



WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD ENGAGE IN ELECTIONS

A TRAINING HANDBOOK

2024

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Overview

The electoral process in America has long been regarded as the gold standard for a high-functioning representative democracy within a constitutional republic. America is known and respected around the world as a model of a government run by the people, for the people — and one in which every citizen’s voice has a right to be heard.



In human history, America stands alone and unique in its trajectory to world superpower status, not through tyranny or despotism, but through a systematic form of government that both respects — and reflects — its citizens.

At the heart of this “last great experiment for promoting human happiness,” as George Washington called America, is the electoral process.

In America, citizens can participate in the civic process to elect officials who are empowered to make decisions that affect the laws and policies of the land. This invitation is both a duty and a privilege! The Founders integrated a system of checks and balances and conveyed power to “We the People” to ensure safeguards against the tyranny they experienced under the British crown.

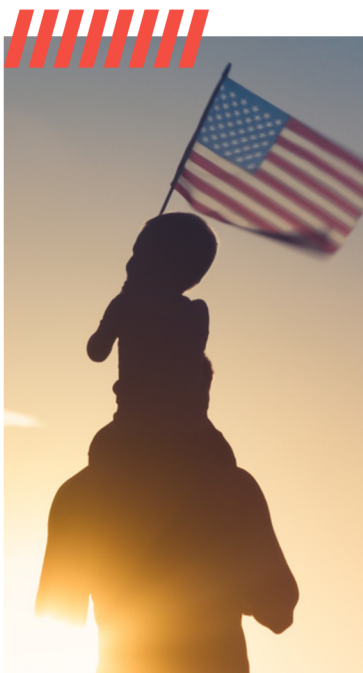
When apathetic citizens forfeit their civic engagement role, the void will be filled by those bent on undermining the freedoms ensured under our constitutional republic. As those who espouse the same Judeo-Christian values as many of our Founders, we cannot let this happen on our watch.

The Time to Engage is Now!

Every election feels like the most important in the history of the United States, and this one is no exception. Globalism is at our doorstep, inflation is on the rise, and our border is compromised. While abortion is no longer regarded as a constitutional “right,” the battle over preborn life rages on in the states.

Additionally, parental rights are under attack while an unyielding LGBTQ agenda aimed at indoctrinating our kids is on the rise. And let us never forget what COVID taught us: in the name of public health, our religious and medical freedoms were attacked, and America was divided by vaccination status.

While roughly 25 million American Christians (about one in three) do not vote, history shows that positive change can occur when just a few people care. **We can change the tide of history** when we engage in the electoral process, exercise our civic duty, and mobilize apathetic voters to do the same.



You are part of the solution to ensure that freedom and American ideals endure for the next generation. This Training and Handbook are meant to be tools to aid your success and encourage you to participate in the process like never before. Righteous leaders and policies will only prevail when Christians are engaged in the process and influencing government and culture. Now, more than ever, America needs Christians who will stand up and protect the precious freedoms upon which this republic was built.

America needs you.

Dismantling the Fallacy Around Separation of Church and State

Contrary to widely held belief, the phrase "separation of church and state" is found nowhere in America's founding documents. During the time President Thomas Jefferson had been attending a national church service regularly held in the U.S. Capitol, he wrote a letter to assure the Danbury Baptists that the American government would not interfere with religion, thus coining the often-misinterpreted phrase "separation of church and state." What Jefferson meant to communicate was not for God to be expunged from government, but rather, the opposite: that government would not intrude or trample on one's sincerely held beliefs.

While the Founders rejected the idea of a state-endorsed church, such as they had known in England, they never intended for God to be erased from government. America's founding is inextricable from an acknowledgment of the existence of God and that He governs in the affairs of men.



