

GET OUT THE VOTE

A voting and election guide for citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

www.GOTVNJ.org



Register now and make your voice heard.



985 Livingston Avenue, North Brunswick, NJ 08902 | 732-246-2525
Email: info@arcnj.org | Website: www.arcnj.org



GOTV 2024

2024 is a very big year. That is because the country will head to the polls in November and elect a new President of the United States. The candidates this year are former President Donald Trump and current Vice President Kamala Harris. With such an important election only a few weeks away, we encourage everyone to exercise their right to vote by casting a ballot on November 5. In addition, New Jersey offers a number of other options for voting that may be more convenient for you than going to the polls on Election Day. Make sure you take some time to learn about the various voting methods that may work best for you.

In addition to a new President, New Jersey residents will elect a new US Senator. The candidates this year are Congressman Andy Kim and Curtis Bashaw. Make sure to make it all the way through the Guide to read the candidate questionnaire. This is a way of learning more about the policy positions of those running. And finally, voters will choose a member to the House of Representatives.

As a person with a disability or someone who cares about someone with a disability, it is important to learn about the people who are running for office. The individuals elected this year will have a big impact on everything from funding for critical services, to policies on special education, transportation, health care and more. Make sure you check out our Get Out the Vote website, www.gotvnj.org for additional resources and information.

*For voter registration guidelines,
visit www.arcnj.org*

Frequently Asked Questions

What is voting?

Voting is your right. Voting is your choice. Voting is your voice.

Why should you vote?

Voting allows you to elect people that will represent you and fight for the issues you believe in.

When is voting?

Election Day is Tuesday, November 5, 2024, but there are other ways of casting a ballot before the big day!

How can I vote?

You can vote in person, by mail or by using a secure ballot drop box. Here is some important information about each of these options:



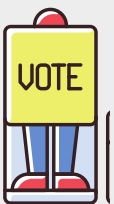
Drop Box: A ballot drop box is a secure, locked structure operated by election officials where voters may deliver their ballots from the time they receive them in the mail up to the time polls close at 8 pm on Election Day, November 5, 2024. There will be at least 10 drop boxes located throughout each county, which will be available 24 hours a day. Drop boxes will be under surveillance by security cameras and collected daily by county election officials. To find the location of the ballot drop boxes in your county visit:

<https://nj.gov/state/elections/vote-secure-drop-boxes.shtml>

Ballots must be placed in drop boxes in your county by 8 pm on Election Day.



Mail: Your vote-by-mail ballot **MUST** be postmarked on or before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day and be received by your county's Board of Elections on or before the sixth day after the close of the polls. You can also deliver your vote-by-mail ballot in person to your county's Board of Elections Office by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.



In-Person voting: You can vote in person at your polling place, from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Election Day or you can choose to vote during the 9-day Early Voting period detailed more below. Find your polling location here:

<https://nj.gov/state/elections/vote-polling-location.shtml>

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the timeline for voting?

Early Voting will start on Saturday, October 26, and will run through Sunday, November 3. Early Voting allows registered voters to cast their ballot in person, using a voting machine, during a nine-day period prior to Election Day. Every county will provide registered voters with this option. Hours for Early Voting will be Monday-Saturday, 10 am to 8 pm and Sunday, 10 am to 6 pm. No appointment is necessary. To find Early Voting locations in your county, click here: <https://www.nj.gov/state/elections/vote-early-voting.shtml>

Important Voting and Election Day Dates:

- **October 15** - Voter Registration Deadline for General Election (21 days before election)
- **October 29** - Deadline to apply for a Mail-in Ballot by Mail for the General Election
- **November 4**, by 3 pm - Deadline for In-Person Mail in Ballot Applications for General Election
- **November 5** - Deadline for Post Office Receipt of Mail-In Ballots from the General Election
- **November 11** - Deadline for Receipt of Timely Mailed Postmarked Mail-In Ballots to County Boards of Election

What is voting by mail?

