



Write Here! Write Now!

Contact: advocacy@uusj.org or 202.600.9132

Delivery of Letters - Organizers: All Letters due by 12/15/2020

NEW try doing an individual letter online [HERE](#) or [Upload this form to submit letters](#)

Email by Thursday, 12/11/2020 to advocacy@uusj.org.

Mail to: *NEW* UUSJ c/o Paulette DeMers, 3745 Tech Dr NW, Rochester MN 55901

Tell your U.S. Senators to support greater voter participation by improving registration and electoral access

Why Are We Writing? General election turnout in 2020 hit a historic high. This extraordinary level of participation was enabled by measures such as vote by mail and early voting that were implemented in many states in response to the pandemic. These methods should be available to all Americans in every state for all national elections. Voters will likely expect them.

Why now? With the election fresh in mind and Congress about to start a new session, this is the time to **reach out to your senators to celebrate this historic turnout and to explore the role that federal legislation might play in improving voter registration and election access.**

Background: While there is much to celebrate, challenges clearly persist to voter participation. Despite high voter turnout this election season, just 67% of the eligible voting-age population turned out, a rate generally lower than our peers internationally. Voter suppression in some states has returned since the Supreme Court gutted certain provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Making it easier to register and easier to vote are therefore key goals, and should not depend on where a voter lives. More than 40 states and jurisdictions already provide online voter registration, and more than a third of Americans have the advantage of “*automatic voter registration*,” typically when they register their vehicles. Nearly half the states allow registering at the same time a ballot is cast. At least 84% of voters were able to **vote by mail** this fall and there was no evidence of any significant voter fraud. The option to vote by mail is especially important for certain populations, like military families, the elderly, the ill, the disabled, the poor, and those who lack transportation or easy access to polling places. **Early voting** offers convenience and can enhance voters’ confidence. These choices tend not to benefit one party over another and should be available to all U.S. voters.

UU Grounding: By enabling voters’ participation in elections, Unitarian Universalists work to advance principles of the “right of conscience” and “use of the democratic process . . . in society at large” (5th), and “human dignity” (1st) as well as honor the demands of justice and equity in human relations (2nd) by ensuring that vulnerable populations are afforded equal electoral access.

Key Message & Our Ask: Speak to your own recent experience with voting. Celebrate historic levels of voter turnout in this last election by continuing successful improvements such as voting by mail, expanding opportunities for registration, and enhancing electoral access. These should be viewed as non-partisan goals for our democracy. By enabling voters in these ways, we promote a healthy democratic process, the right of conscience, human dignity, and justice and equity, all fundamental principles of our UU faith.

(See other side for Key Message, Talking Points, and Sample Letter)

Suggested Talking Points

(use your own examples, tell your story, and/or draw on some of these suggested points)

- **Modernize voter registration through online and automatic voter registration.** Congress should provide money to assist states in updating their voting systems.
- **Restore and modernize provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.** Problems with voter access should be addressed *before* they take effect, rather than *after*.
- **Vote by Mail and Early Voting should be available to every eligible voter.** Ensure voters with conflicting work schedules or mobility and health challenges can participate.
- **Make same day voter registration available across the country.** Create incentives for states to adopt such practices and ensure any eligible voter always has a viable option.
- **Former felons who have faithfully served their sentence should be able to vote.** Voting can help former felons to reintegrate into civil and political life and community.
- **Work across the aisle for bi-partisan support. Voter registration and election access are not partisan issues.** Research demonstrates that reform in many areas of election access typically does not benefit one party over another.

Sample Letter to Your [Senators]

[Use your own words. Speak from your heart -- this is only a sample letter.]

[Today's date]

Dear [Senator] _____, *[write to both of your [Senators]]*

I'm a Unitarian Universalist and supporter of the Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice. Fundamental principles of our faith include the promotion of a healthy democratic process, the right of conscience, the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and justice, equity and compassion in human relations.

I celebrate the historic voter turnout in our recent general election, as I'm sure you do. I urge you to enable future voter participation by working for bi-partisan reform to expand opportunities for registration and enhance electoral access . . . *[Here you might specify what specific policies are most important to you. See Suggested Talking Points above. To support the message you might include in your own words a personal experience, a story, or concern relating to voter registration or voting.]*

[adapt a closing such as...] Enabling greater voter participation has garnered support from both sides of the aisle and should be considered nonpartisan. I care deeply about this issue as do voters across the country, and I look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME and include your COMPLETE ADDRESS]