American Government Is Built on the Cornerstone of Judeo-Christian Values

America is built on a foundation of Judeo-Christian values that espouse the truths that every human has innate worth and that all are created equal. While our nation is imperfect, our Founders were concerned with establishing the framework for a government that honored both righteous and natural law and the Creator by whom these laws were given. Both our Founders and founding documents affirm these principles. Here are some examples:

- The Declaration of Independence reinforces that all men and women have inalienable, fundamental rights to “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness” that are endowed by our Creator.
- The words “We the People” in the Constitution established that citizens have power to influence government, and the Founders transferred power to the citizenry to ensure their rights were secure. Citizens, which includes Christians, are given a voice to weigh in on who leads us, to hold positions in government, to hold government accountable, and to ensure that government remains accountable.
- While not every U.S. citizen adheres to the Christian faith, the laws, policies, and character of the nation reflect biblical principles. Founder and second U.S. President John Adams said, “Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”
- Founder and first U.S. President George Washington said religion and morality are the “essential pillars of civil society.” In his Farewell Address, Washington said, “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.” Washington knew that a constitutional republic could not endure long without morality, and morality cannot endure without a foundation in religion.

- After the drafting of the Constitution, Benjamin Franklin said it had been “influenced, guided, and governed by that omnipotent, omnipresent, and beneficent Ruler, in Whom all inferior spirits live, and move, and have their being.”
- At the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787, Franklin also said, “God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? ... Without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel.”

H.Res. 397 outlines America's rich spiritual heritage that continues from our founding and throughout our nation's history. Judeo-Christian principles, self-government, and the balance of powers were a few of the safeguards intended to protect against the inherent weaknesses of fallen mankind.

America is great because of our rich, Judeo-Christian founding, which was meant to guide the conscience of America through our laws and policies. Although not perfect, most of the Founders identified as Christians and had, at least, reverence for the Creator.

Proverbs says, “Righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34) and “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan” (Prov. 29:2). Psalm 33:12 reiterates, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.”

As a nation whose motto is “In God We Trust,” it is imperative that we uphold the righteous laws and foundational values that make our nation great.

How Pastors Can Get Engaged in the Political Process and Encourage Members to Do the Same

If the church remains silent and passive, evil ideologies will continue to be codified into law at the local, state, and national levels. Pastors should be unafraid to be civically engaged and informed of their protections under the law and encourage their congregations to do the same.

Did you know that pastors have the freedom to address biblical and moral issues, educate congregants about candidates, and encourage people to vote, no matter the ongoing threats to remove a church's 501(c)(3) status? Silencing people of faith in the public square has always been the goal of those who realize the influence that pastors have on their communities.

Here are some practical ways pastors can encourage their church members to get involved and informed in the political process:

- Churches can distribute voter registration forms during the service to allow congregants to register to vote (without specifying which party).
- Along with preaching biblical truth, churches may host voter registration drives to ensure congregants are registered to vote or host a forum where candidates can address the congregation and answer questions from a moderator.
- Churches can also distribute objective voter guides that address the candidates' views on a broad range of issues.

- Candidates visiting the church may be introduced, and political candidates may even preach in the pulpit so long as the pulpit is not used as a political forum to urge the members to vote in favor of the candidate.
- Pastors can lead in prayer regarding current events and cultural issues, and of course, preach on biblical, moral, and social issues such as homosexuality and abortion.
- Pastors can urge the congregation to become involved in the political process, vote, and even run for office.
- Pastors can *personally* endorse or oppose political candidates, *personally* work for political candidates, and *personally* contribute to them.
- Also, a pastor's name may appear in a published ad or letter signifying the pastor's endorsement of the candidate, and the pastor's title and affiliation with the church can also be listed with the notation, "Title and affiliation for identification purposes."



Not an Excuse: Unpacking 501(c)(3) Guidelines

Christians are called to be the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world” (Matt. 5:13-16). We can’t live up to this call if we isolate ourselves from the world and disengage from the issues plaguing our culture.

Many pastors fear losing tax-exempt status. They misunderstand Internal Revenue Service 501(c)(3) guidelines and use them as a cop-out for not being involved in the issues of our time. So many times, church leaders don’t understand the church’s relationship to lobbying regarding 501(c)(3) guidelines and maintaining tax-exempt status.



