

# Texas Faith Votes

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★ **TEXAS IMPACT**  
PEOPLE OF FAITH WORKING FOR JUSTICE

# Voter Engagement & The Texas Legislature



# Should We Do This?



# Voting is A Matter of Faith

## A MATTER OF FAITH

Sermon Starters, Prayers, Litanies, and Other Resources  
for Considering Voting Through the Lens of Faith

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# Can We Do This?



# Politics and the Pulpit

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## POLITICS AND THE PULPIT

A Guide to Rules and Regulations on Political Activity by Religious Organizations



As we prepare for another important election season, we want to ensure that faith communities across Texas have the information they need to conduct election-related activities within the bounds of federal rules and regulations.

The ways in which religious organizations engage in public policy and politics is a function of their status as nonprofits under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Periodically, the IRS publishes guidelines to help religious organizations understand what they can and cannot do as tax exempt entities—the IRS last distributed such a resource was more than a decade ago. This guide is inspired by that document and has been updated to address scenarios involving contemporary technologies and other present-day concerns.

For more information from the IRS about , visit <https://www.irs.gov/charities-nonprofits/churches-religious-organizations>.

# Politics and the Pulpit - Extended Version



Here's a more in-depth look at

**PERMISSIBLE ELECTION-RELATED ACTIVITIES**  
along with examples that can help you and your congregation  
understand how these activities might play out in the real world.

## 1 TAKE POSITIONS ON PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

Religious organizations can take positions on public policy issues. While many issues can be framed as partisan, making statements that address the social and religious implications of policy issues is well within the rights of a religious group, so long as you do not show support for or against any particular party or candidate. Addressing policy issues through the lens of your faith tradition is not just acceptable— it's an effective way to engage your community in the important discussions and actions that take place in our collective society, both within and outside of your house of worship.

## 2 HOST CANDIDATE FORUMS & DEBATES

For the purpose of educating voters, religious groups may sponsor candidate forums or debates that are fair and unbiased. The religious group shouldn't say what it thinks about the issues being talked about; make judgements about what candidates say; indicate whether it likes or dislikes a candidate, party, or position; or ask candidates to support the group's positions, goals, or platforms. When there are a lot of candidates for an election, it may not be possible to host all of them. In this case, an organization that facilitates a candidate forum should invite the two major party candidates—along with up to four other candidates with at least 15% of the vote in a credible, independent poll—to ensure that it remains impartial and uninvolved in campaigning.

## 3 PREPARE AND DISTRIBUTE NONPARTISAN VOTER GUIDES AND VOTING RECORDS

Religious groups may educate voters about issues and candidates' positions. Religious groups can print or hand out unbiased voter guides to help people learn where each candidate stands on different issues.

Events and resources that help people understand candidates' positions cannot favor or oppose any candidate or political party. Voter guides should include all candidates for a certain office to make sure they are fair. They should also cover a wide range of issues that voters care about and that candidates for a particular office would have to address. There shouldn't be any bias in the questions or issues that are asked, and all candidates' answers should be included. There shouldn't be any editorial comments or other signs of approval or disapproval of any candidates or their positions.

