

CITIZENSHIP SUNDAY



A Program to Encourage Voter Registration Drives Through Churches in Georgia

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“The church must take right ground in regard to politics. . . The time has come that Christians must vote for honest men and take consistent ground in politics. . . God cannot sustain this free and blessed country which we love and pray for unless the Church will take right ground. Politics are a part of religion in a country such as this, and Christians must do their duty to the country as a part of their duty to God. He will bless or curse this nation according to the course Christians take in politics.”

Charles Finney

Introduction

Despite what modern historical revisionists write, this country was founded on Christian principles and flourished for its first 180 years by adhering to Biblical standards of morality and ethics.

Because of America’s Christian heritage, Christians have always had a special duty to exercise both their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Today, it is more important than ever for people of faith to stand in the gap in prayer on behalf of our land, to engage ourselves in the voting process, and to take a stand for righteousness on public policy issues.

Many believers are already fulfilling more than the minimum requirements for good citizenship. But, that is not true of all Christians--even Evangelicals.

Research reveals a startling and sobering truth--40% of Evangelical Christians are not registered to vote. On top of that, in most elections, less than 50% of registered voters actually vote. In light of these numbers, it is crucial that we engage more of our Brothers and Sisters in Christ in the political arena in order to return our country to the Christian principles of our Founding Fathers.

Citizenship Sunday

To that end, the Georgia Christian Alliance is asking churches in Georgia to participate in our voter registration program called *Citizenship Sunday*. This project was first implemented during the 1994 election cycle and was very effective in registering new, pro-family voters. This is a nonpartisan effort, sanctioned by the Secretary of State, to enlist churches throughout Georgia to conduct voter registration drives during the year, and especially those months prior to an election.

We suggest, due to the transient nature of our society, that you hold these drives as many times during the year as possible. Remember, **voters must be registered thirty (30) days prior to an election in order to be eligible to vote. The final date to register for 2008 election is Friday, October 3, 2008. In order to participate in advance voting the final date to register is Friday, September 26, 2008.**

****Please keep in mind these important dates:**

Advance voting for General Election – October 27 – 31, 2008

General Election – November 4, 2008

Pastors can assist those in their congregations in meeting their civic responsibilities in an informed way by providing easy access to VOTER REGISTRATION and information. Registering to vote is the first step. The *Citizenship Sunday* program will facilitate this process using the new “Motor Voter” applications for voter registration.

The *Citizenship Sunday* project requires only a few volunteers and a limited amount of time to prepare for and implement. Yet, experience shows that it will pay great dividends. It will not only result in the registration of many Christian citizens, but it is a program that pastors of all denominations can applaud and embrace.

Background

In 1994, the State of Georgia implemented the national Motor Voter Law which facilitates registration of all persons who apply for or renew their driver’s license. Additionally, government social service agencies, such as welfare offices, will also register persons who receive their services and who are in compliance with requirements.

And, this new voter registration process and the official forms may be used by ordinary citizens to encourage and assist others to register to vote. The use of the new mail-in forms vastly simplifies the registration process.

NOW WE CAN ASSIST CITIZENS TO BECOME REGISTERED VOTERS BY FOLLOWING A FEW SIMPLE PROCEDURES . . . AND WE CAN DO THIS RIGHT IN OUR CHURCHES THROUGHOUT THE STATE!

Helpful Suggestions

*Determine who will be “in charge” of the drives. It is important to have a chairperson designated unless the pastor wishes to coordinate the effort.

*Set the dates and specific times of day which you wish to hold the registration drives. You may wish to schedule the drives before and after Sunday morning services, Wednesday evening services, or even a major special event during the week.

*Determine where in the church the registration tables will be placed--Fellowship Hall, Narthex, Classroom, Gym, etc. (make it a convenient location).

*Recruit a few volunteers to help. The number, of course, will be dependent on the size of the church.

*Order a sufficient supply of voter registration forms from your County Registrar’s Office.

A rule of thumb to follow:

Order a quantity of forms equal to 20 percent of your church’s average Sunday attendance at all services. Thus, if the church averages 500 adults on Sunday, order 100 forms. Remember, you can use them at any time before or after the *Citizenship Sunday* drives so they will not go to waste.

*Schedule your volunteers so that there are at least two or three persons covering the process at key times--usually ½ hour before and 45 minutes following each service.

