

No Vote, No Complaining



Next month, we get another opportunity in the United States to set the direction of our cities, states, and nation. This is not a political statement. This is a citizenry statement. Please vote!

When my daughter was growing up, she frequently heard me say, “If you don’t vote, you don’t get to complain.” What I meant by that was this: Citizens of the United States are granted the privilege

of voting. However, if you check local, state, or national results any year, the percentage of people who vote falls far short of the number of people eligible to vote. Some people were challenged to vote because they had to secure transportation, plan for an early ballot or wait in line (and if they lived in one of our northern states and the weather was bad, that could be a real challenge), or their employer wouldn’t allow them to arrive late or leave early to vote. The list goes on. Yet, all those reasons still do not account for our low voter turnout.

Although I am saddened by the low turnout, I am concerned when I listen to someone complaining (often loudly and long) about taxes, road repair, or policies (including health care), to name a few examples. I have made comments about voting and most commonly the response I hear is something to do with being too busy to do so or an expression that their voting would not make a difference. Thus, I developed my philosophy of “no vote, no complaining.”

I knew my daughter had absorbed my message when, years later, we were talking on the phone (on Election Day) and she

said, “Well, I have to go because I want to vote before I go to work and I know if I don’t vote, I can’t complain.” Parents do not often get to hear their positive words repeated back to them at times when they matter!

We all complain about issues that are controlled by local, state, and federal government. We do so freely. That is a part of freedom of speech. Frequently that complaining is a political statement, meaning the person I voted for wasn’t elected and now I can prove my vote as the right view by pointing out a failure in policy or performance of the person who won. Although we all may not agree on candidates or issues—and we do not in most elections—we do support freedom of speech. And that ability to speak out against a policy or a point of view seems to be one we value. We need to translate that desire to speak out into the action to vote. In many cases, I do not care who or what you vote for because—at least we hope—good people and good policies are at stake.

The Tri-Council for Nursing urges you to exercise your right to vote in the 2020 Election (**Figure A**; available in the online version of this article).

Please do not deny yourself the opportunity to vote. You may want to exercise your right to complain later. Just vote!

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The author has disclosed no potential conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise.
doi:10.3928/00220124-20200914-01

From Frontlines to Voting Lines: Nurses Need to Vote in 2020

As the most trusted professionals on the front line of health care delivery, combating current and future public health challenges, nurses continue to provide priceless insight and input around the future of health care. Nurses' voices carry immense weight and now, more than ever, it is critical that those voices are heard loud and clear in local, state, and federal elections.

For that reason, the Tri-Council for Nursing, an alliance between the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the American Nurses Association, the American Organization for Nursing Leadership, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, and the National League for Nursing representing nurses in practice, nurse leaders and nursing educators, urges you to exercise your right to vote in the 2020 Election.

The Tri-Council for Nursing calls upon all nurses to carefully weigh the positions, proposals, and legislative voting records of candidates who aspire to elected office on November 3, 2020. In these unprecedented times, voting may look different, especially with early voting options and vote-by-mail opportunities becoming increasingly relevant.

As we get closer to Election Day, the Tri-Council strongly recommends that you consider the safest way for you to cast your vote. To ensure you have the best information available and are ready to cast your ballot, follow these three simple steps:

- 1) Register.** Double check if you are registered to vote by going to Vote.gov. Some states allow same day registration, but it is important to check now to ensure that you are prepared for Election Day.
- 2) Do Your Research.** While 2020 is a Presidential Election Year, there are many open seats at the state and local levels as well. It is important to research not only who will be on the ballot, but any proposals that may also be up for consideration this election season.

To learn more about local and state voting plans, gain information on polling places, mail-in options, or absentee ballots visit:

- **American Nurses Association:** <https://nursesvote.org/>;
 - **American Association of Colleges of Nursing:** <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Policy-Advocacy/Get-Involved/Nursing-Voices-Nursing-Votes>;
 - **American Organization for Nursing Leadership:** <https://wecarewewote.aha.org/>; or
 - USA.gov/voting
- 3) Vote:** With COVID-19 states are also looking at how to provide socially distant voting in person. Look at your work schedule, check out voting options in your state, find your polling site, and determine the best way for you to vote in this year's election.

We understand the many challenges continue to face our country and nurses continue to answer the call to meet the demands of our nation's health and safety, from rural towns to urban centers. With more than 5 million nurses nationwide, there is power in our voice. So this year, during the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, exercise that power by going from the front lines to voting lines to cast your ballot in the 2020 Election.

More information on the [Tri-Council for Nursing](#):

About the American Association of Colleges of Nursing

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) is the national voice for academic nursing representing more than 840 schools of nursing nationwide. AACN establishes quality standards for nursing education, influences the nursing profession to improve health care, and promotes public support of baccalaureate and graduate nursing education, research and practice. For more information, visit www.aacnnursing.org.

About the American Nurses Association

The [American Nurses Association](#) (ANA) is the premier organization representing the interests of the nation's 4 million registered nurses. ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting a safe and ethical work environment, bolstering the health and wellness of nurses, and advocating on health care issues that affect nurses and the public. ANA is at the forefront of improving the quality of health care for all. For more information, visit www.nursingworld.org.

About the American Organization for Nursing Leadership

As the national professional organization of more than 10,000 nurse leaders, the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) is the voice of nursing leadership. AONL's membership encompasses nurse leaders working in hospitals, health systems, academia and other care settings across the care continuum. Since 1967, the organization has led the field of nursing leadership through professional development, advocacy and research that advances nursing leadership practice and patient care. AONL is a subsidiary of the American Hospital Association. For more information, visit AONL.org.

About NCSBN

Founded March 15, 1978, as an independent not-for-profit organization, NCSBN was initially created to lessen the burdens of state governments and bring together nursing regulatory bodies (NRBs) to act and counsel together on matters of common interest. It has evolved into one of the leading voices of regulation across the world.

NCSBN's membership is comprised of the NRBs in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and four U.S. territories — American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and the Virgin Islands. There are three exam user members. There are also 27 associate members that are either NRBs or empowered regulatory authorities from other countries or territories. For more information, visit www.ncsbn.org.

Mission: NCSBN empowers and supports nursing regulators in their mandate to protect the public.

About the National League for Nursing

Dedicated to excellence in nursing, the National League for Nursing is the premier organization for nurse faculty and leaders in nursing education. The NLN offers professional development, networking opportunities, testing services, nursing research grants, and public policy initiatives to its 40,000 individual and 1,200 institutional members, comprising nursing education programs across the spectrum of higher education and health care organizations. Learn more at NLN.org.