In 1934, the Internal Revenue Code was first amended to restrict the amount of lobbying by an organization. Churches and nonprofit organizations were allowed to freely engage politically until 1954 when then-Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson amended the Internal Revenue Code through the Johnson Amendment. Since Johnson was opposed by a nonprofit organization when he ran for the U.S. Senate, he amended the Internal Revenue Code after being elected to prohibit nonprofit organizations, including churches, from endorsing or opposing political candidates.

Despite this, it's a myth that pastors cannot engage in the political sphere. This amendment does not prohibit churches from civic or political engagement.

From 1954 to the present, no church has ever lost its tax-exempt letter ruling for endorsing or opposing political candidates. In one instance, the Church at Pierce Creek in New York took out full-page ads in *USA Today* and *The Washington Times* opposing Gov. Bill Clinton for president in 1992, but the issue wasn't from the church's opposition to Clinton. Instead, it was from the church soliciting tax-exempt donations to defray the cost of the advertisements.

To put into perspective what a church is allowed to do in terms of political engagement, one IRS case ruled that 5% of an organization's overall activity devoted to lobbying was permissible, and another case held that 15% was not.

Based on this, it is safe to assume the permissible amount of lobbying for a church is somewhere between 5% and 15% of overall church activity. So, in a church that does the bare minimum and is only active up to 4½ hours per week (including volunteering, preparation, and services), this church could spend 13½ minutes each week lobbying under the 5% rule. Click [HERE](#) for the full breakdown of this formula.

Pastors and ministry leaders must speak to the issues of abortion and human sexuality without compromising the gospel. These are not merely political topics — they're biblical. Pastors must unapologetically preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and repentance from sin, speaking truth in love. The American church has the liberty and responsibility to do so.

Pastors need not be afraid of preaching biblical truth and encouraging civic engagement. Click [HERE](#) for more resources on how churches can join the fight and become more civically engaged.

Make Sure Your Vote Counts

An election for president of the United States happens every four years on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. The next presidential election will be on November 5, 2024. It's important to engage in every election and at every level — federal, state, and local.

Not only are elections important on the national level, but state and local elections often have a greater effect on our daily lives and should not be discounted. On ballots nationwide this November are all 436 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, 34 seats in the U.S. Senate, 11 governorships, countless state and local offices, and many citizen-initiated ballot measures on abortion and other critical issues.

State and local government elections should not be overshadowed by a presidential election because these offices have integral roles in our lives — they enforce laws, influence how schools are run, enact policies in our communities, and affect the local economy. These positions — from your state representative and governor to your city council member and school board member — play a significant role in governance and have a significant impact on daily life.



Exercising your right to vote to determine both national governance and state and local governance is vital. Reach out to your Election Commission to find out what is on your ballot in 2024. On top of that, get involved and educate yourself as to which individuals align with your values and will enact conservative policies to make your community, state, and country a better place. To make sure you are registered to vote, call or visit your secretary of state's office or local Board of Elections.

Not everyone who is registered makes it to the polls, so think through ahead of time any possible obstacles to being able to vote. Find your polling place here, and remind your friends and family to vote. Virtual ballot tracking is available in most states (see list on next page). If ballot tracking technology isn't available in your state, contact your local election office if you have questions or concerns about your ballot.



Track Your Ballot

(Click state name to link to ballot)

