

# Election Connection Patch Program

Courage | Confidence | Character



girl scouts   
of central & western  
massachusetts

**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS'  
OF AMHERST

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Election Connection is a nonpolitical and nonpartisan program designed to increase civic participation. As a tax-exempt, § 501(c)(3) organization, Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts cannot take sides in elections or support or oppose any political candidates. Material will not be used to target a particular political party or individuals on any one side of an issue. The focus is on encouraging everyone, regardless of political party, affiliation, or beliefs, to participate in the democratic process.

# Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is deeply embedded in Girl Scouts history and the Promise and Law. Encouraging girls to be informed citizens and showing them how they can be change makers also shows them how they can make a difference in their communities and the country.

The purpose of this patch program is to engage and empower Girl Scouts to understand the voting process in a patriotic - not political - manner, to eagerly anticipate their right to vote, and to encourage and enable everyone to exercise their right to vote.

This program is designed to introduce Girl Scouts to the political process in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Country. It is a great introduction to earning the Democracy Badges which are available for Daisy through Ambassador Girl Scouts. Full requirements of the Democracy Badges can be found, for free, in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) and a summary of requirements can be found on the Badge Explorer page on [gscwm.org](http://gscwm.org).

Here is a sample activity for each level of the Democracy Badges:



Daisy Girl Scouts



Brownie Girl Scouts



Junior Girl Scouts



Cadette Girl Scouts



Senior Girl Scouts



Ambassador Girl Scouts

# General Requirements

- Girl Scout Daisies complete at least one activity from each section.
- Girl Scout Brownies complete at least two activities from each section.
- Girl Scout Juniors complete at least three activities from each section.
- Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors, complete at least four activities from each section

## Section 1. Voter Registration

1. Who is eligible to vote? What are the ways we can vote in Massachusetts (early vote, vote-by-mail, in-person)? Discuss these at home and share how your family votes.
2. What is required in order to register to vote?
3. Obtain a copy of a voter registration form. Encourage 2 family members who are unregistered to register. Give them a voter registration form.
4. Read about the 19th Amendment and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Share with your family or troop what you learned about this legislation. <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/voting-rights-act>
5. Pick a famous Suffragette and write a biography about her; i.e. Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, Ida B. Wells, Julia Ward Howe, Dolores Huerta.

## Section 2. Get Out the Vote

1. Find out where the voting booth locations are in your community and how and where your parent/caregiver votes.
2. Obtain a copy of a sample ballot from your town or county's voter registration department and share with your troop or family.

3. Pretend you are running for office and make a commercial telling people why they should vote for you.
4. Design pledge cards that say, "I promised a Girl Scout I'd vote." Have at least 5 adults (per girl) pledge to vote on Election Day.
5. Make five "Thanks for voting" cards and give them to people on Election Day.

## Section 3. The Election Process

1. Collect three newspaper or online articles or pictures that discuss an upcoming election and share them with your troop or family. You could make a collage featuring candidates and issues.
2. Make a list of the characteristics of a good leader.
3. Read the Glossary of Election Terms and find three new words you have never heard of.
4. Talk about elections as a system of selecting people who will be expected to lead and to make decisions for other people. Discuss who you think would make a good leader.
5. In groups or individually, pick an election issue you believe is important. Research your issue and summarize what you learn and present it to your troop. Hold a debate on the issue or issues. Find out if it will appear on the ballot.
6. If you will be 18 years old on Election Day, you can vote! Make sure you register in time.

# General Requirements Cont.

## Section 4. Our Government at Work

1. Find out who the elected officials are in your town/city, state and country. Complete the activity, “My Representatives”.
2. Did you know Massachusetts has over 50 State Symbols? Research and chose 5 to share with your troop or family.
3. Investigate the different ways you can contact your town/city and state elected officials.
4. What does ‘bill’ mean in government? Find out how a bill becomes law in your town/city, state and in the federal government.

## My Representatives

Who are they and what do they do?

There are federal, state and local elected officials chosen to represent the people. Use the internet or local directories to find the following information:

What form of government is used in your town/city? Do you have a Mayor? Select Board? Town Council?

Who is the Governor of Massachusetts?

Who is the Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts?

Who are the United States senators from Massachusetts?

How many congressional districts are there in Massachusetts?

