

features

Preparing to vote: Voice of a new generation

AVAERIE FITZGERALD
Managing Editor

American eyes and ears were turned to the television as both presidential candidates, President Donald Trump and democratic candidate and former Vice President Joe Biden, took the stage for a debate on Sept. 29.

Throughout the two-hour long back and forth duel, there was an initial feeling of anxiety for many American citizens, a feeling that many replaced with fear after turning off the screen.

The fear of being ill-informed can consume voters — the fear of having the wrong candidate elected can be even more intense.

The national election is increasingly being put in the spotlight, often dominating the news, social media and daily conversations.

Ashland University’s student body already is dealing with new stressors, like the new health and safety protocols put in place to protect against the coronavirus, said Justin Politzer, president of AU’s Student Senate and political sci-



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Young voters play a key role in the 2020 Presidential Election.

viduals can request their ballot through mail and send it back by the deadline in order to have their vote count. In Ohio, the ballots were automatically sent to every registered voter due to covid.

Any college student that wants to vote and does not have an Ohio home address may have different absentee-ballot requirements, which can be found at usvotefoundation.org.

tween two perfect candidates. That’s not how politics is,” Sikkenga said. “It’s choosing the person that you think is best based on their character, principles and policies — not about who is perfect.”

Oftentimes, new voters get stuck on finding a candidate that fits certain expectations. This causes stress and many times leads to a lack of desire to vote.

“You can’t let perfect be the

she knows is best for the country.

“I think voters, especially young voters, are reluctant to vote because some people are nervous about going against their parents,” Estridge said. “When people are raised a certain way, I’ve noticed that they become timid when it comes to speaking out about their own beliefs, especially when those beliefs are opposite of their parents.”

audience.

Local politics

“Please, please vote,” Politzer said. “Register if you haven’t and you’ll be able to vote in your local elections next year, even if the registration has passed.”

Local politics are just as vital as the presidential elections and often the outcomes of the local elections affect the voter directly.

Sikkenga said it is important not to neglect townships, a line that comes directly from Alexis De Tocqueville’s “Democracy in America.”

“Who’s running for school board really matters, who’s running for city council really matters, who’s running for mayor really matters, who’s running for county commissioner really matters,” Sikkenga said. “Don’t neglect your local, county and state elections. We’re citizens of America, but we live in our local communities, where we go through our daily lives. It’s important you’re engaged in your local elections.”

Even when unsure of who to vote for in the presidential election on Nov. 3, local politics is still something worth voting for because it is something that involves the voter directly.

“Even if you don’t like Joe Biden and Donald Trump, you can still vote,” Sikkenga said. “There are other things to vote on and to vote for.”



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The United States President will be announced Nov. 4

ence major.

“I don’t think it’s hit our campus yet that we’re in the middle of an election year because we’re also in the middle of a global pandemic,” Politzer said.

One push in this national election has been toward reaching a younger audience, more specifically, college-age voters.

Many college students are experiencing their first chance to vote in a presidential election.

“If we truly want to see a government that reflects the rule of the people, in particular our generation, it’s our responsibility to show up and vote for a candidate that we think does that,” Politzer said.

The push to vote has been intense and persistent with hundreds of advertisements placed on social media and popular websites asking the question, “Are you registered?”

Many of the advertisements boast that voting is made easy now, and lead users straight to the official voter registration website.

Registration ended in Ohio on Oct. 5, but many other states like Arizona, California, Colorado and Connecticut have later deadlines which are listed on Vote.org.

When it comes to actually casting a vote, there are a few options.

How to vote

Every state offers an absentee-ballot option, where indi-

There may also be a state requirement to bring unused or unsubmitted absentee-ballots to the polling location.

If an absentee-ballot is turned in late, it will be marked invalid and not counted.

There is also the option to vote in-person early, which started on Oct. 6 in Ohio. Times and days for early voting differ based on state as well, however, all it takes is going to the local Board of Elections office (based on the voter’s home county).

The early voting schedule in Ohio for the coming week of Oct. 19 through 23 is: Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For Oct. 26 through 30, available times are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Nov. 3 marks Election Day, and it is important to know where the nearby polling location is. The polling information is mailed to the voter’s home address and can also be found at voterlookup.ohiosos.gov/voterlookup.

While the steps to cast a vote may be simple, the decision can be the most difficult aspect, especially to those out of tune with American politics.

How to choose a candidate

Executive Director of the Ashbrook Center, Dr. Jeffrey Sikkenga, broke down the meaning of voting and explained the decision-making process.

“There’s almost never in American history a choice be-

enemy of good,” Sikkenga said.

Another hesitancy is found in expectations placed on young voters from an older generation.

Kennedy Estridge, a senior religion, business management and entrepreneurship triple major, is voting for the first time on Nov. 3 and said that she feels confident in voting and making a decision that

Young voters have the unique position of bringing new thoughts and ideas to the world of politics.

Where candidates were once focused on talking about marriage equality, income tax, and property rights, they now address issues like climate change, fracking and how to handle covid.

A lot of this change is brought on to appeal to a younger



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The new “I voted” sticker design was released in May.