



LOCAL ELECTIONS

May 6, 2017 is local election day in Tarrant County. Early voting will be from April 24 – May 2, 2017.

On the majority of local ballots will be elections for Mayor, City Council and School Board Members. You can check out <http://access.tarrantcounty.com/content/main/en/elections/Upcoming-Election-Information/Sample-Ballots-by-Entity.html> for your city's sample ballot.

The League will be moderating a number of candidate forums in April. This is the best way to find out about the candidates that are running in your city.

A few cities and one ISD will have issues on their ballots. These cities are Arlington, Carroll ISD, Dalworthington Gardens, Westworth Village and Trophy Club.

Arlington has a \$45,000,000 bond issue for a senior center (<http://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/community/arlington/article124416259.html>).

Carroll ISD has a \$208,000,000 school bond issue (1) for building improvements, (2) technology improvements, (3) maintenance, transportation security and safety and (4) extra-curricular and co-curricular activities (<http://www.southlakecarroll.edu/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&ModuleInstanceID=65&ViewID=6446EE88-D30C-497E-9316-3F8874B3E108&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=3852&PageID=1>).

Westworth Village has a \$3,500,000 bond for a new community center ([http://www.cityofwestworth.com/uploads/file/Notice%20of%20Election%20\(English\)%20\(Westworth%20Village\).pdf](http://www.cityofwestworth.com/uploads/file/Notice%20of%20Election%20(English)%20(Westworth%20Village).pdf)).

Trophy Club has a \$2,420,000 bond for water work improvements (<http://www.tcmud.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/February-15-2017-Regular-Meeting-Agenda-packet.pdf> - starting at page 63)

Dalworthington Gardens has a \$4,000,000 bond for road improvements.

Everman, Grand Prairie, Sansom Park, Lakeside and Pantego have ballot issues for ¼% of sales tax for street maintenance and repair.

Richland Hills also has a proposal for 1 ¼% local sale and use tax for the Economic Development Corporation for projects previously approved which include public parks, community facilities and maintenance and cost of publically owned projects and promotion of new and expanded businesses at 3/8% .

Saginaw and Southlake have proposals about reauthorizing Crime Control and Prevention Districts.

Why are local elections important? Our local elected officials are the ones who decide the local laws, policies and budgets that affect our day to day lives. Local politics influence all of the decisions that have a direct influence on our everyday lives, from the laws we're most worried about abiding by, to the streets we drive on and whether or not they're riddled with potholes, to whether or not we'll have to pay for plastic bags at the grocery store, and more. Our local public servants leverage our property tax dollars to make big budgetary decisions that influence our local communities, from education reforms to welfare and more.

However, fewer people vote in local elections than in Presidential elections.

Discussion Questions

1. If you live in any of the cities that are voting on bond issues in this election, are you for or against the bond? Why? What sources or articles have you read or heard from to inform your vote?
2. What can you do to learn about the candidates that are running for local office? Should there be more required information given to the public regarding the candidates? For example, should a candidate be required to write a short bio and why they want to be on the city council/school Board/other elected position and have that published on the city's webpage or in the city's local paper? What if there is no candidate forum held or what if you are unable to attend? What if the candidate does not respond to the Vote411 questionnaire?
3. Do you agree that local elections are very important? Why or why not?
4. Why do you think there is such low voter turnout for local elections? What do you think is the main reason:
 - a. not enough information on the issues and the candidates?
 - b. burn out/apathy from too many elections?
 - c. people aren't registered to vote and don't know where to go to do that?
 - d. the two party system doesn't offer a candidate that the elector likes?
 - e. they think their vote won't count?
5. What can you do to help increase voter turnout?
6. What can the League do to help increase voter turnout?
7. What do you think about mandatory voting? Is this something that the United States should consider? As of 2012, twenty two (22) countries in the world have mandatory voting laws and eleven (11) of those countries enforce the law. Do you think voting is a right or a duty?