<u>Alabama</u>	<u>Alaska</u>	<u>Arizona</u>	<u>Arkansas</u>	<u>California</u>
<u>Colorado</u>	Connecticut N/A	<u>Delaware</u>	<u>District of Columbia</u>	<u>Florida</u>
<u>Georgia</u>	<u>Hawaii</u>	<u>Idaho</u>	Illinois N/A	<u>Indiana</u>
<u>Iowa</u>	<u>Kansas</u>	<u>Kentucky</u>	<u>Louisiana</u>	<u>Maine</u>
<u>Maryland</u>	<u>Massachusetts</u>	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>Minnesota</u>	Mississippi N/A
Missouri N/A	<u>Montana</u>	<u>Nebraska</u>	<u>Nevada</u>	<u>New Hampshire</u>
<u>New Jersey</u>	<u>New Mexico</u>	<u>New York</u>	<u>North Carolina</u>	<u>North Dakota</u>
<u>Ohio</u>	<u>Oklahoma</u>	<u>Oregon</u>	<u>Pennsylvania</u>	<u>Rhode Island</u>
<u>South Carolina</u>	<u>South Dakota</u>	<u>Tennessee</u>	Texas N/A	<u>Utah</u>
<u>Vermont</u>	<u>Virginia</u>	<u>Washington</u>	<u>West Virginia</u>	<u>Wisconsin</u>
<u>Wyoming</u>				

Myth vs. Fact: Why Your Vote Matters

**“Silence in the face of evil is itself evil:
God will not hold us guiltless.
Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.”
— Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

When good people do nothing, bad policies and agendas prevail. Below are some of the myths that lead people to stay home on Election Day followed by the facts to debunk them.

Myth: “My vote doesn’t really make a difference.”

Fact: Polling shows that if more people engaged through voting and advocacy, government officials would make the policy issues of constituents a higher priority. Also, numerous critical races have been won by only one vote or just a few votes. So yes, your single vote absolutely matters.

Myth: “The Electoral College decides the presidency, so my vote doesn’t matter.”

Fact: The Electoral College is an election system the Founders designed to allow each state to have proportionate representation and to prevent direct democracy or mob rule. The Electoral College avoids population-based representation and represents the will of the people without tyranny of the majority, according to the Heritage Foundation.

With the Electoral College, the candidate who wins the popular vote might not win the presidency, as we saw in the 2016 election with Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. Each state has a certain number of electoral votes, and the candidate who receives 270 electoral votes (the majority of 538 total electoral votes) wins the presidency. It essentially divides a national election into 51 smaller elections within the states.

All states have equal representation in the U.S. Senate, and representation proportionate to population size in the U.S. House of Representatives. This "federal bargain" to ensure a balance in Congress is also reflected in the Electoral College. Each state, no matter its population size, receives two electoral votes to represent its two representatives in the Senate. The remaining number of electoral votes is based on the state's population or House representation.

In 48 states and the District of Columbia, all electors go to the presidential candidate who wins the popular vote. Maine and Nebraska, however, award two electoral votes to the candidate who wins the popular vote in the state and the remaining electoral votes to the candidate who wins each congressional district.

America is a constitutional republic, not a true democracy. The Founders recognized the dangers of "mob rule" in a true democracy and wanted both a government and electoral process that represents all citizens proportionately, not just controlling factions, which is why presidential elections are not conducted by national popular vote but by the Electoral College. If elections were based on a national popular vote, densely populated urban areas would be the sole decider of elections, overshadowing the different interests and values of rural states and communities.

So, while the Electoral College ultimately determines the presidency, *your individual vote in your state matters* and is pivotal in determining the next president – a president more representative of all citizens and not just congregated majorities.

Myth: “As a Christian, I should refrain from voting this time because candidates on both sides have moral problems and/or don’t align with me on every issue.”

Fact: No candidate will ever be completely in line with our values, and sometimes we feel forced to choose between the lesser of two evils. Voting for the candidate most aligned with your values is the most effective, responsible thing to do. Consider the policy record of each candidate and determine which candidate will best protect the right to life, religious liberty, national security, economic prosperity, the Constitution, and the conservative values that make America great. In some cases, the alternative candidate would allow for abortion up to birth, America-last policies, forced LGBTQ policies, global weakness on the world stage, and abandonment of border security and the rule of law. Outside of policy, the caliber of judicial picks that would be made by each gubernatorial or presidential candidate is also important to consider. A candidate with no regard for the Constitution or rule of law will appoint like-minded judges or justices who will likely serve for decades.

