

Proposed Resolution No. 7

Submitted by: NPMHU Committee on the Future

Universal Voter Registration and Vote by Mail

WHEREAS, voter turnout in the United States is disgracefully low, especially when compared to other countries with developed democratic processes; and

WHEREAS, less than half of those eligible to vote actually vote during midterm elections, and those numbers are only marginally higher during presidential election years; and

WHEREAS, the 2014 midterm election saw the lowest voter turnout in 70 years, with only 36 percent of eligible voters showing up to the polls; and

WHEREAS, the right to vote is essential to any functioning democracy; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, many states and localities have initiated measures that try to chip away at the right to vote and serve to disenfranchise and dissuade eligible voters; and

WHEREAS, since implementing automatic voter registration, the State of Oregon has added more than 50,000 voters to the state's rolls, and the States of Vermont, California, and West Virginia have passed similar legislation; and

WHEREAS, according to the Brennan Center for Justice, 28 more states as well as the District of Columbia are considering implementing such measures; and

WHEREAS, even after registering to vote, citizens must have a simple, convenient, and low cost means of exercising their right to vote; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Postal Service provides a modern, secure, efficient vehicle for voting that has proven to increase participation and make voting much more convenient; and

WHEREAS, the States of Oregon, Washington, and Colorado and many other locations have proven that vote by mail expands on existing absentee balloting, eliminates the embarrassing errors of malfunctioning electronic equipment and untrained poll workers, and preserves the necessary paper trail to certify elections; and

WHEREAS, the Postal Service provides a trusted, trained, and professional workforce to handle the ballots; and

WHEREAS, increased use of vote by mail will have the corollary effect of saving money that normally would be spent by state and local governments on training and paying poll workers, while at the same time providing the Postal Service with additional revenue;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the NPMHU supports automatic or universal voter registration for all citizens who reach voting age and for all persons who become citizens; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NPMHU supports and should continue to work for the passage of vote by mail legislation.