

RIVERLAND NATIVE VOTER ZINE



AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE
AND GUIDE ON NATIVE VOTING



This project was originally focused on increasing the Native Vote in the State of Iowa. However, the Great Plains Action Society (formerly known as Indigenous Iowa) expanded their initiative because:

1. In hopes of decolonizing the political system
2. Abolishing border imperialism (which is a form of voter suppression)
3. Empowering all Native votes

Riverland Native Voter Project is committed to delivering facts and education about the current political system. We are hoping to encourage all Natives to get out and vote, change the public opinion, and uplift Native politicians and representatives who are currently seeking or hold a position in the political system. We anticipate our followers to share their experiences and opinions as we get closer to the 2020 Presidential Elections.

For more information, please visit www.greatplainsaction.org



Why Vote?

Being Native and exercising your right to vote is a complicated ideology, especially if you are on the long journey to decolonize. On one hand you are participating in an oppressive colonial system. On the other hand, you are trying to challenge and change that. So what should you do? Everyone is different. Your decolonization process is not the same as others and so you should do what you think is consistent with your perspectives and beliefs.

In Indian Country, we have many gifted, intelligent, and resourceful Natives that are becoming more involved with proactive approaches. We also see Natives utilizing reactive approaches as well. One is not more important than the other. There is a diversity of tactics in the process of decolonizing the world and we need to work together to make real change.

Although your vote might not be the vote that determines the overall outcome of an election, it is still valued. By exercising your right to vote, you could help elect a candidate who has your best interests at the forefront.

POLITICAL SLANG

Campaign - An organized effort to win an election

Caucus - An informal meeting of local party members to discuss candidates and to choose delegates to the party's convention

Democratic Party (Party of the People): Donkey; Blue State: members of this party believe the government should take an active role in providing services and help to those in need

Demagogue: A leader whose impassioned rhetoric appeals to greed, fear, and hatred, and who often spreads lies

Gerrymander: The reorganization of voting districts by the party in power to insure more votes for their candidates

Grass Roots: Political activity that originates locally, or arises from ground level

Lobby: A group seeking to influence an elected official, or the act of doing so

Pork Barrel: Wasteful and unnecessary projects that politicians secure for their local districts, usually to gain favor with local voters

Silent Majority: The mass of Americans whose opinions are not loud and public, but who together have enormous power



POLITICAL SLANG

Republican Party (The Grand Old Party aka GOP): Elephant;
Red State: members of this party believe the government should not interfere with people's lives, support lower taxes, and less spending on social programs

Swing Vote: The undecided, usually independent, portion of the electorate that can "swing" the outcome of an election one way or the other

Electoral College The voters, or electors, of each state that formally elect the U.S. President and Vice President. Each state has as many electoral college votes as it does U.S.

Representatives and U.S. Senators in Congress

Non-partisan Not supporting or controlled by a group or a cause

Precinct An administrative division of voters by neighborhood; smallest political unit in U.S. politics. Cities and counties are divided into precinct polling districts that have varying numbers of registered voters based on State law

Lobby: A group seeking to influence an elected official, or the act of doing so

Political Action Committee (PAC): An organization created to raise money in support or opposition of a particular candidate or candidates

Bipartisan - A cooperative effort between two political parties



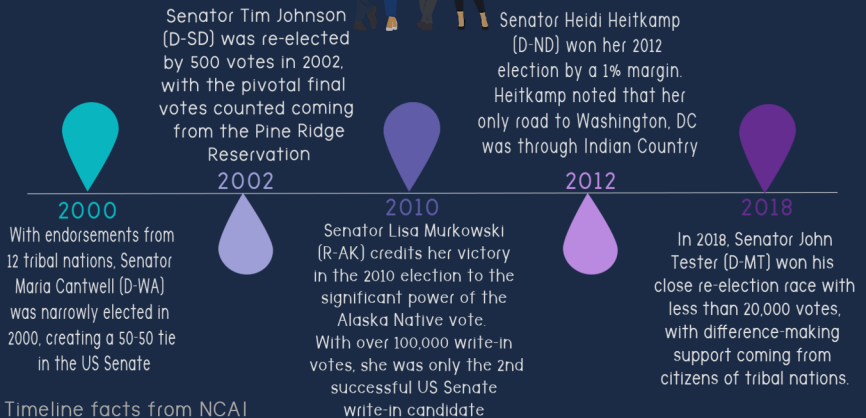
NATIVE VOTER STATISTICS

According to U.S. Census information from 2018, there were an estimated 6.8 million Native Americans. Although comparatively small from the rest of the U.S. population (330 million), Oliver "OJ" Semans (co-Founder of Four Directions) states that the Native vote could swing states in the upcoming presidential election. Those include: Arizona, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, North Carolina, Colorado, and Wisconsin. With the current administration threatening to cut funding and infringe upon tribal sovereignty, the Native vote could not be more important than ever.

Historically, we've always had a lower voter turnout than any other ethnicity. We weren't even acknowledged or granted U.S. citizenship until The Snyder Act was passed in 1924, which also began the slow process of granting us the to vote, state by state. The last state to fully guarantee voting rights for Native people was Utah in 1962 (history.com). In conjunction with the 2010 U.S. Census, Wang states that 34% of the total AI/AN population over age 18, alone or in combination with another race, are not registered to vote - this equals approximately 1.2 million potential new eligible voters.



Native Votes Matter



VOTER SUPPRESSION

Being Native always comes with barriers. Why would it be any different when it comes to voting? Voter suppression is used to hinder the voting process. It is targeted towards the lower socio-economic classes (the poor, the working poor, and the middle class) in an attempt to ultimately change the outcome of an election.

Here are some examples of voter suppression:

Elimination of Early Voting/ Same-Day Registration

Prevents or reduces the number of voters who want to vote and cannot make it to a location and time on election day

Long Wait Times

Most recently, we have seen an increase in wait times to cast votes. Many Native Americans do not have time to wait long if they are looking after other relatives such as grandparents and/or children. Some may rely on public transportation to get to places if they do not have their own.

Physical Address

Most Native American families live together in one home. This brings up the issue of revealing that information and fearing that government assistance would be cut off because of multiple relatives/families living together. Another issue is the homeless population who do not have a physical address to put down.

ID requirements


A majority of Native voters do not possess any ID and may not have the sufficient documents (i.e. birth certificate, Social Security card,) at the time to obtain one. Tribal IDs were not honored until recent..

These are just some of the barriers that Native voters encounter. This doesn't even include external factors such as domestic violence, depression, financial burdens, and overall lack of community voter engagement can factor into whether a Native voter will vote or not.

RNVP



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