

Secretary of the State

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NEWS FROM SECRETARY OF THE STATE BYSIEWICZ

SECRETARY BYSIEWICZ ISSUES PARTICIPATION CHALLENGE

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The July 4th holiday week should be a wake-up call for residents who are eligible to vote but don't. As Connecticut residents celebrate our nation's birth, I am urging them to not take their freedom and independence for granted.

According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, which studied voter turnout in 172 countries between 1945 and 2005, the U.S. is ranked 139, with an average turnout in federal elections (presidential & midterm elections) of 48.3%. The U.S. is just below Switzerland and one spot ahead of Mexico. (Italy is ranked #1 with 92.5% and Mali is last with 21.7%.)

The good news is that turnout in Connecticut is typically above the national average, especially when it comes to presidential elections. Still, turnout in municipal elections remains low, and this should concern all of us. The only way to ensure that elected leaders remain committed to the will of the people is for the people to vote.



Facts and Stats

- The U.S. ranks 139 in the world for voter turnout.
- CT voters participate at a rate higher than the National Average.
- Naturalized citizens who are registered to vote, vote at rates higher than or equal to native born citizens.
- 93% of new citizens who were registered, voted in the 2000 elections.

SECRETARY BYSIEWICZ REGISTERS NEW CITIZENS TO VOTE

On July 2nd, I was joined by Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, Congressman Joe Courtney, Middletown Mayor Sebastian N. Giuliano, and John S. Bennet of the Middlesex County Bar Association at a naturalization ceremony for new citizens at Middletown's City Hall.

Thirty-eight men and women, from 29 countries, finished the naturalization process by taking the oath of citizenship in front of their family and friends. The new citizens reside in 20 different Connecticut towns and cities.

According to census data, new citizens are less likely to vote than natural born citizens but when they're registered to vote, the disparity dramatically changes. The Immigration and Policy Center reports that in the 2000 Presidential Election, 93% of new citizens who were registered to vote in Connecticut actually did vote, compared to 87% of native-born registered voters.

Many of these new citizens come from other countries which don't have the same democratic practices that we enjoy. It is incumbent upon my office and local election officials to make sure our newest citizens are welcomed to the electoral process, which is such a fundamental part of our democracy. I am proud to have registered to vote many of the new citizens on Monday. Over the past decade my office has registered thousands of new citizens to vote and I am encouraged by statistics that show us that when new citizens are registered to vote, odds are they will.

Sincerely,



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Questions or comments? E-mail us at Susan.Bysiewicz@po.state.ct.us or call (860) 509-6200.