# We Are Plugged In



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# Texas Faith otes



# Regional “Faith Votes” Campaigns



# Houston Faith Votes



# Goals

1. Connection
2. Resources
3. Mobilization!



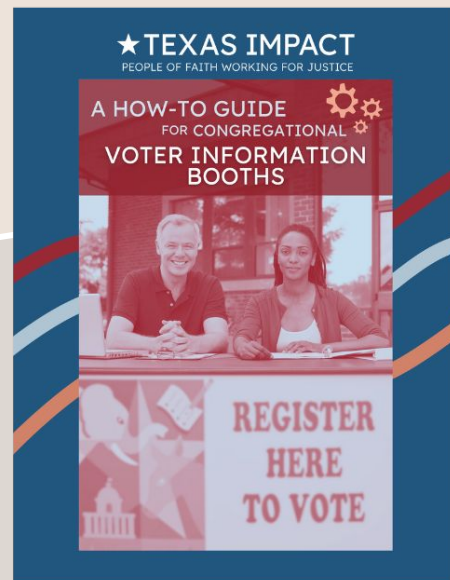
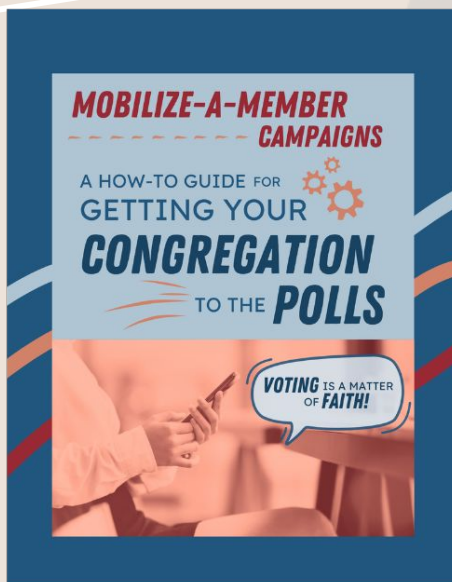
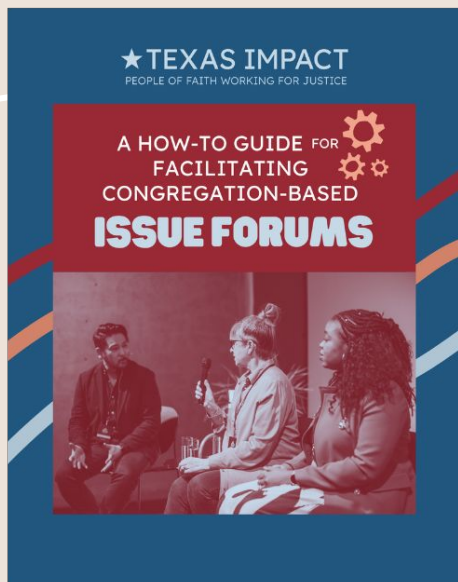
# North Texas Faith Votes

The logo features a brown outline of the state of Texas. Inside the outline, there are several gold stars of varying sizes. A large red checkmark is positioned to the right of the state outline, overlapping the word 'votes'. The text 'North Texas Faith' is in blue, and 'votes' is in a lighter blue color.

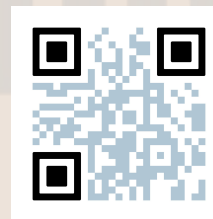
**North Texas Faith** ✓ **otes**

*A project of Texas Impact*

# Voter Engagement Hub



AND MORE!



# Engagement Levels

- Never done CE work
- Some to little CE work
- Have decades of experience

## Potential Activity

Bulletin/newsletter announcements

Sunday school/small group series

Call-a-church-friend campaigns

Meet-a-neighbor campaigns

GOTV block parties

Candidate/issue forums

Voter information booths

VDR trainings/voter registration drives

Know-the-law trainings

Poll worker trainings

Congregation as a polling place

The logo consists of a dark blue square with a white square inside it, and a small red triangle pointing upwards from the top center of the square.