Any voter may apply for vote-by-mail by completing the [Application for Vote-By-Mail Ballot](#) and returning the application to their [County Clerk](#). After completing the Vote-By-Mail Ballot, you can mail it back, place it at one of your county's Ballot Drop Box locations, or return it to your County Board of Elections Office. Counties will begin mailing ballots to voters 45 days before an election, but some counties may begin prior to that. Please remember: Your Vote-By-Mail ballot CANNOT be returned to your In-Person Early Voting Poll Location or your Election Day Poll Location.

Who are the candidates?

This year, voters will elect:

- President of the United States
- United States Senator
- Congress person to serve in the House of Representatives



Frequently Asked Questions

Who can vote?

You must be 18 years old to vote and a citizen of the United States. You cannot vote if you are in jail, on parole or on probation. It is **not** legal to deny someone the right to vote based on the fact that he or she has an intellectual or other disability. Only a judge can declare that an individual lacks capacity to vote. It is **not** legal to deny someone the right to vote based on the fact that he or she has a legal guardian. It is **not** legal to deny someone the right to vote based on the fact that he or she lives in an institution, developmental center, group home, supported apartment or other residential facility assisting individuals with disabilities. It is **not** legal to deny someone the right to vote based on the fact that he or she receives services or supports related to a disability. A voter with a disability cannot be required to answer questions or fill out a form to “prove” his or her mental capacity.

Who can register to vote and how do I know if I’m registered?

Visit this site to determine if you are registered: <https://voter.svrs.nj.gov/registration-check>
To register to vote, you must be at least 17 years old, though you may not vote until you have reached the age of 18. You must also be a resident of the county for 30 days before the election.

How can I register to vote?

To register, you must complete a Voter Registration Application and/or Party Affiliation Form. Mail or deliver the Voter Registration Application and/or Party Affiliation Form to the County Commissioner of Registration or Superintendent of Elections for your county. To find your county, click here: <https://nj.gov/state/elections/vote-county-election-officials.shtml>. To register to vote online, click here: <https://voter.svrs.nj.gov/register>. You will need your current and valid Driver’s License or non-driver Identification Card, or your social security number.



Frequently Asked Questions

Are polling places accessible for people with disabilities?

A voter with a disability has the right to vote privately and independently, have an accessible polling place and accessible voting machines, seek assistance from workers at the polling place who have been trained to use the accessible voting machines and to bring someone to help you vote. Under federal and state law, voters with disabilities have the right to receive “reasonable accommodations” at polling places. If you are blind, if you have a disability or if you cannot read the ballot on the voting machine, you can have someone of your choice assist you with the voting machine. You are also entitled to assistance. Two board workers of opposite political parties may help you. You have the right to have both workers assist you, or one worker – it is your choice. If you encounter accessibility difficulties, you can report and communicate that experience to the NJ Division of Elections by using this web site:

<https://nj.gov/state/elections/voting-access-feedback-form.shtml>

Voters should not be asked for “proof” of their disability in order to receive accommodations. Animals assisting people with disabilities must be allowed to accompany the person into the building and into the booth. Voter rights and accessibility information can be found here: <https://nj.gov/state/elections/voter-rights.shtml>

How will I know if my ballot was received?

You can check on the status of your vote-by-mail ballot using the Track My Ballot Portal online here: <https://nj.gov/state/elections/vote-track-my-ballot.shtml>

You can contact your County Clerk. That contact information is here:

<https://nj.gov/state/elections/vote-county-election-officials.shtml>

VOTE



2024

Frequently Asked Questions

What should I do if I go to vote and am told I can't vote because I have a disability?

If you are a voter with a disability and you have a question or you encounter an issue trying to vote on Election Day, call Disability Rights NJ hotline 1-(866)-493-0023 from 8 am to 4 pm Monday through Friday, or from 6 am to 8 pm on Election Day. You can also email voterhotline@disabilityrightsny.org.

Looking for more information?

Don't forget to visit our website, www.GOTVNJ.org for additional content and resources!



