

League of Women Voters of the U.S.
1026 - 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

July 1, 1964

SAMPLE SPEECH

YOUR VOTE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

(A speech for your adaptation and use in approaching organizations to cooperate on Women Voters Week. The more you can localize it and make it personal the better. Please note that different conclusions are suggested for use with men's and women's groups.)

I have come to talk to you today about voting. Not about your voting. I assume that you are registered and are going to the polls in November and that you are convinced, as we are, that your vote makes a difference.

No, I am here to ask you to help us get more women to the polls this November. Because, for all the talk about women and their role in government and politics and their appointment to high public office, the fact of the matter seems to be that the women of this country are not voting in as great numbers as men are.

Dr. George Gallup tells us for example, that in the 1960 election over 68 million people voted. Of these some 33 million plus were women and over 34 million were men. And yet there are more women -- alas -- than there are men.

But men don't have anything to be complaisant about. The Report of the President's Commission on Registration and Voting Participation tells us that total voter participation in the last presidential election was only 63.8 percent. In local and off-year elections the percentages are much, much lower.

(Add statistics on own state or city if these are available or point out where your state ranks in the scale between Idaho with 80.7 percent turnout in 1960 and Mississippi with 25.5%. See back page of this section for list.)

The President's Commission tells us that there are two over-all reasons for our not so good voting record: one is psychological which is a nice way of saying that we are apathetic and that we do not think that our vote makes a difference. The other cause for non-voting is that there are many legal and administrative barriers which stand in the way of registration and voting.

(Review registration system, residence requirements, absentee provisions and election day problems which may be barriers in your state.)

There is probably not much we can do to change our election procedures before the November election, but there are things we can do to break down the psychological barriers to voting and to dispel apathy and indifference. For one thing, we can let people know that their one vote counts. In 1960 John F. Kennedy's national plurality was less than one vote per precinct. He defeated Vice President Nixon by less than 120,000 votes out of the almost 69 million votes cast.

(Cite state example and/or local example)

Many people don't vote because they do not feel that they are well enough informed to make an intelligent choice. I must admit that this is sometimes difficult especially when the ballot is long and there are many offices to be filled. In the

League of Women Voters we try to break down this type of barrier by providing information on candidates and issues.

(Tell them about some of the materials you have available and show samples)

As I mentioned earlier, women have a poorer voting record than men, and we are rather tired of shouldering the blame for the relatively low average of voting in the country as a whole. That is one reason why the League of Women Voters has launched a campaign to find the 20 million women in this country who do not vote and to do what we can to get them to the polls.

We feel that the best way to do this is through organizations. We are asking each women's group to launch an "Each One Reach One" campaign. In addition to seeing that their own members are registered and prepared to vote, each member of the organization would pledge herself to find a woman who has never before been to the polls (or who is not presently prepared to vote). This might be a young woman who has just turned 21 or a newcomer to town or just someone who has never felt it made a difference whether she voted or not. We figure that if each woman in this country who belongs to an organization would find just one woman who has never voted before and sees to it that she is registered and gets to the polls, a big dent could be put in that 20 million figure.

(The speech to this point is suitable for both men's and women's groups. The suggested conclusion for use with men's groups follows immediately; that for women's groups follows after that.)

I am told that one reason some women don't vote is that they are not sure that the men in their lives - their husbands, their fathers, the men whose opinion they respect - really approve of their voting. This is where we need your help. I would like to make three suggestions in the hope that you may be able to use one, or two, or all three of them.

First, we would like very much if the _____ Club would endorse the idea of Women Voters Week (or, if the speech is delivered after WWV, endorse the all-out campaign now being waged to find the women who do not vote and see that they are registered). Second, if you would like to go a step further and offer a prize in our "Each One Reach One" campaign, we would be glad to see that it is awarded to an organization doing a good job in the "Each One Reach One" effort. Or third, if neither of these suggestions is suitable, we hope that each of you will join personally in our campaign. What you can do is this: encourage your wife, your mother, your grandmother, your aunts, your cousins, your daughters, your secretary, and your sister-in-law in Oshkosh to register and vote.

The person-to-person approach is all important and the personal attitude of those we admire is important too. Your approval may be the encouragement needed to get at least one woman registered and to the polls. We hope we can count on you.

(Suggested conclusion for use with women's groups):

And now I would like to ask, "Would an 'Each One Reach One' campaign be possible in this group?" Obviously, if we know enough people who are not now voting, it should be fairly simple. Let's see. I am going to pass out some slips of paper and some pencils.

(And, after time has been allowed for this) --

And now I am going to ask you to think a minute. Do you know a young woman who has just turned 21? Someone who may not have registered as yet? Jot her name down on your paper.

Next, do you know a newcomer to town? Someone who may or may not have registered? Jot down her name and the state where she came from. It may be possible that if she can't vote here she might be able to vote back in her former state.

Now, how about someone in a minority group -- someone you think may not have been encouraged to vote heretofore? Do you know someone in this category? Put her name down, too.

Is there any woman you know who is a newly naturalized citizen? If you do, chances are she is already registered, but you might put her name down anyway.

Do you know someone who is either in the armed forces herself or whose husband is serving in the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marines? Or someone who is overseas for some other government assignment? They may be able to register and vote absentee. So put down their names.

Do you all have some prospects? Now that you have some prospects to tell about registration and voting, let me remind you of the pertinent sections of our election laws.

(Review necessary information on where and how to register, eligibility, etc. Suggest they may wish to jot this down too, unless you have it in a form that can be passed out to them.)

It seems to me that you have a good start already in conducting an "Each One Reach One" campaign in the _____ Club. I hope you will decide to participate. Each of you can be a vital link in improving the voting record of this state and of the United States of America. And, more important, you can be the means of reaching someone who has not voted and helping her to take the first vital step toward becoming a full citizen. In persuading her that her vote makes a difference, you will make a difference too.

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Note: Leagues may wish to have a sheet available for the use of the women's organizations signing up for the "Each One Reach One" Campaign. The heading for such a sheet is suggested below:

Name of Organization:

President:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Name of Member

Registered?

Name of Non-Voter Reached When registered

VOTING TURNOUT IN 1960

<u>State</u>	<u>Turnout</u>
Idaho	80.7
Utah	80.1
New Hampshire	79.4
North Dakota	78.5
South Dakota	78.3
West Virginia	77.3
Minnesota	77.0
Indiana	76.9
Connecticut	76.8
Iowa	76.5
Massachusetts	76.1
Illinois	75.7
Rhode Island	75.1
Wyoming	74.0
Delaware	73.6
Wisconsin	73.4
Maine	72.6
Vermont	72.5
Michigan	72.4
Washington	72.3
Oregon	72.3
New Jersey	71.8
Missouri	71.8
Colorado	71.4
Nebraska	71.4
Montana	71.4
Ohio	71.3
Pennsylvania	70.5
Kansas	70.3
California	67.4
New York	67.0
Oklahoma	63.8
New Mexico	62.1
Nevada	61.2
Kentucky	59.2
Maryland	57.2
Arizona	54.5
North Carolina	53.5
Hawaii	51.3
Tennessee	50.3
Florida	50.0
Alaska	45.5
Louisiana	44.8
Texas	41.8
Arkansas	41.1
Virginia	33.4
Alabama	31.1
South Carolina	30.5
Georgia	30.4
Mississippi	25.5