Therefore, not voting can be a greater violation of conscience that leads to dire consequences for America, such as when opposing candidates are elected and subsequently support and enact evil policies.

To make this point, some have used the example of Abraham Lincoln’s evolution on slavery. Although Lincoln was not the most pro-abolition candidate in the Republican primary, his views evolved, and his loss would have led to the continuation of slavery if his Democrat opponent had won the presidency.

Myth: “2 Timothy 2:4 says we should stay out of civilian affairs, and Jesus didn’t discuss voting so I’m going to stay out of politics.”

Fact: When reviewing 2 Timothy 2:4, the original Greek translates “civilian affairs” as “life affairs” or “affairs of life.” A further breakdown of “affairs” in Strong’s Concordance means business, occupation, or transaction. If we took this literally, it would mean Christians shouldn’t hold a job or conduct any of the business that comes with everyday life.

In contrast to isolating the 2 Timothy 2:4 verse, there are several examples in both the Old and New Testaments that speak about being involved in governmental affairs. For example, the prophets repeatedly warned kings of the grave consequences that would befall their nation if they ruled wickedly. In the New Testament, Jesus respected the role of government and even paid taxes. He said to “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21). In the early church, we see admonitions to recognize and respect the role government plays in a well-functioning society.

Advocating for candidates and policies that honor God and uphold biblical values is part of our Christian stewardship. When we vote people into power who impact the morality of our culture, we love our neighbors in a practical way. As Christian conservatives in America, we have the great responsibility to steward, influence, and advocate for truth and righteousness in the public square.

Election Central

Below are links to organizations that offer robust resources related to the 2024 election. Please download resources, sign up for updates, and get connected at the local, state, and national levels. **Also, pray, vote with your values, and help get out the vote!**

Connect with organizations to get the latest information and voting resources.

- **Pray** with Intercessors for America. Get IFA's election prayer guide [HERE](#).
- **Register to vote**. Get important voter reminders and much more from My Faith Votes.

Get Informed on Policy Issues:

- **Sign up** for Liberty Counsel and Liberty Counsel Action emails on national and global issues.
- **Learn** simple policy solutions and get talking points from the Heritage Foundation.

Get Informed on The Elected Officials' Voter Scorecard:

Find out where your elected leader stands on the issues:

Congress:

- The Heritage Action for America Scorecard is available [HERE](#).
- Family Research Council Action Vote Scorecard is [HERE](#).

Congress and State Lawmakers:

- American Conservative Union scorecards are [HERE](#).

Connect at in-person events:

- LEARN more about Conservative Political Action Committee events.
- Family Research Council Action's Pray Vote Stand Summit.
- Faith and Freedom Coalition's Road to Majority.

Grassroots advocacy:

- Turning Point Action: Connects you to precinct leadership, election integrity strategies, state and local party details, and much more.
- Chase the Vote (TP Faith): "Ballot chasing is our newest approach to contacting voters who have already received mail-in ballots to encourage them to mark their ballots and make a plan to vote. Our initiative will have huge numbers of door knockers to win the ballot game at the mailboxes."
- Become a precinct leader. Turning Point Action gives details on how to connect with the state and local party.
- Connect with your local party about canvassing, door knocking, and getting involved in this important campaign season.



Glossary of Campaign-Related Terms

BALLOT INTEGRITY — Integrity efforts ensure that proper voting rules are fair and that legal procedures are maintained at polling places. To prevent fraudulent voting, election integrity committees are often put together at the state and local levels with volunteers sent to monitor polling places.

BLOCK WALK (Door-to-Door or “D2D”) — Block walking is a form of voter contact where supporters are organized and go door to door in precincts to visit with voters, collect information about their beliefs, and advocate for a candidate or political party. This is considered one of the most effective forms of voter contact when done with informed, enthusiastic volunteers. Some campaigns hire paid walkers to cover more ground, but this should be done only when all efforts to find volunteers are insufficient.