Candidate Questionnaire

To help our readers learn more about the candidates and where they stand on the disability issues we care about, The Arc of NJ sent out a questionnaire to both campaigns. Both candidates were sent the same questions and offered the opportunity to participate. Mr. Curtis Bashaw did not submit a response. Congressman Andy Kim's response appears below, un-edited and in its entirety.



Andy Kim

Question 1: If elected in November, what policy initiatives do you plan to pursue that would benefit people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families?

"Public policy must center the needs of all people, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Too often, people with disabilities are seen and treated as second-class citizens. This is wrong. We must give dignity and honor to all people. Similarly, too often the needs of people with disabilities are only narrowly understood – people with disabilities need access to housing, jobs, healthcare, and reliable transportation, among other things. These issues require comprehensive action that leads with listening to the disability community, and fighting for a social program that is uplifting for all. I believe we must ensure that the American Disabilities Act is enforced and updated as necessary – especially as we make greater investments in infrastructure and public transit. I would support efforts to bolster and modernize the ADA. It is also imperative that we ensure people with disabilities have access to health care – this is why I was proud to cosponsor H.R. 7503, the Health Equity for People with Disabilities Act. People with disabilities must also have access to good jobs that treat them with dignity and respect – I believe that we should work to phase out sheltered workshops that too often don't provide the necessary support and job training to people with disabilities, and all too often don't even pay workers with disabilities the minimum wage. People with disabilities must receive equal pay as everyone else and they must not be treated differently in the workplace. I will always stand for these values and fight for people with disabilities in the Senate."

Candidate Questionnaire

2024

Andy Kim

Question 2: People with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families rely on Home and Community Based Services which provide opportunities for Medicaid beneficiaries to receive services in their own home or community rather than in institutions or other isolated settings. As Senator, what would you do to ensure these critical services are both protected and strengthened?

"Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) are crucial for Americans with disabilities and their families - these services provide necessary care that allows people with disabilities to stay in their homes, remain independent, and be active in their communities. I am committed to expanding and strengthening these services, which is why I was proud to cosponsor H.R. 547, the Better Care Better Jobs Act. This legislation would make investments in long-term care, including by hiring and training more care workers, and expanding access to HCBS. I believe that we must ensure every American receives the care they need, and that the caretakers receive the pay and benefits they deserve. This legislation would improve the quality of life for Americans with disabilities, and bolster job opportunities and security for caretakers. I will continue to advocate for these initiatives and for better care for Americans with disabilities in the Senate. "

Question 3: Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) help millions of people with disabilities. Unfortunately, some aspects of these important programs have not kept up with societal changes as well as rising costs to live. What would you do as Senator to improve and fix these programs?

"It is imperative that we secure and strengthen Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). These programs are essential to ensuring that millions of people with disabilities receive the care they need. I believe that we must protect these benefits, and will continue to work on these issues in the Senate. I will work to promote the economic security of Americans with disabilities - this begins by securing and strengthening Social Security benefits. In Congress, I have been proud to support legislation that helps advance these goals. I was proud to cosponsor H.R. 3824, the Social Security Supplemental Income (SSI) Restoration Act, which would modernize and expand benefits. I have also cosponsored H.R. 883, the Stop the Wait Act, which would ensure that people with disabilities have better access to benefits, with shorter wait times. It is also imperative that we protect everyone's right to access their Social Security benefits - this is why I cosponsored H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act. I believe that these are important steps to ensure the economic security for Americans with disabilities, and I will continue to fight for these, and for the economic security of all people with disabilities, in the Senate."

In Their Own Words: Family Perspective



I am what you might call an “election nerd”. I haven’t missed voting in a general election in fifty years. I set up snacks and watch the returns late into election night. For years I was a poll worker and a volunteer in voter registration drives. I’m

driven by a belief that, despite its flaws, we have the greatest democratic election process in the world. Even more important is the fact that elections do have consequences. While not always easy to do, finding out where candidates stand on issues that are important to us – whether it’s a candidate for school board or the White House – can lead to forward movement on those issues.

