Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports

THE GATES PORTAL

Primary Education - Voting & State Senate Races

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Voting is our most basic right as an American. Unfortunately voter turnout in the United States has remained the lowest among world democracies. During a Presidential election year voter turnout is the highest, Georgia had 58.4% citizens voting in 2012. While the last Governor's race in Georgia had only 39.9% citizens voting in 2010. Yet the state elections are the closest to the people and truly the most important for citizens with disabilities.

You can help folks register to vote by April 21st to be eligible to vote in the May 20th Primary election. In fact, in terms of the legislature the Primary will determine their state Senator or Representative as most do not have General Election opponents. This week an exciting new online voter registration site was launched on the Georgia Secretary of State's website. As long as someone has a valid Georgia Driver's license or identification card they can register to vote online here. This is one of the most exciting opportunities to help people exercise their basic right and show legislators in your area that people with disabilities and their families make up a significant portion of the electorate.

Competitive State Senate Races *(Next Portal will focus on the State House)*
The State Senate has 56 seats with about 150,000 Georgians in each District. This year 27 Senators have no opposition and are guaranteed their Senate seats in 2015. There are six open seats where the incumbent Senator decided to retire or run for a higher office. Of the 29

seats with competitive races there are thirteen where the office will be decided only in the primary and another five where a primary winner will then face a General Election opponent from the other party. This will leave thirteen races out of 56 State Seats deciding their State Senator in the General Election. This is why primaries are so important in Georgia.

First get all your folks registered to vote by April 21st! Second, get those candidates who have important primary races out to see the incredible work you do in their communities. Finally, invite your board to participate in the event. You are a constituent and the people you employ and the help to achieve their employment dreams are part of the American Dream. All of these candidates need to know about your incredible contribution to Georgia's economy.

As a non-profit organization you must be non-partisan in your approach and invite all candidates to visit your programs and meet your people. This can be done at one event or you can have them take a tour one at a time over the next forty days. The critical element is you must invite them all and give them all equal time and information. You just don't know who your next Senator will be and what will help them understand the critical services you provide in their community.

Here is an overview of the Primary in areas that correspond with CRP territory. Notice that I am providing the Senate District number in a competitive primary race. You can then find all candidates for that District online here. The candidate information page is very different from past years. You need to choose the election (5/20/2014) the Party and the Office (State Senator) from three different drop down boxes. This summary will help you gather the information on the candidates in your area when you go to the site to obtain their names and contact information. **The District with an (*) will be decided completely in the primary election - again thirteen Senate Seats decided solely on May 20th!**

Atlanta
Democratic Primary - District 36*, 38*, 40
Republican Primary - District 40

Augusta
Democratic Primary - District 22*

Carrollton
Republican Primary - District 30

Chickamauga/NW Georgia
Republican Primary - District 53*

Cumming
Republican Primary - District 27*

Decatur
Democratic Primary - District 42

Jonesboro

Democratic Primary - District 44*

Macon
Democratic Primary - District 26*
Republican Primary - District 18*

Marietta
Democratic Primary - District 33*

Riverdale
Democratic Primary - District 34*

Snellville
Republican Primary - District 9

Stone Mountain
Democratic Primary - District 55*

Tifton
Republican Primary - District 13*

Tyrone/Fayette County
Republican Primary - District 16*

Valdosta
Republican Primary - District 8

Call for Information

THE PORTAL is a communication tool for GATES and GATES members. If you have stories about your organization, staff announcements, program descriptions, or other information you want to share with other GATES members, please send the info to Charles Hall, chall@asginfo.net

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