



**Make it Count:  
The PFLAG National "Get Out the Vote"  
Pocket Guide**

***2016-2017 Edition***

## From the Executive Director...

Dear PFLAG members and supporters:

Thank you for downloading the 2016-2017 edition of the PFLAG National Get Out The Vote Pocket Guide, a short, resource-rich publication.

By exercising your right to vote, you will ensure that PFLAG's unique family and ally voice is heard at the polls.

In this guide, you will find information to help you more effectively advocate at election time for your LGBTQ loved ones. But by no means do you need to only use the ideas in this pocket guide; your understanding of what works best where you live will make a huge difference, whether it's shuttling seniors to the polling places or partnering with local groups on get out the vote (GOTV) initiatives.

No matter what action you take, remember that **PFLAG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization; therefore, all election activities must remain non-partisan.** Please take a careful look at our 501(c)(3) dos and don'ts to ensure your activities are in compliance with the law, as failure to comply will jeopardize our tax-exempt status.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact our staff to ask questions or brainstorm ideas. All of us at PFLAG National truly value your leadership and your contributions to this important work, and we look forward to seeing the results this November!

Thank you for continuing to move equality forward.

Yours in solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JHuckaby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

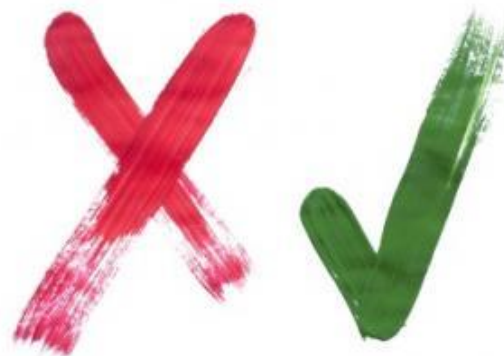
Jody M. Huckaby  
Executive Director, PFLAG National

## Chapter Engagement

Election cycles provide opportunities to bring up important LGBTQ issues with our loved ones, communities and elected officials. Last year the Supreme Court officially made marriage equality the law of the land, and while this was a landmark event, marriage is only one of many important legal issues relevant to PFLAG's mission and to the lived experiences of LGBTQ individuals nationwide. At the state level, there are still cases of opposition to the marriage equality ruling, and a majority of states do not have comprehensive anti-discrimination or anti-hate crime protections for LGBTQ people. These are only a few current and developing issues, the future of which are significantly impacted by the outcomes of state, local and federal elections - especially in a presidential election year!

### 501(c)(3): Non-Profit Election Year **Dos** and **Don'ts**

As a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, there are many rules that PFLAGers and chapters much follow during an election. PFLAG chapters may engage in lobbying activities that influence the outcome of legislation but are not permitted to engage in political/electoral activities that influence the outcome of an election for a candidate or political party.



Please review the following list of Dos and Don'ts that will help you navigate this year's election season. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to [contact your field manager](#) who can help ensure that you're following all regulations.

**\*\*These "Dos and Don'ts" only apply when you're advocating in an official PFLAG capacity, whether at PFLAG chapter events, meetings etc. You may work for candidates or political parties on your own time, just be sure that it's not connected to PFLAG in an official capacity.\*\***

## DO:

- ★ Attend candidate forums and town hall meetings!
  - You can organize such public forums as long as ALL candidates are invited, and the discourse is even handed.
- ★ Ask both candidates about LGBTQ issues and gear the debate towards them.
  - *REMEMBER!* We cannot state our position in favor or opposition of a candidate or party, nor should we comment on the candidate's responses.
- ★ Distribute copies of candidate speeches or other remarks in regular newspapers.
  - Don't forget that all candidates must be given equal opportunity to appear and for coverage, and that your personal opinion must not be shared.
- ★ Conduct nonpartisan voter registration drives!
  - *REMEMBER!* Don't promote a particular candidate or party while registering voters.
  - Be sure members of your local communities know when and where to vote, and what restrictions may apply during the voting process. Share info about early voting as necessary.
  - For help, click [here](#) to see state-by-state registration information.
- ★ Educate the public about issues relating to the election!
  - Just make sure there is no mention of a particular candidate, political party, or their respective stances on the issue being discussed.
- ★ When Election Day nears, make follow-up calls or send reminders to voters.
- ★ Make sure voters have a way to get to the polls!
  - Verifying voters have a plan and means of transportation on Election Day can help avoid last-minute difficulties getting to polling places.
  - Offering assistance--or even a ride--to voters without a reliable means of transportation is a great way to assure that all people have the opportunity to vote.



## DON'T:

- ★ Endorse, or oppose, in any way, any political party or candidate running for local, state, or federal office, including PFLAG members running for office while representing PFLAG.
  - This does not prohibit members from participating in these activities as long as they are speaking or acting as private citizens and NOT on behalf of PFLAG.
- ★ Wear political propaganda to PFLAG meetings or when otherwise representing PFLAG.
  - Examples include clothing with a candidate's name, slogan, or anything that can be directly linked to a political party. You MAY wear clothing that supports specific issues, however.
- ★ Distribute candidate statements or make public comments about them, either at meetings or electronically via PFLAG email accounts or PFLAG social media.
- ★ Issue candidate questionnaires, because PFLAG is an organization with a relatively narrow focus.
- ★ Invite a candidate, or their staff, to a PFLAG meeting to recruit volunteers or give out membership lists.