*Ideas on how to publicize *Citizenship Sunday*:

- a. Church Bulletin Announcements—ongoing or at least two or three weeks prior to the drives and on the Sundays during which the drives are being held.
- b. Pulpit announcements on Sunday and Wednesday Evening Services--prior to and during the weeks of the drives.
- c. Make announcements in Sunday School Classes, Bible Studies, Home Group Meetings, Seminars, and Special Events.
- d. Put up posters around the church, being certain to mention the dates of the *Citizenship Sunday* registration drives and the dates of upcoming elections.

- e. Consider printing some special flyers to announce *Citizenship Sunday*.
- f. If there is a church mailing going out prior to the *Citizenship Sunday* registration drives, place a notice of the drive dates in the envelope.
- g. If the voter registration forms that you receive do not have the prepaid postage indicia (most do) on them, buy a roll of stamps and have it at the table when people are filling out the forms. **(Do not let any new registrant leave the church without a stamp on the form!)**

Setting Up and Conducting the Drive on *Citizenship Sunday*

1. Set up two six to eight foot tables and some chairs where registrants can sit while filling in the forms.
2. Place near the tables an American Flag and a couple of posters identifying the *Citizenship Sunday* Voter Registration Program.
3. Place several stacks of voter registration forms on the tables. Have ball point pens available (black). Also, have a roll of stamps if necessary.
4. Ask each volunteer to wear some sort of name tag or identification badge.
5. Ask the person to fill in the form **right then** at the table. Having them complete the form in the church is essential.
6. Be ready to give registrants any assistance that they may need and answer any questions that they may have to the best of your ability. Be sure that each form is signed. If they take the form with them without completing it, chances are 50 to 60 percent it will never be filled out and mailed.
7. It is imperative that all regulations prohibiting any kind of campaigning by candidates or workers, the wearing of campaign buttons, the availability or distribution of campaign literature in and around the registration table be adhered to. Instruct your volunteers **not to discuss** candidates or issues with the registrants.
8. Keep in mind that any citizen of Georgia, from any country, who meets the requirements on the form may register at your church--even visitors.
9. Be sure to ask the registrants to mail the form on the way home from church, and let them know the location of the mailbox nearest the church. THIS IS VITAL. People have good intentions, but if they don't mail the form right away, after they leave church, it may be forgotten and not mailed.
10. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** According to the Secretary of State's office, volunteers at the church are not allowed to collect the forms and mail them. **They MUST be mailed by the person who is making the application.**

11. Have a name and address sheet available for registrants so that you can notify them of election dates and provide nonpartisan information. Ask them to record their name and address.
12. Before each person leaves, ask them if there is anyone in the family who is not registered and who is in the military, in a nursing home, or away at a university. If so, urge them to take an extra form and mail it to that person.

Absentee Ballots

Please give members of your congregation who will be out of town on election day the opportunity to vote by absentee ballot. Any registered voter who will be unable to vote in person may complete an absentee ballot and return it by mail to the County Registrar. Allow plenty of time if you are mailing in your absentee ballot. The ballot itself must be received the day prior to an election. You can vote absentee up to 45 days prior to the election by going to your County Registrar’s Office and filling out your ballot there.

You can request an absentee ballot as far out as 180 days prior to an election. The form can be retrieved from the Secretary of State’s Web site: www.sos.state.ga.us

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR DIFFICULTIES, PLEASE CALL THE GEORGIA CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE OFFICE AT (770) 998-3541 OR YOUR COUNTY REGISTRAR’S OFFICE.

For additional information, you may contact:

Secretary of State’s Office
Phone: (404) 656-2871 Fax: (404) 651-9531

NOTE: Please have your chairperson fill out the form below and return it to the Georgia Christian Alliance office so that we may accurately compile data to determine the effectiveness of this year’s *Citizenship Sunday* drives.

CITIZENSHIP SUNDAY
VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE
REPORT

Church Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Citizenship Sunday Chairperson: _____

Mailing Address _____

City/Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Dates Registration Drive held: _____

Number of forms filled out in church: _____

Number of forms taken home: _____

Number of forms distributed or
filled out through other sources: _____

Comments: _____

Signed: _____

Mail, fax or email completed forms to:
Judy Craft
Georgia Christian Alliance
8975 Roswell Road
Atlanta, GA 30350
E-Mail: sadie@gachristianalliance.org
Phone: 770.998.3541 Fax: 770.998.9684