

FAIR ELECTIONS LEGAL NETWORK

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING STUDENT VOTER REGISTRATION & VOTING IN VIRGINIA

Q: I am a student attending college in Virginia - can I register to vote in my college community?

A: Yes. You may register to vote so you can vote in the precinct where you live in your college community if you 1) are a U.S. Citizen, 2) are at least 18 years of age and 3) declare your college community as your legal residence. Your legal residence for voting is the place where you have an express intent to remain and a fixed place of residence such as a dorm room or apartment. However, based upon proposed regulations, plans to leave the area, due to future events such as graduation or military transfer, do not prevent you from having an “intent to remain” for purposes of registering to vote. In addition, you must provide a physical address for your dormitory when filling out a Voter Registration Application Form. This would typically include the name of the dormitory, a street address if available, and/or a description of the dormitory’s location to adjacent streets. You should contact your college’s Dean of Students if you are unaware of your dormitory’s physical address.

Q: I’ve heard that if I register to vote in my college community I’ll have to change my driver’s license and motor vehicle registration? Is this true?

A: With very few exceptions, registering to vote in Virginia will have no impact on whether you will have to change your driver’s license and motor vehicle registration. ***Even if you are a full time student in Virginia, you may have to make those changes regardless of whether you register to vote in Virginia.*** If you have questions about your obligations to update your driver’s license and motor vehicle registration while attending school in Virginia, you may contact the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

Q: I’ve heard that if I have ever registered to vote in another state, I cannot register to vote in Virginia. Is this true?

A: No. You can decide to change your legal residence and voter registration from another state to Virginia at any time regardless of where you lived or registered to vote in the past, as long as you meet the citizenship, age and residency requirements outlined in the first question above.

Q: If I register to vote in my college community, will my parents still be able to claim me as a dependent for tax purposes?

A: Yes. A student’s decision to register to vote in a jurisdiction other than where they lived with their parents before they left to attend college is irrelevant to whether your parents can claim you as a dependent for tax purposes. Dependency is addressed by the federal Internal Revenue Code, and has to do with your income, not your voter registration or legal residence.

Q: If I register to vote in my college community, will I lose my financial aid?

A: Not for the *vast majority of students* receiving financial aid. Most students attending school in Virginia receive financial aid from the federal government and/or the Commonwealth of Virginia.

- **Federal financial aid** is **not** linked to state residency or voter registration.
- If you receive aid from the **Commonwealth of Virginia**, you would not lose it by registering to vote anywhere in Virginia because grants of state aid apply state-wide.
- If you receive aid from **another state or from a local town/city government other than your college community** that does link receipt to your continued residence in that state or town/city, your financial might be affected, but very few states or local governments do so, and you can easily check with your financial aid provider.

Q: If I register to vote in my college community, will I be dropped from my parents’ health or auto insurance?

A: The terms of insurance coverage are spelled out in your parents’ insurance policies. Most policies allow parents to extend health and vehicle coverage to dependant children on the basis of age. It would be highly unusual for insurance coverage to be linked in any way to voter registration or the residence of a dependent.

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If you have additional questions about student registration and voting in Virginia please contact the **Fair Elections Legal Network** at 202.331.0114 or jprow@fairelectionsnetwork.com. For more information about student voting in Virginia, please see the Virginia Voter Registration and Voter ID Guide on FELN’s resource page, found at www.fairelectionsnetwork.com.