

MID-TERMS: PLANNING IS EVERYTHING

"I tell this story to illustrate the truth of the statement I heard long ago in the Army: Plans are worthless, but planning is everything. There is a very great distinction because when you are planning for an emergency you must start with this one thing: the very definition of "emergency" is that it is unexpected, therefore it is not going to happen the way you are planning."

– Dwight D. Eisenhower

With Eisenhower's sage words in mind, what are you planning for tomorrow's mid-term elections? If you haven't voted yet, what will you do to ensure you cast your vote? Don't have just one plan – the car breaks down, the babysitter gets sick, the weather turns crappy, the dog runs away, pick whatever minor emergency you can imagine because shit happens. Have a Plan A and then a Plan B and a Plan C in place in order to vote.

I'm lucky because I can very nearly crawl to my polling place. I might have to dodge cars on a busy state highway but it's so close I have no excuse not to vote even if there was a sudden and unexpected blizzard tomorrow.

Do you have kids? Can they manage if you take them to the polling place with you, or do you need a sitter or voting tag team? Can someone wait in the car and play games with the kids while you take turns voting? Do you have a "busy box" at the ready filled with smallish toys or crafts or books to keep youngsters occupied during a wait? I always had one of these in my car, used to put McDonald's Happy Meal toys in it along with a small box of crayons and tiny boxes of LEGOs – they were perfect for waiting in restaurants let alone waiting in long lines.

What about school-age kids – will someone else pick them up or watch them after school, or can they go to the polls with you? I always took mine until they were old enough to stay at home; I wanted them to see that voting was a regular, ordinary thing people should do and that it was easy. It might be a different story for folks who live where lines are long and tedious, though.

Will your pets keep another hour or more if you need to wait in line that long? Can a neighbor walk/feed/water them for you? Can you offer to watch your neighbors' kids or pets? That's what I'll be doing for a poll worker tomorrow, caring for an elderly pet which can't be left alone. It's a small price to ensure democracy works here in my backyard.

How about family in eldercare and any special needs folks? Will they be okay while you take the time to vote?

Yeah, yeah, you've got it all covered, you say. Great. Some people will have difficulty tomorrow; we've all heard and read myriad stories about voter suppression. If you're all set, can you fight back against suppression and help someone else who needs a ride to the polls? Call your local political party office and ask if they need help providing rides. You could make a critical difference in places like Calvert County, Maryland, where GOP commissioners attempted to shut down public transportation for the day. Who knows what other "emergencies" might cause transportation problems for voters?

Can you offer water to people who have to stand in line in the heat to vote? What about calling in a pizza at Pizza to the Polls if you learn of a long line near you?

And what about your own voter information – your polling place, what time it opens and closes, what's on the ballot? Have you confirmed those with your Secretary of State's or county clerk's office? Do NOT trust random phone calls or text

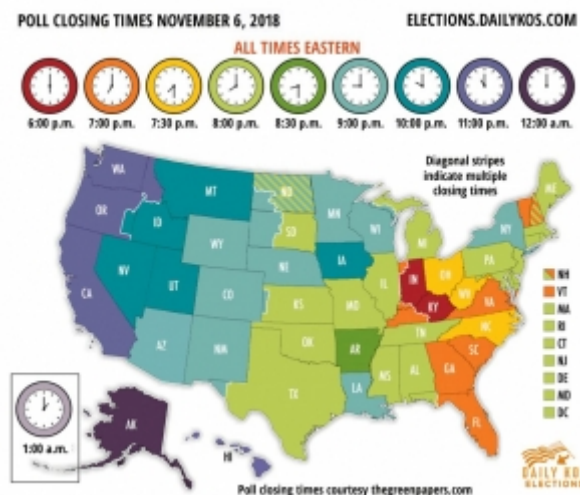
messages to tell you where to vote. I've already gotten a bad phone call today claiming political party affiliation telling me my polling location is in another town and giving me the wrong candidates' names. There will be a lot of these kind of monkeyshines and hoaxes over the next 24 hours. Be skeptical and make sure your family and friends are likewise savvy about their polling place and ballot.

AND TELL YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS NOT TO BLINDLY TRUST FACEBOOK, TWITTER, OR OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA ABOUT THE POLLS. Just like that bad phone call I got, there will be bad posts online, many with disinformation and misinformation about poll opening and closing times, many with information intended to suppress voter turnout.

Media reports about busy polling places and long lines worked to suppress Remain voters during the Brexit referendum. Ignore the horse race type election news and simply commit to voting and supporting other voters.

Still want election news but don't want to feed personal information to suspect advertisers? Try Firefox's Election Bundle if you haven't already.

DailyKos Elections has a handy colored map showing poll closing times (all noted in Eastern time zone). Check their site for election news and resources, too.



Ballotpedia also has links to poll closing times

– you can look yours up if you haven't already checked with your Secretary of State's or county clerk's office.

Whatever you do, do NOT do this. We'll regret it if you do.



No manicure will fix that planning failure.

Treat this as an open thread with emphasis on election-related content.