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Your Vote is Your Voice – Register!

Op-Ed by Vermont Secretary of State Jim Condos
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September is National Voter Registration Month. A national, non-partisan campaign by non-profit and voter advocacy organizations will also celebrate September 22, 2015, as National Voter Registration Day.

Voting is at the very core of our democracy!

Our system of government works because "we the people" participate in its organization. This right is enshrined in both the United States and the Vermont Constitutions. Vermont led the nation long ago in extending the right to vote to all eligible citizens by removing property ownership as a prerequisite to voting eligibility. I believe that we should remove any and all unnecessary barriers to the exercise of this critically important right, and my office continues to work toward this end.

Today I ask you to support the goal to make all eligible Vermonters aware of registration deadlines and requirements for participation in elections by urging your family members, friends, and neighbors to register to vote.

Since taking office in 2011, I have worked hard to streamline the voter registration process in Vermont, seeking legislative solutions and leveraging the use of technology to remove some of the hurdles that existed in the past. This October, my office will roll out a new election management system to help us achieve these goals.

Increased participation in elections is one of my primary goals as the state's chief elections officer. We can increase participation by expanding the opportunities to register to vote and putting as many resources as possible at the fingertips of every registered voter.

Online Voter Registration is a key component that will provide the opportunity for eligible Vermonters to register to vote online. This new solution will provide a more accurate, up-to-date, and secure statewide voter checklist.

Vermonters are busy people, and online voter registration provides access without the burden of missing time from work, childcare, and all of our other day-to-day responsibilities.

This solution will also provide every registered voter with access to a unique "My Voter Page." This page will contain a range of election-related information specific to that person, including sample ballots, polling locations, and notice of upcoming elections.

Most importantly, the "My Voter Page" will allow all registered voters to request an absentee ballot online and to track when their ballot has been sent to them and received back by the clerk. Again, this will allow access to the voting process to all registered voters when it is most convenient for them. My hope is that these tools will result in greater participation in all of our future elections.

I am excited to introduce this new solution in October and extend the principles and goals of National Voter Registration Month to every month of the year. Your Vote is Your Voice!

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