## Community Education

Help us get the world out! Share PFLAG's message with our communities to ensure that members and supporters get to the polls!

**Tell your story!** Each and every one of us has a unique story as to why we're in this fight, and, overwhelmingly, it is PFLAGers sharing those stories that changes hearts and minds! Whether you're LGBTQ, a parent, family member, friend, or ally, putting things on a personal level helps people relate: Tell people why you care and why you think they should care too.



In addition to your local community, consider sharing your story by calling or writing your elected or soon-to-be elected officials to make sure they are aware of PFLAG's issues and the importance of those issues to you and others under their governance. Let your legislators know how their stances on these issues matter. To learn more about PFLAG's legislative priorities, and for tips and tools on engaging in personal visits with [your legislators](#), visit [One Voice Can Change The World](#), the PFLAG guide to policy and advocacy.



**Keep talking!** Get the PFLAG message out there by using social media and contacting your local newspaper. Post about your LGBTQ equality views, an upcoming ballot measure, or a recent news item to keep PFLAG in the minds of the community. The more we get out into the community, the more individuals we can get to support PFLAG at the polls and ensure they remember to vote.

**Focus on the issues!** Help others understand what they're voting on, and how the decisions they make will affect the community. Educating people about their Election Day decisions is key!

**Join community coalitions!** Tapping into existing community networks and coalitions of like-minded individuals is a great way to find more people to support PFLAG at the polls. Urging people to vote, no matter whom they support, is another way to work with coalitions, be they affirming faith communities, civically engaged groups, or others.

# Voter Engagement

## Voter Registration Information

Voter registration is an important element of achieving the PFLAG mission. It is crucial that you be registered to vote by the deadline for your home state.



On June 25, 2013, The Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) ruled on [The Voting Rights Act \(VRA\) of 1965](#), eliminating Section 4 and granting states permission to enact sweeping changes to voter registration rules without federal consent. Despite this ruling, Voter Registration drives are still under way in some states that permit same-day registration and voting.

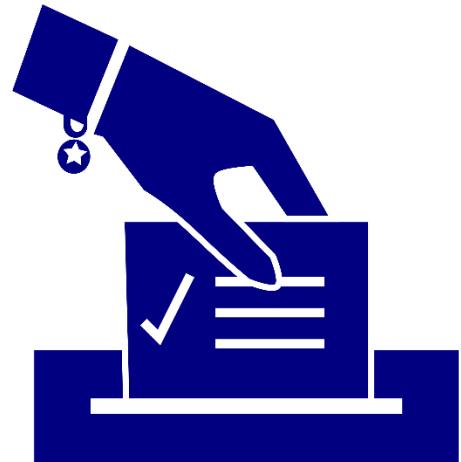
2016 sees the first U.S. presidential election without Section 4, which used to keep states from creating voting laws with discriminatory impact. This means that now some voting and registration procedures may look different from state to state, and some voters will find the overall process more difficult than others - even within the same state. One's income, race, physical ability, or social status, among other factors, can now make registering to vote harder in certain places. Since 2013, a few federal bills have tried to prevent voter discrimination, but without much success. However, there has been some recent progress at the state level in the fight against voter suppression, including a court victory in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals on July 20th, 2016, which ruled a strict voter ID law in Texas unlawfully discriminatory.

Click [here](#) to identify your state's voter registration deadlines, find helpful forms and a link to register. You may also click [here](#) to access the mail-in federal voter registration form, which includes instructions on where to mail it in each state to be registered in that state, or [here](#) to see if your state provides online registration.

## Where do I vote, when can I vote, and what's on the ballot?

It's not only important to remind people to vote, but also to assist them in finding their own state guidelines for registration and voting, including how to vote early, how to find the correct polling place, and what state-mandated documentation they may need to bring with them.

[Rock the Vote](#) offers all of this information and more by phone [202-719-9910] and email [[info@rockthevote.org](mailto:info@rockthevote.org)]. They also offer text alerts and reminders which will be sent to make sure that you don't miss out on any election reminders! Sign up for that easy service [here](#)!



For people who are transgender or gender expansive, The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) has prepared their handy [Voting While Trans tip sheet](#), designed to be carried to a polling place, as well as a detailed document on [Preparing for Voter ID Laws](#), another helpful guide for transgender voters.



## Now...Go Get Out the Vote!

If you have any questions about this guide, don't hesitate to contact the PFLAG National Staff; we are always here to support you in your efforts to move equality forward for ourselves and our LGBTQ loved ones. You can find the complete staff listing at [pflag.org/about/our-people](https://pflag.org/about/our-people).

PFLAG's values are America's values, and that includes exercising your own right to vote and encouraging people you know to register and do the same.



***Make it Count!***