

No Longer Tolerating Low Voter Turnout

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Low voter turnout is a chronic problem in Tennessee. Tennessee ranks 48th out of 50 for highest voter participation in the United States, one of the lowest rates in the country, with only about 54 percent of its eligible citizens having voted in the 2016 presidential election. In other words, only two states in the nation had a worse voter turnout than Tennessee. According to the Tennessee Secretary of State's website, during the 2016 presidential election, Hamilton County was in the bottom third of all counties for voter turnout.

It is important to increase voter turnout in Hamilton County, and in Tennessee as a whole, because civic engagement is one of the fastest paths to creating social change in the community. Each member of the community should feel compelled to cast their votes during both the national and local elections, however, many individuals feel as though their vote does not count. That is simply not true, and it takes every member of the community, working together, to create positive change. That is why it is so important to get involved in civic engagement.

To increase voter turnout in Hamilton County and Tennessee, there are several things that members of the community can do to help. First and foremost is to make sure that they themselves are voting at every opportunity. Following that, they can advocate for policy changes that would increase the likelihood of voter turnout, like longer hours at the poll booths, and engage others in the community in civic discussions to promote more voter participation. Studies show that individuals who are reached out to through canvassing are more likely to become civically engaged. This is especially true for young people, according to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement.

In conclusion, Tennessee and Hamilton County's history of low voter turnout can no longer be tolerated. In order to create positive change in our communities, voter turnout must be increased through outreach and individual participation. This means you too.