

Citizens Urged To Register Now To Vote In November

The right to elect the officials who govern is one of America's most precious freedoms, yet nearly one of every three Pennsylvanians aged 21 and over is not even registered to vote. Statistics indicate that between 2.2 and 2.5 million Pennsylvanians are not registered. It is a number so large that if the

unregistered decided to form their own party, or anti-party, they would be almost equal in strength to the Republican and Democratic Parties, each of whom have about 2.5 million registered adherents. And the number of unregistered is increasing at an accelerated pace. In 1960, there were

an estimated 1.4 million persons old enough to vote but unregistered. So in just eight years, that number has increased by about one million — at a time when the state's population rose by only 330,000 persons.

Naturally, it is a problem of increasing concern to the Commonwealth's political leaders. So much so that the chairmen of the Republican and Democratic State Committees have joined together in a bipartisan effort to narrow what they call the "citizenship gap".

John C. Jordan, the Republican chairman, and Thomas Z. Minehart, his Democratic counterpart, recognize that while the business of signing up new voters is one of their most important duties, they are in agreement that the matter of registering and voting is of concern to every citizen.

"The strength of the American system is dependent on full participation by every citizen," the two chairmen said in a recent statement. "The alarming increase in the number of people who fail to register and vote can only result in the weakening of good government at every level because our public officials are being elected by proportionately fewer persons."

Minehart and Jordan recently asked the state's newspaper publishers and radio and television broadcasters to join in a non-partisan effort to illustrate the problem in an attempt to sign up as many new voters as possible, regardless of party affiliation, for this year's critical Presidential, Congressional and Statewide elections.

"We are of the firm belief that the job of convincing people to register and vote should not be left to the political parties

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alone," they said "This is democracy's business and every Pennsylvanian has a vital stake in an effective and responsive political structure."

The two chairmen provided registration statistics which show the depth of the problem.

A grand total of 5,687,837 Pennsylvanians were registered to vote in the Presidential Election in 1960, including Democrats and Republicans, non-partisans, independents and members of various minor parties. The total registration for the Primary Elections in the spring of this year was 5,220,878 — a decrease of 466,959.

The 1964 Presidential Election stimulated registration slightly and the grand total for all parties and non-partisans increased to 5,728,359, which is 507,481 more than were on the books for

this year's primary elections. Both Jordan and Minehart look for a natural increase in registration in this Presidential Election year, but they are still concerned about the ever-widening "citizenship gap" which shows the total number of unregistered increasing annually regardless of what offices are at stake.

In addition to the publishers and broadcasters, they also have issued a joint appeal to every citizen to try to enlist their relatives, friends and neighbors to register to vote before the books close on September 16th.

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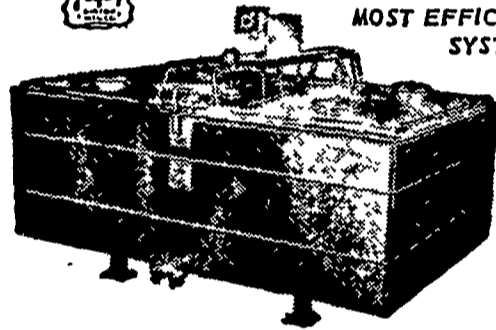
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