As a parent of a 25-year-old daughter with Down syndrome, I often wonder what her life would be like without the benefits and protections of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Or how much narrower her adult experiences might be so far without her participation in the transition program at the local community college and the resulting employment she now enjoys. We may take these laws and programs for granted now but they weren’t always there. They came into being from the actions of those we elected to public office. The future opportunities that Elizabeth and her contemporaries will enjoy will depend on the votes we cast next.

Yes – I may have always been an “election nerd” but now I’m a nerd with a personal agenda. And while my single vote doesn’t have the visibility of the outstanding advocacy efforts of organizations like The Arc, my vote – our votes – are no less impactful. So, register, do some candidate research, cast your vote, and settle in with a bag of chips on election night.

Chick Pinto, Parent

In Their Own Words: Self Advocate Perspective



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Voting is one of the most essential things we can do for a high quality of life. We don't know what is good for us until something bad happens and it's too late. If we go to the polls and vote then it shows that our life is important and it matters. There's more people that are disabled than people realize, and if we go to the polls and vote then it shows everyone that we matter, we are important, and we are worthy of living!

Ginamarie, Self-Advocate

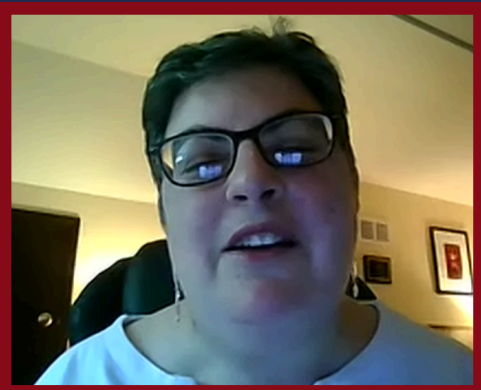


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People with disabilities that really need their voices to be heard in elections should educate themselves on candidates running for office and the community and learn about the issues such as health care, transportation, the economy, and issues pertaining to them. Accessibility is especially important and a lot of places are making accommodations for people with all disabilities to exercise their right to vote and learn about the legislative process.

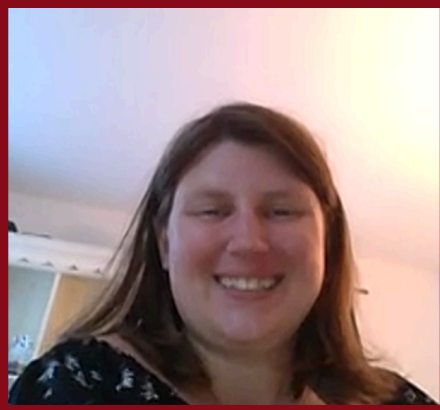
Anita Clavering, Self-Advocate

In Their Own Words: Self Advocate Perspective



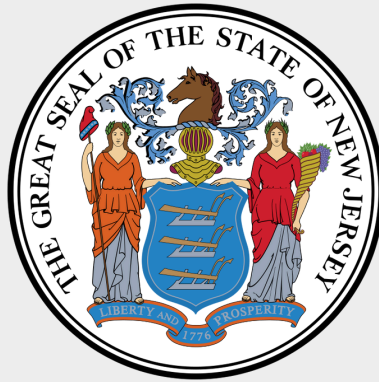
Voting is a right. When you get to the polls you will have a choice of who you want to vote for. Not everybody votes for the same person, but in addition, you have the right to do so, but being 18 years old is a very big part of voting. Being in my county gives me the right to get to know my district 22 and the people I can convey to as to voting. I just wanted everyone to know that being able to vote is a very special thing in New Jersey as well as knowing your candidates.

Evelyn G. Ramundo, Self-Advocate



Voting is a right that everyone except convicted felons have and it's crucial to the outcome of our social welfare. I am working the polls in the general election and I also worked them in the primary election. I vote by mail in order to be able to do this and enjoy helping with democracy and having some extra pocket money.

Julia S., Self-Advocate



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