

## TOP TEN REASONS TO VOTE

- In honor of those in our military who courageously fight wars and our law enforcement officers, firefighters and emergency workers who respond to our needs and defend the peace at home. Those who sacrifice their personal well-being in the name of our safety and security deserve our respect. Voting is a way of giving them and their families our vote of confidence in their heroism.
- In honor of those who struggled for civil rights, women's suffrage, immigrant rights and the ideals of justice for all whose diverse voices are essential for our nation's moral health and community vitality. Freedom needs affirmation. Voting is a way to assure that our rights are protected by strengthening the voices of those for whom rights are sacred and need to be defended.
- To be a good example to our children and grandchildren by exercising the right to vote as a symbol of our faith in democracy. By voting we send a signal of the importance of the choices we as adults make to secure a better future for ourselves, for our children, and generations who will follow.
- Voting is our society's great equalizer. No matter our station in life, income, or social status, every citizen over age 18 has the same power of one vote. Pollsters do not determine who wins elections; voters do. Predicting the outcome of elections, especially close ones, is at best an inexact science. Pollsters and political pundits have their roles, but like each of us, they only have one vote.
- Elections should not be about negative ads, it should be about the options we all have to promote positive policy actions. Voting for candidates in whom we believe, and for or against ballot initiatives we know will affect our future, is a perfect counterbalance to the flood of negativity polluting the airwaves and mailboxes.
- Voting is now more convenient than ever. Early voting and mail-in balloting are options which can avoid the frustration of lines on November 7th. Florida voters may visit <http://election.dos.state.fl.us/index.html> and click to learn more about the options for voting available this year. Voters in other states have similar access to elections information to facilitate efficient and effective voting practices.
- It's important to be an informed voter. Pay attention to news reports and editorials about the campaigns. Voting gives all us the chance to make our opinions known in the public policy arena. While how we vote is confidential, the fact that we have voted, or failed to vote, is public record. Elected officials know which individuals and demographic groups are voting, and we who vote are therefore more likely to be influential in policy debates. Non-voters are voiceless and by not participating can become victims of their neglect.
- Regret is preventable. November 8th is one day too late, and "could have, should have" are sorry alternatives to acting. Have a "no excuses" attitude by committing to vote, ask others to join us in voting, and promote a positive approach to making a difference among family, friends and colleagues.
- Be part of making history. Because every indicator points to the prospect that the 2006 election will suffer from an extremely low turnout, every vote is even more important. As a Floridian, I know how close elections can be. Being a participant in affecting history gives each of us a sense of pride in democracy and the power to touch the future.
- Democracy is a team sport....and spectators don't count.

"Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that ever has." --- Margaret Mead, Anthropologist