take a pledge to vote by using their phone to text VOTE to the numer 747464!

Pledging to vote helps us send the message to candidates and all potential voters that on November 6th there will be a flood of voters!



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## D. Voting Tales & Testimonies – 15 minutes

*The goal of this discussion is to have fun and talk about how we find a way to vote, even with everything else going on in life. And also, some fun and goofy things can happen at the polling place.*

- ➔ Open up the discussion by asking one or more of the following questions:
  - Do you have a voting tradition? Something you wear or do each Election Day?
  - What is the most memorable time you voted? Give a prize for the most memorable story!
  - Have you ever had something awesome or bizarre happen while voting?

## E. Making a Plan to Vote – 15 minutes

*The goal of this discussion is to have every participant leave with a plan about how/when they are going to vote in this election.*

- ➔ You could open up the discussion/planning with:
  - Sharing with your guests that when voters make a plan to vote ahead of time, they are significantly more likely to show up on Election Day.
  - Asking everyone to share their plan and back-up plan, if they are willing. Are they going to do early voting? If so, when? (You've checked early voting dates & locations so you are all set!)
  - Ask if anyone in the group wants to do early voting together or check in with each other before Election Day to make sure everyone is all set!

## F. Voting Tools: Spreading the Word – 20 minutes

*The goal of this discussion is to have a conversation about how your group can help register and turn out more voters in your community!*

- ➔ Open up the discussion by asking one or more of the following questions:
  - How could we share the following tools with our community?
    - How to get voting info via text
    - Voting registration link
    - Ballot information
    - For more info on these tools, please go to [www.momsrising.org/momsvote](http://www.momsrising.org/momsvote)
  - What are people willing to do between now and Election Day?
  - Are you willing to host a gathering like this one?

## G. Closing – (Recommended activity) 10 minutes

- Thank everyone for coming
- Ask everyone what stood out for them in the gathering – an inspiration, a new learning, new connections, a plan of action, etc.
- Take a group picture!
- Send your group picture to us via [MomsMeetup@MomsRising.org](mailto:MomsMeetup@MomsRising.org) or post it directly to [www.facebook.com/momsrising.org](https://www.facebook.com/momsrising.org)