CAMPAIGN MANAGER — Campaign managers are appointed by political candidates to manage their campaigns. This high-level (usually paid) position is responsible for the smooth functioning of the candidate’s campaign. Specific responsibilities include keeping the campaign on track, managing finances, recruiting volunteers, creating and distributing campaign literature and ads, scheduling appearances and events, fundraising, and providing the candidate with pertinent information on issues.

CAMPAIGN PLAN — This is the most important document in a campaign. It details and defines the campaign’s strategy, structure, message, budget, and timeline to keep staff and volunteers on track. It is the road map to victory that focuses the campaign team, keeps them accountable, and demands they stay on the most important tasks.

CITY/COUNTY ELECTION BOARD — A City or County Election Board is a local board established in each area. It is responsible to hire the local registrar and effectively manage every primary and/or general election.

COLLATERAL (LITERATURE or "LIT") — A term used to describe campaign materials (push cards, door hangers, signs, bumper stickers, etc.) that support the candidate.

ELECTION JUDGE — *See Officers of Election.*

GENERAL ELECTION — General elections are held as the final contest between the nominees from each political party. General elections are held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November. Nominees for these positions are chosen in the spring in party conventions or primaries.

GET OUT THE VOTE ("GOTV") — A program devoted to increasing voter turnout during the voting process. The term is used to describe the massive voter mobilization of previously identified supporters during early voting and on Election Day. An effective GOTV program should be the most intense period of the campaign for grassroots activities and should continue right up until the polls close on Election Day. This effort focuses on turning out all identified supporters through mail, phones, block walking, etc.

GRASSROOTS — Commonly used term, especially in Republican politics, to refer to local party leaders, activists, and volunteers. These individuals are the building blocks of the party.

GREETERS (LITERATURE DISTRIBUTORS) — Volunteers who stand outside a polling location on Election Day, greet people coming to vote, and offer them literature about each candidate. These are the last partisan touches before entering the voting area.

MICROTARGETING — A tool for campaigns and organizations that allows them to reach certain voters with tailored messaging using a combination of consumer data, advanced marketing techniques, and traditional political targeting.

OFFICERS OF ELECTION (ELECTION OFFICIALS) — Individuals who conduct the election at each precinct polling place. Officers must be registered voters within the state, but they do not need to be registered within the locality where they serve. In states with party registration, the officers serve under their party affiliation. In states with no registration affiliation, the chairpersons of the two major political parties submit the list of their party's selections as election workers each year.

OVERVOTE — Refers to a ballot where the voter has selected more candidates than are allowed for each race or referendum.

PHONE BANK — An organized phone center where volunteers gather to make calls to potential voters to identify their political beliefs, advocate for a candidate or party, or turn out the vote.

POLL OBSERVERS— Non-partisan volunteers who are monitoring the election process. They cannot object to anything that is happening but can only be present to both learn and report to others what is happening inside the polling location. Their presence is approved before the election by the Electoral Board.

POLL WATCHERS — These are the party representatives who ensure election integrity inside the regular precincts and central absentee precinct (CAP, which is usually at the registrar’s office). They have the right to bring objections to the precinct chief if a ballot is improperly handled. Poll watchers are approved by the unit chairperson and must provide a letter from their chairperson to have access inside the precinct.

POLL WORKERS — This is a confusing term that can be used for a wide variety of roles and is best avoided and replaced with a title specific to the role a person is fulfilling, such as election official, poll watcher, greeter, GOTV volunteer, etc.

PRECINCT (PCT) — The voting precinct is the smallest political subdivision within a city or county.