**BallotReady<sup>®</sup>**

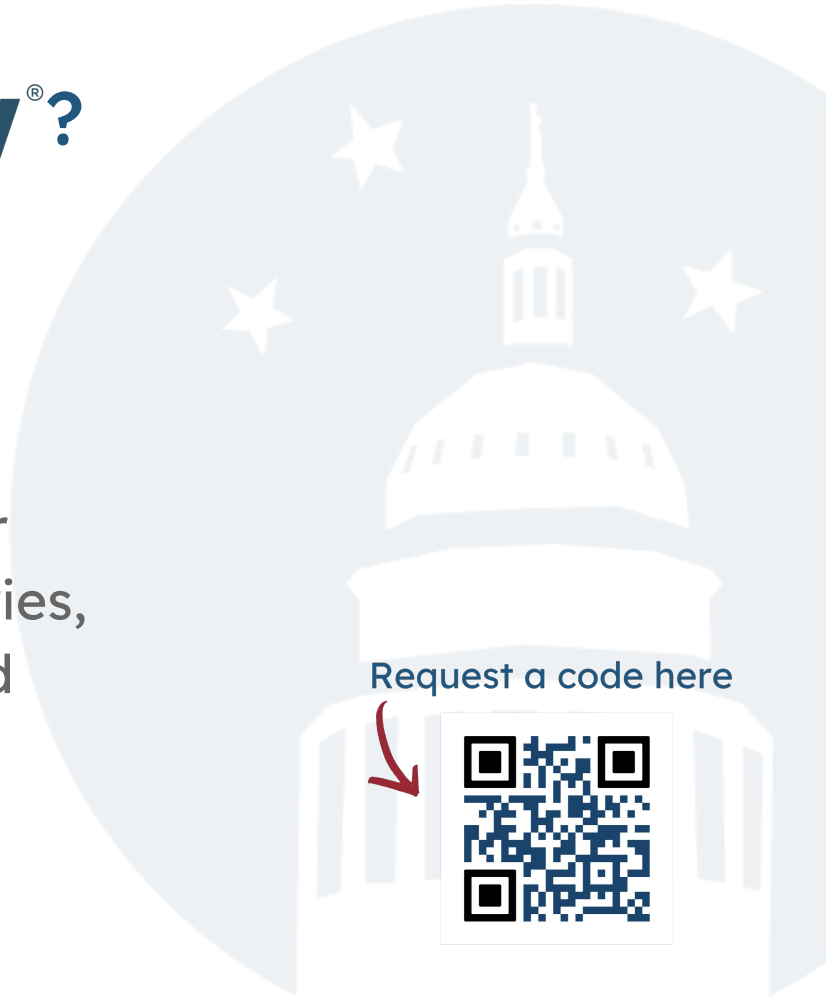
A large, faint, light-colored watermark of a state capitol building is visible in the background on the right side of the image. The building features a prominent dome and a portico with columns. Two five-pointed stars are positioned above the dome.



# What is **BallotReady**®?

1. One-Stop Shop Voter Information
2. Great for mobilizing your members
3. Great for mobilizing outside of your membership - direct service ministries, community outreach, neighborhood engagement, etc.

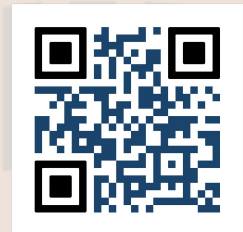
Request a code here



**THIS TOOL IS NOT JUST FOR  
YOUR MEMBERS!**

**MOBILIZE EVERYONE YOU  
OR YOUR COMMUNITY COME  
INTO CONTACT WITH**

Request a code here



# Scan now!



WELCOME TO OUR  
**Civic Center**

Your platform for civic engagement



### Meet your representatives

Get to know your elected and appointed officials at every level of government



### Voter registration

Register for the first time, update, or check your voter registration.



### Pledge to vote

Promise yourself that you are going to vote in the next election.



### Research your Ballot

Learn about the candidates and referendums on your ballot



### Plan Your Vote

Pick a date, time, and place to go vote



### Request a Ballot

We'll help you vote by mail in your state.

# Texas Faith VOTES

#### ELECTION DATE

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

#### OTHER KEY DATES & INFORMATION

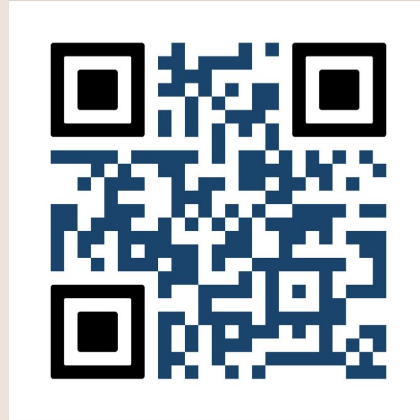
- If you have any questions or need more information, visit our [FAQ page](#) or call 1-866-OUR-VOTE

#### SHARE WITH FRIENDS & FAMILY

Spread the word. Every person who shares helps us reach three more voters.