How many United States Congressmen/women does Massachusetts have?

Who are your US Congressmen/women?

## Resources

Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

VOTE 411

The 19th\*



# Glossary: Election Terms

Here are some words you will hear or see during an election campaign.

**Absentee Voting** A way people can vote when they can't get to their polling place. They vote on a special form and mail it.

**Ballot** A list of people who are running for public office: a form voters use to show whom they vote for.

**Ballot Box** A box people's votes are put into.

**Blue State** A state that predominantly votes for or supports the Democratic Party.

**Budget** A plan for spending money.

**Cabinet** The group of government department heads who advise the president.

**Campaign** What a candidate does to get people to vote for her/him.

**Campaign Committee** A group of political party members who plan how to get the party's candidate elected.

**Candidate** A person who runs for a public office: someone who wants to be chosen for public office.

**Caucus** A special meeting that only important members of a political party go to.

**Chief Executive** The president; the official in charge of our relations with other nations.

**Civil Rights** Rights that all citizens have. Those rights are given by law.

**Commander in Chief** The president; the head of the army, navy, and other military forces.

**Delegate** A party member who is chosen by other members to go to the party's convention.

**Democrat** A member of the Democratic party.

**Democratic Party** One of our two main political parties. Its symbol is the donkey.

**Domestic Issue** An issue/problem inside our country.

**Economic Aid** Help such as money or food that a country provides to another country.

**Early Voting** Voting before Election Day

**Elected Official** A person who is elected to a public office in the government, as opposed to appointed or hired. The president of the United States is an elected official.

**Election Officer** A person who works at the place where people vote to make sure voting laws are followed; a poll watcher.

**Electoral College** A group of people who meet right after an election for our president. Our constitution says this group formally elects the president and vice president.

**Foreign Policy** The ways in which our government relates to the government of our nations.

**G.O.P.** Acronym which stands for Grand Old Party, the nickname of the Republican party.

**Inauguration Day** January 20, the day when the president is sworn into office.

**Incumbent** A person who holds a public office and wants to be elected to that office again.

**Independent** A person who does not belong to either of the two main political parties.

**Issue** A point of debate or controversy between the candidates or parties. How to deal with unemployment or social security would be examples of issues.

**Majority** More than half. A group or political party whose numbers equal more than half of a body or vote.

**Military Aid** Military help, (soldiers and/or weapons) that one or more countries provide to another country.

**National Convention** An important political meeting for party members from all over the country, at which Republicans, Democrats and/or other political parties choose their party's candidate for president.

**National Economy** The system a country has which keeps track of how much it spends and how much it makes.

# Glossary: Election Terms

**Nominate** To suggest that someone be a candidate for an office.

**Oath of Office** The pledge that the new president makes to uphold and defend the constitution.

**Party Headquarters** An office where party members meet to work for the party and/or candidate.

**President-elect** The title for the candidate who wins the election for president but who has not yet taken the oath of office.

**Primary Election** An election that a political party holds in a state, to narrow down the number of people running for an office.

**Red State** A state that predominantly votes for or supports the Republican Party.

**Register** Sign up to vote.

**Registered Party Member** Someone who signs a form saying she or he belongs to a certain political party.

**Registry of Voters** The office that handles records of voters and information about voting. (In some places, this office is called the Office of Voter Registration.)

**Republican** A member of the Republican Party.

**Republican Party** One of our two main political parties. Its symbol is the elephant.

**Social Program** A plan or system to help a nation's citizens. Medicare is a social program that helps to pay medical bills.

**Special Interest Group** A group of people who all want specific things from the government. Environmental organizations are often special interest groups.

**State Convention** A big political event held by each party. This is where national delegates are selected.

**Super Delegate** Important players in the National Parties who get more than one vote and help decide which candidate will secure the nomination.

**Term** How long a person is elected to a public office. The president's term is four years.

**Third Party** Any political party that is not Democrat or Republican, such as the Green Party, Libertarian Party, etc.

**Ticket** A list of all the candidates in one political party who are running in an election.

**Treaty** An agreement between the governments of two or more nations.

**Voting Machine** A machine people use when voting.

**Voting Precinct** One of several districts into which a city or town is divided for voting.

**Voter Registration Card** The form that people receive that shows they are registered to vote.

**Ward** A political district that is made up of several precincts.

