

## Help Your Student Become a Political Force to be Reckoned With

As students roam their university campus, jotting down reminders of assignments and test dates in their planners and rushing to make it to class on time whether they remembered to go vote is usually the last thing they have on their mind. What Circuit Court Judicial candidate they will be voting for in the primary is usually not at the top of their priority list, even though the candidates they miss out on voting for have a meaningful impact on their student and community life.

Civic engagement is one of the more challenging campaigns to get students to rally behind, yet when they become engaged they serve as a massive political force able to decide critical elections and capture the attention of legislators on the local, state, and federal level. While, it can seem daunting to get more students concerned with politics and voting, there are many ways parents can encourage their students to get out and vote!

On campus, political student organizations and Student Government give students the chance to explore the political world, register to vote, and make their voice heard. Students can join an active political student group that focuses on bringing students of their like political minds together on campus, or can take another route and run for office with their Student Government's Legislative Branch. Here at USF there are eleven registered political student organizations open to new members and Student Government has a Government Affairs Department that registers students to vote and hosts various events throughout the year focused on civic engagement.

Some of those Student Government events and initiatives include –

**USF Day at the Capitol:** On February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015 around 100 students get the chance to drive up to Tallahassee each year to lobby their legislators

**Reducing the Debt – A USF Fiscal Forum:** On September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014 from 6:00-8:00 PM in the Marshall Student Center's Oval Theater where USF students will be able to sit in on a panel discussion featuring former Senator George LeMieux and Congressman Jim Davis concerning national fiscal issues

**Turbovote:** Turbovote is a website where students can sign up to receive text message and e-mail alerts whenever there is an upcoming election, print out a voter registration form, and even sign-up to receive a vote-by-mail ballot in the mail.

**Political Internship Opportunities:** Any student can reach out to Student Government, or the Department of Government and International Affairs to get more information on political

campaigns and organization internships and jobs. It is as easy as sending an e-mail to an advisor, representative in Student Government, or checking either of our websites for available opportunities!

If your student is not registered to vote yet, they can visit the Supervisor of Elections website (<http://www.votehillsborough.org/>), or visit a more student friendly website such as Rock the Vote (<http://www.rockthevote.com/>).

***Ashley Garvia, USF Student Government, 813-974-2401***