Once again it is requested that you contact the Board of Elections with any questions or concerns before you register, or vote.

By JUDITH LYNN LEE
Contributing Writer

Well, it is election time again, and it seems both sides are out in full force trying to convince people to vote for their candidate. Many individuals are now plastered with television ads as a reminder of who the best candidate is – and of course their competition, who they say is the worst.

Yes, this sound and fury is meant to get you rowdy, it's meant to make you speak out, and get you fired up to go vote. That's all good. But, what about those who are not phased politically?

So many have seen drastic changes in the economy. Flaws and confusion with attempts at

voting has left a horrible taste in the mouths of others. They beg to question, “Why should I vote?”

It’s sad to hear the words so often, “My vote doesn’t count and it won’t change anything” or “I cannot vote because the polls close before I get off work.” Unfortunately, this is the way a lot of people think and might indeed be why they do not vote.

If this is your case, here are some topics that may help ease your voting dilemmas. Did you know you can vote online? Well, you can. Go to Google and type in “where to vote online” then put in the name of your state. Problem solved, you don’t have to leave your home or take time off from work; you can even register to vote online.

Voting gives you the power to make politicians do the right thing. When more people start to vote, politicians will begin to understand they need not play around in getting the job done. You can find an online record of what they have and have not done.

You can also go online and Google the person’s name. This will give you information about the person and legislation, commitments, assignment, also contact information. Remember, you have the power with voting. The more these politicians see you doing your homework, voicing your opinion and voting; the more they will want to do right by you.

For those who don’t want to be bothered with crowds on voting day, take advantage of early voting. Christopher Smitherman, President of Cincinnati’s National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, (NAACP) posted online about early voting.

“The Ohio Secretary of State’s web site has issued information on uniform early voting hours for the state of Ohio. Oct. 2, 2012 hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for the first three weeks. 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. the last two weeks with no weekends.”

According to Kim Zurz, Deputy Director, Summit County Board of Elections; early voting can also be done at the Summit County Board of Elections with the same hours recorded by the Secretary of State.

Cover yourselves; make sure applications/ballots are properly completed before mailing them in. Improper work may surely cause for delay or even prevent you from voting.

The biggest problem during voting time is citizens who have moved and their addresses do not match the Board of Elections. “Our experience is 10 percent of the votes cast will be provisional votes, not because the citizen is not registered, but because their address does not match the Board of Elections,” claimed Smitherman.

“Statistically, if 50,000 people vote and 5,000 votes are thrown out because addresses do not match, it is our fault and we must take personal responsibility for that failure.”

During the Summit County Board of Elections’ Aug. 20 meeting, several issues were brought before the board that could hinder the ability for several people to vote. Ohio Secretary of State Office worker Tim Monaco and Ballot Layout worker Dave Petty submitted a bulk of Ballots to the board with post mark, signature and other issues.

There were ballots with signature issues where a father and son who accidentally signed one another’s ballots, a ballot where signatures were signed with red ink and some with post mark dates missing. The board had to deal with these issues separately. However, if not corrected in time could prevent these individuals from being able to vote.

Making sure your address is updated will cut down the delay or errors in the voting process. If your address has changed since the last time you’ve voted, the Board of Elections needs to know because your address must match with what they have on file in order for you to vote. You can call the board of elections and request a change of address form, or log on to their web site at www.summitcountyboe.com and update on line.

What do you do when you get to your voting location and find that your voting location has changed? According to Kim Zurz, “each Ohio voter will be receiving an orange card in the mail that states where their precinct is. This card may have changed your previous precinct or polling location; make sure you pay attention to this card when you receive it.”

She also said that if you are not sure of your voting location; call the Board of Elections ahead of time to verify your location status. “All we need is your name and address; we’ll be able to tell you where your precinct or voting location is.”

Zurz said the following documents **will be** valid for voting: Driver’s License or State ID that is current and has a photo. “The address **does not** hav e to match what the Board of Election has on file because only the last four digits of the ID or License number will be recorded.”

A current Military ID is also valid. “We do understand that a Military ID does not have a photo or address listed on it. However, workers will know what to look at for valid identification.”

A current Utility Bill (Water, Electric, Gas, Cable, Internet) must contain a name and address that corresponds with the address on file with the Board of Election.

Current bank statements and government or employee checks are valid. “Personal checks will not count; it must be a government or employment entity check,” said Zurz.”

According to the Director, items that **will not** be valid are as follows: a pass port, social security card, insurance card or registration acknowledgement cards sent out by the Board of Elections.

Zurz mentioned that Bureau of Motor Vehicle registrations are questionable. “I don’t know why, but some election officials will accept them and some won’t…I do not advise anyone to try to use car registrations or titles because they would be taking a chance of being turned away.”

Once again it is requested that you contact the Board of Elections with any questions or concerns before you register, or vote. Your homework could be a life saver for you in the end.

It is you who has the power, but only when you vote. Please remember “We the People of the United States In Order To Form a More Perfect Union”…. Need to Vote!