

If you're reading this letter, you are likely to be a small business owner or work for a small business. It is likely that you joined SCBA to help your business, and that's good. That's one step toward making your business grow. All of us want to do what we can to help our business.

Are you registered to vote? Are your employees registered to vote? Keep in mind that the people who make the laws that affect your business have to get elected to be able to pass these laws.

I've heard so many people over the years say that their one vote won't make a difference. So how can you make your vote count the most? I have a suggestion.

Before going further, let me say that I am a member of the Republican Central Committee of Carroll County. If you go to the local fire department carnivals you may have seen me working the voter registration booth. That experience has actually allowed me access to a number of unregistered voters.

The majority of new voters we sign up are students just coming of age to vote. I give them the card. When they hand it back, the overwhelming majority of them fill in "unaffiliated." At that point I ask them to sit down and we have a talk. I ask them why they don't want their vote to count. They seem shocked. Here are some points to be made

- Unaffiliated (a.k.a. independent) voters, in a primary election, can only vote for school board.
- Unaffiliated voters can't vote in local OR national Democratic OR Republican primaries as primaries are only reserved for voters who are registered as members of that party. If you are a registered member of the Green Party, for example, you can only vote for Green Party candidates in primaries, on both the national & local level – and that's, of course, only if there are any! This rule applies to all party affiliations.
- In many primary elections, particularly local ones, the eventual winner is determined.
 - In Carroll County, no Democrat has been elected in this century, for any office except school board.
 - In Baltimore City, Theodore R. McKeldin was the last Republican elected as mayor, and that was in 1963, 54 years ago.
 - There are some jurisdictions that go back and forth between parties, but some jurisdictions typically vote solidly one way or the other with long standing regularity. For example, Carroll County is known for its strong Republican voter base and Baltimore City is known for typically electing Democratic candidates.

My point is that, if you want your vote to count, and live in a jurisdiction that goes with the same party election after election after election, in order for your vote to affect the outcome, it is worth carefully thinking about whether it is in your best interests to register with the party that usually wins in that jurisdiction. This may be especially meaningful if it is common for that district to ONLY have candidates from the leading party. It does not mean that you agree with the national party line – although it will mean that you will only be able to vote in your registered party's national or local primaries. But this method may give you an opportunity to make your vote count on the local level.