



Voting

What does MODDC think about voting?

Voting is a human right. It's what makes our government work. So, Missouri must make sure that all people have a chance to vote. That means people with disabilities should get the chance to vote. They should get to vote in every election, whether it's national, state, or local.

Why is this important?

Voting gives people a say in the laws that affect their lives. Voting can help change state and local laws. People can vote for things that help them have better lives.

The U.S. has laws that say disabled people should get to vote. These laws are:

- The Fourteenth Amendment
- The Voting Rights Act
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Research shows that people with disabilities vote less than people without disabilities. One study found 2 in 3 people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) had never voted.

There are some things that make it harder for people with disabilities to vote.

Some things that make it harder to vote are:

- Living in a group setting, like an institution.
- Not having transportation to get to a place to vote.
- Places to vote that are not accessible. For example, buildings without wheelchair ramps.

There are other things that help people with disabilities vote more. Getting to learn about voting helped more people with disabilities vote. So did being a part of self-advocacy groups.

Missouri did a study about voting for people with I/DD who get state services.

They found out that only 1 out of 4 people ever voted.

This is worse than the average in the United States.

Missouri spends less money on transportation than 46 other states. This makes it harder for Missourians to take part in community activities like voting. It makes it especially hard for Missourians with disabilities.



There are a couple other big problems for people with disabilities in Missouri. A 2018 study looked at people in Missouri who got taken off voting lists. Over 10,000 people lost their right to vote because of their disability. This was more than anywhere in the country. It was twice as much as the next closest state.

Some people with disabilities are under guardianship. In 2022, a county clerk said she would remove everyone under guardianship from voting lists. She said she'd even remove people with a court order protecting their right to vote. This is not fair to people with disabilities.

What should Missouri do?

The right to vote is the most important right we have. We must make sure all people can vote. This means people with disabilities must get to vote. Here are some things Missouri could do to help more people with disabilities vote:

- People under guardianship should get to vote. The law should help people under guardianship to vote. People under guardianship should only lose the right to vote if a court order says so.
- Missouri should give people many ways to vote, such as:
 - Voting in-person
 - Absentee voting
 - Voting by mail
- Missouri should look at every voting place to make sure it is accessible.
- Groups that work with people with disabilities should talk about how to vote. People with disabilities should get information about voting.
- Groups that work with people with disabilities should help them get transportation to vote. People with disabilities should get help voting by mail if that is most accessible.
- There are programs to encourage people with disabilities to vote. One example is Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered's Go Voter Project. Missouri should tell people with disabilities about programs like this.
- Public and private jobs in Missouri should let their workers take off work to vote.



Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council

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- Missouri schools should make sure students with disabilities know about voting. They should make signing up to vote a part of IEP and 504 plans.
- Missouri should help more people get public and private transportation. That will help more people be a part of their communities. It will also help more people vote.



To Learn More

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