# REQUEST YOUR UNIQUE LINK



# What do you get?

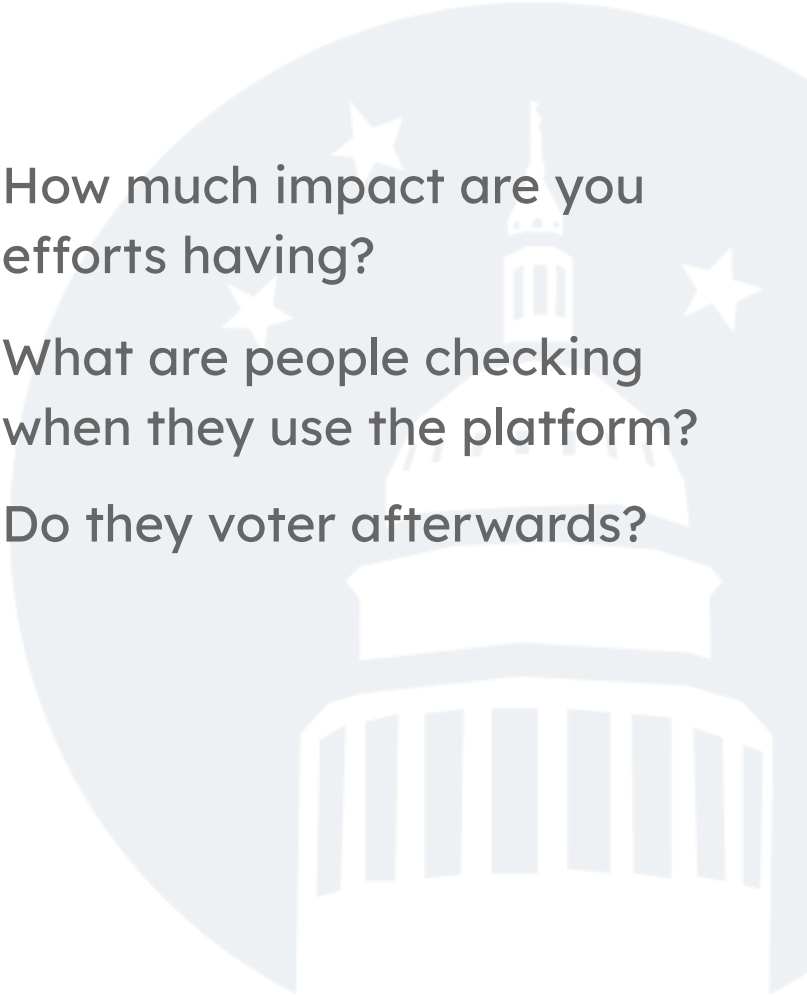
1. QR CODE
2. URL



# Why is BallotReady helpful for Faith Communities?



# Trackability

- How much impact are your efforts having?
  - What are people checking when they use the platform?
  - Do they vote afterwards?
- 



# Do Your Members Actually Vote?

Let's Find Out!

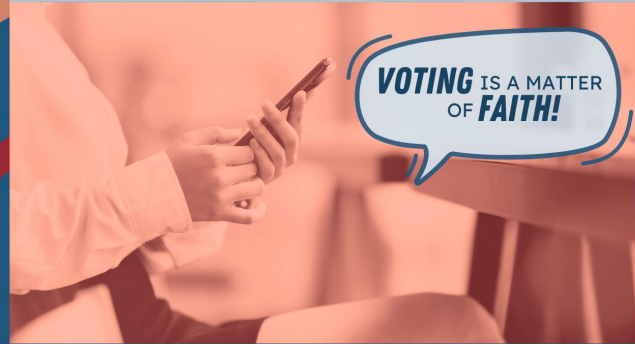


# Is Voter Registration the Best Route?

... maybe, maybe not?

## **MOBILIZE-A-MEMBER CAMPAIGNS**

A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR  
GETTING YOUR   
**CONGREGATION**  
TO THE **POLLS**



**VOTING** IS A MATTER  
OF **FAITH!**

# BallotReady & the Voter Engagement Hub





**Voting is a matter of  
FAITH, CITIZENSHIP, & DEMOCRACY**

This election, we have the opportunity to vote for leaders who will support vibrant communities and promote policies that reflect our values: LOVE OF NEIGHBOR & CARE FOR CREATION

We are joining other faith communities across the state to ensure that everyone at Friends Congregational Church, UCC has the information they need to make an informed and confident vote! Scan our BallotReady code to see your registration status, who and what is on your ballot, and when, where, and how you can vote. And share the link with your family and friends! #texasfaithvotes

QUESTIONS? Contact Jane with our social justice committee - jane@example.org



SCAN ME

For more information about this statewide effort, visit [texasfaithvotes.org](https://texasfaithvotes.org)

**GET READY TO VOTE!**  
Find election information here



**Houston FaithVotes**  
Voting is a matter of FAITH, CITIZENSHIP, and DEMOCRACY  
A project of Texas Impact





First Congregational Church of Houston

[CONGREGATION NAME]  
**VOTES**  
AND SO CAN YOU!

