POLITICS FOR DUMMIES CHEAT SHEET

If the thought of politics makes you cringe, don't worry, you can get involved as little or as much as you like in politics. If you want to voice your concerns, use these handy resources to contact your representative, and when you do call, be prepared to offer some information to them.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN POLITICS

- [ ] Register to vote.
- [ ] Vote in every election.
- [ ] Join a political party.
- [ ] Vote in primaries.
- [ ] Read and listen to the information about the candidates — cast an informed vote.
- [ ] Ask questions of candidates and elected officials.
- [ ] Don't hesitate to tell officials when they've done something you don't like.
- [ ] Thank officials when they do something you do like.
- [ ] Use your phone, the mail, your fax, your computer e-mail — let your representatives hear from you often.
- [ ] Circulate petitions and join with others who think as you do.
- [ ] Become a delegate to a national convention

HOW TO CONTACT ELECTED OFFICIALS

- [ ] County board of elections or voter registration
- [ ] State election board

- [ ] Local office of the League of Women Voters
- [ ] Public library
- [ ] State or county headquarters of the Republican or Democratic party Ask the person to give you the following information (make sure you have your address book with you):
- [ ] Your congressional district, congressperson, and the office phone number
- [ ] Your legislative district, state legislator, and the main number at the statehouse
- [ ] Your state senate district, state senator, and a phone number at the statehouse

INFORMATION TO HAVE WHEN CALLING ELECTED OFFICIALS

- [ ] Be prepared to give your name and address.
- [ ] Tell the person precisely why you are calling.
- [ ] If you are calling about a particular piece of legislation, give the number of the bill, if possible.
- [ ] Tell the individual whether you are for or against the legislation and why.
- [ ] Be patient; other voters may be calling to express their views, too.

CANDIDATE SELECTION CHECKLIST

- [ ] Because you've only one vote to cast, your candidate choice is crucial. How do you know what to look for in a political candidate? Do a little research to help you get to know something about each candidate and use these useful tips:

Things to Watch Out For

- [ ] Does the candidate appear intelligent, or is he just filling out the suit?
- [ ] Is the candidate qualified for the job?
- [ ] Does she have the education and experience to handle the job?
- [ ] Do you agree with the programs and ideas the candidate has proposed?
- [ ] Are you comfortable with the groups and the individuals who support the candidate?
- [ ] Can you trust the candidate?
- [ ] Does he pass the elevator test? (If an elevator door opened in front of you and getting on meant you would ride alone with the candidate, would you get on?)
- [ ] Is the candidate a leader?
- [ ] Does she have ideas of her own?

Things to Watch Out For

- [ ] Candidates who make appeals to your emotions — not to your intelligence

- [ ] Candidates who identify problems — but don't propose realistic solutions
- [ ] Candidates who offer simple, no-sacrifice solutions to complex problems
- [ ] Candidates who talk exclusively about hot-button issues such as race, immigration, the flag, English as the official language, and class warfare, but not about such issues as taxes, health care, and the budget
- [ ] Candidates with shady dealings in their backgrounds
- [ ] Candidates who tell you what they think you want to hear
- [ ] Candidates who use negative campaign tactics to give you a false impression of the competition

How to Supporting Your Candidate

- [ ] Volunteer your time — contact voters, organize events, distribute literature.
- [ ] Contribute money or help the candidate raise money.
- [ ] Remember to vote for your candidate on election day.

Make and Share Free Checklists
checkli.com