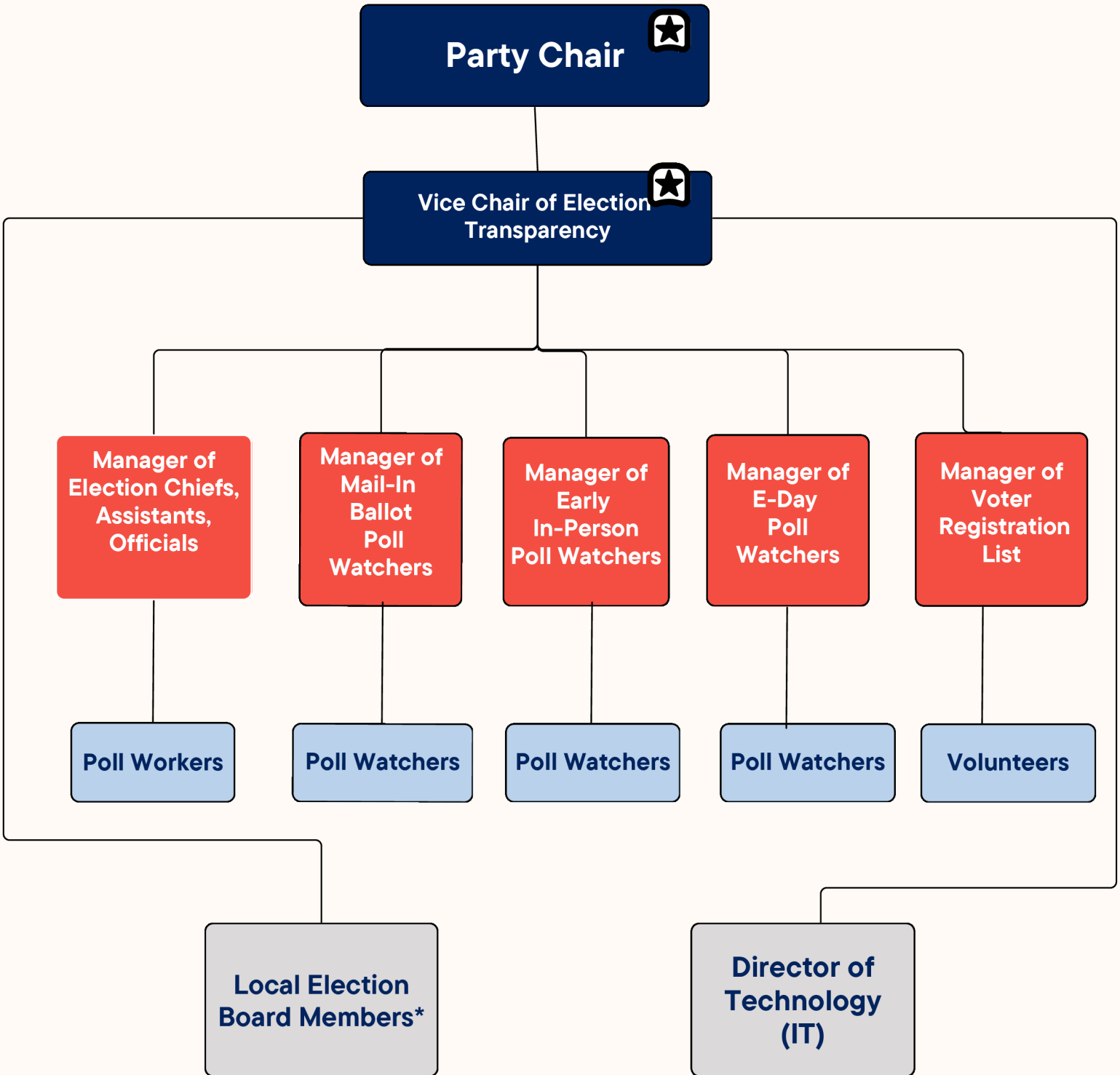
PRIMARY ELECTION — Primary elections are one means of selecting nominees. They are organized, conducted, and funded by the state government.

SWING VOTER — A voter who does not commit to voting for one Party but who is swayed by different candidates and issues. Each party works to have these voters “swing” in their direction during elections.

UNDERVOTE — A ballot that has been cast but which shows no legally valid selection in one or more races or referendums.

UNIT CHAIRPERSON — The chair of a city or county’s Party Committee.

Election Organizational Chart



Connect with us!

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