Scan the Code to see...

- ★ Your registration status
- ★ Who and what is on your ballot
- ★ When, where, and how you can vote

[congregation's website]



★ TEXAS IMPACT PEOPLE OF FAITH WORKING FOR JUSTICE

BallotReady

**FRIENDS**

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Using our link, voters can see:

- If they are registered to vote at their current address
- Who and what is on the ballot in their county
- When and where they can vote in-person
- How to get a mail-in ballot if they want one

For more information about this statewide effort, visit [texasfaithvotes.org](https://texasfaithvotes.org)

QUESTIONS? Contact Jane with our Social Justice Committee - jane@example.org

# Technical Support



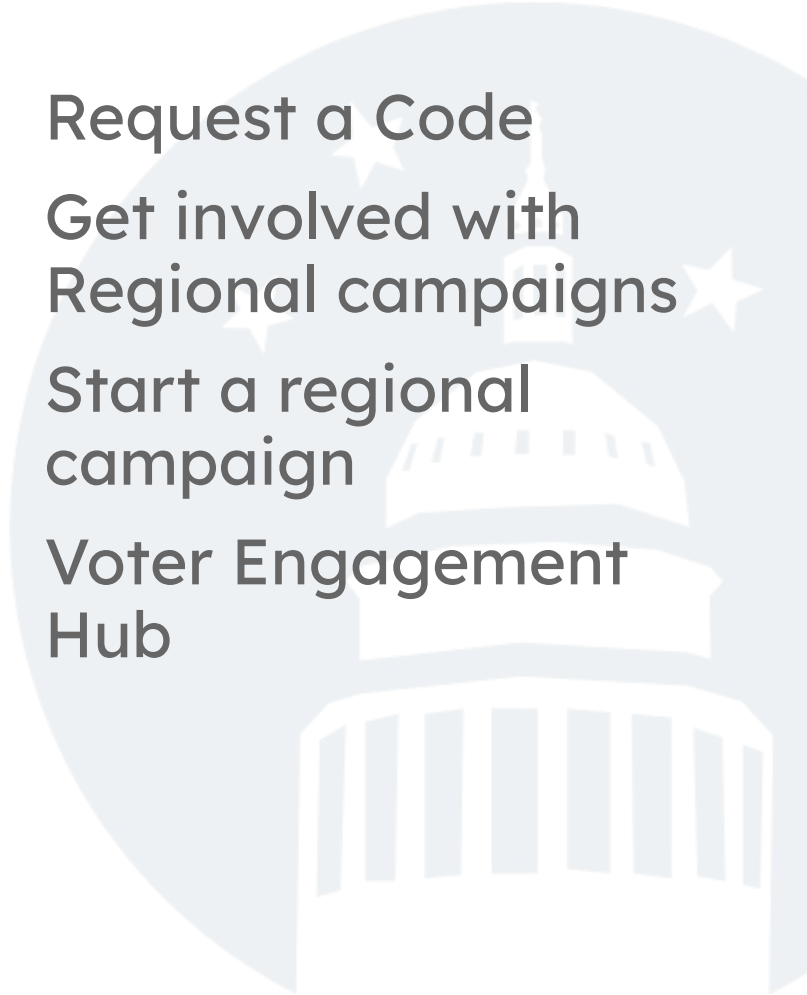
# Have a Problem?

# Talk to Kyle!

[kyle@texasimpact.org](mailto:kyle@texasimpact.org)



# Action Items

1. Request a Code
  2. Get involved with Regional campaigns
  3. Start a regional campaign
  4. Voter Engagement Hub
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# Texas Faith VOTES!

