

Collegiate Student Advisory Task Force
Jocelyn Benson, Michigan Secretary of State

Project Description: Founded by Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson in September 2019, the Collegiate Student Advisory Task Force is a nonpartisan entity focused on improving youth voter engagement and civic participation. The 2023 – 2024 Collegiate Student Advisory Task Force (CSATF) is run by the Michigan Department of State in partnership with Campus Vote Project and Fair Elections Center, a national, nonpartisan voting rights organization that works to eliminate barriers to student voting. Task force members serve as student liaisons between the Michigan Department of State and their campus populations, advising on the unique experiences and barriers of student voters, and helping to ensure the voice of young people are heard in Michigan's elections.

Subject Area: Elections

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Executive Summary

History:

The CSATF has three main goals:

- Assess barriers and challenges to voter registration and voting faced by students in Michigan.
- Develop legislative recommendations and best practices to improve student voter engagement.
- Enact solutions on campus to resolve student voting barriers, improve student voter registration and turnout rates, and to educate peers about Michigan elections.

The department encourages undergraduate and graduate students attending a college or university in Michigan to apply and receives hundreds of applications each year. Successful applications participate in interviews by Department of State and Bureau of Elections staff. The department selects members based on their commitment to voting, prior experience, and answers to interview questions, with a maximum of two students per educational institution. Thirty-three students from 23 schools comprised the initial task force in 2019-2020. Twenty-five students from 18 schools served on the task force in 2022-2023. The 2023-2024 task force is made up of 30 students from 23 schools. The task force meets at least once a month. Students appointed to the 2023 - 2024 task force have the option to also enroll in a paid Campus Vote Project Democracy Fellowship. Fellows must commit an average of 10 hours a week to the program.

Significance:

The CSATF has identified barriers to improving youth voter turnout and recommended both administrative and legislative solutions. Identified issues cross a variety of categories that make it more difficult for young people to exercise their right to vote. The task force sent a list of priority recommendations to Secretary Benson in 2019 and shared a list of recommendations with Michigan legislators in 2023. Task force members have also engaged in on-campus solutions to boost voter turnout rates and provide educational opportunities for their peers, enabling the Department of State to continue its mission to provide free and fair elections to all Michiganders, especially young and first-time voters.

Impact/Results:

In 2022, Michigan had the highest youth voter turnout of any state studied by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University. 37% of voters ages 18-29 voted in Michigan, which was significantly higher than the national average youth turnout rate of 23%.

Additionally, Michigan was one of only four states where youth turnout was higher in 2022 than in 2018. Task force members contributed to the creation and execution of multiple Student Voting Summits in Michigan. They held a virtual summit in two parts in May and September of 2020. They also held summits in person at Oakland University in Rochester in October 2023, Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo in April 2024, and Wayne State University in Detroit in September 2024. These events brought together students, educators, elected officials and advocates from across Michigan for idea-sharing, coalition building and networking.

In 2024, task force members contributed to “Practice at the Polls” events at Henry Ford College and the Detroit Youth Summit, where they set up mock polling places to walk first time voters through each step of the voting process on Election Day. Students who participated in these events reported feeling more confident about exercising their right to vote.

Task force members conducted voter registration events at several Michigan college and university campuses in 2024, including Central Michigan University, Eastern Michigan University, Grand Valley State University, Macomb Community College, Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, Wayne State University and Western Michigan University. Task force members assisted with planning, organizing and hosting these events. Attendees were able to check their voter registration status and

received information on registration, requesting their absentee ballot, address changes and other items to increase knowledge of the voting process.

The Michigan Department of State held five youth voter engagement roundtables in 2024 in Flint, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Marquette and Traverse City. Task force members attended and assisted with planning and organizing these events.

The department launched Michigan's first "I Voted" sticker design competition in May of 2024, after task force members recommended it. The goal of the competition was to engage young people in elections and voting, and to gain positive media attention to raise awareness for voter engagement.

- The contest received 480 artist sticker design submissions.
- During the public voting phase, over 57,000 votes were cast to select the winning stickers. There were nine total winners, three in each of three categories: Elementary and Middle School (grades K-8), High School (grades 9-12) and a general category, which was open to all Michiganders.
- The department printed more than 4 million stickers and distributed them to county clerks to be given to voters.
- Several stickers went viral, including the popular "Werewolf sticker", which was featured on several national news outlets, including the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* and *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*.

The CSATF collaborated with Campus Vote Project and University of Michigan Law Professor Roseanna Sommers to create a set of tools geared at encouraging college students to register and vote. This initiative was based on compelling research, including a study published in *PS: Political Science and Politics* titled "[I will Register and Vote if you Teach Me How](#)", which found that classroom presentations are one of the most effective strategies for increasing voter registration and turnout.

Recognizing the value of this approach, the task force developed adaptive resources to assist faculty and student presenters in providing effective and accessible voter education. These tools include an [adaptive slide deck](#) geared to varied audiences, a concise 9-minute video presentation perfect for online classrooms, and a full [toolkit guide](#) with "dos and don'ts," a sample script, and a timeline for presenters. An example outreach email was also created to assist engagement with faculty members and encourage them to implement this program in their classes.

These efforts culminated in a comprehensive outreach project involving college students from thirty-four educational institutions across the state of Michigan. The study's findings revealed that classroom presentations improved registration rates by 6 percentage points and voting turnout by 2.6 percentage points vs. those that don't have classroom presentations. These findings emphasize the transformative potential of incorporating civic education into academic settings. By utilizing these resources and research-informed strategies, the task force has enabled campuses to enhance civic engagement and strengthen democratic participation among students.

Supporting Materials:

Secretary Benson announces 2019-2020 task force:

<https://www.michigan.gov/sos/resources/news/2019/09/19/secretary-benson-announces-33-participants-for-collegiate-student-advisory-task-force>

Secretary Benson names 25 students to the CSATF (2022-2023):

<https://www.michigan.gov/sos/resources/news/2022/04/22/secretary-benson-names-25-students-to-the-csatf>

Michigan Collegiate Student Advisory Task Force Report and Recommendations (December 17, 2019)

https://www.michigan.gov/sos/-/media/Project/Websites/sos/13lawensn/MCSATF_Report_2019.pdf?rev=abf449e0668a43b6832c6209fd40c41&hash=5CF9C6C671ED76377A802695706480BD

Report: Michigan's youth turnout in the 2022 election was best in the nation

<https://www.michigan.gov/sos/resources/news/2023/04/17/report-michigans-youth-turnout-in-the-2022-election-was-best-in-the-nation>

Michigan Collegiate Student Advisory Task Force 2023 Legislative Recommendation

<https://www.michigan.gov/sos/-/media/Project/Websites/sos/Students/Michigan-Student-Task-Force-Legislative-Recommendations.pdf?rev=684c18d477e142279125c050e073a5a5&hash=817F7A3A6CE2572D542EB22482EF6734>

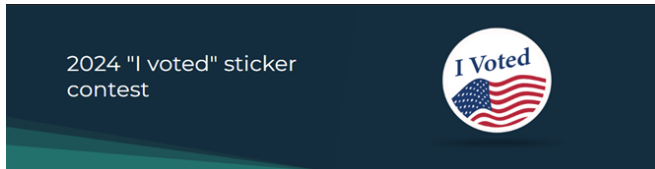
Letter to Michigan College and University Presidents:

<https://www.michigan.gov/sos/-/media/Project/Websites/sos/35lawens/CSATF-President-Letter.pdf?rev=10e5ec1f817c441bbde75e154af85a59&hash=CC923F2BEDAE310D70459F6580C2DD2E>

Secretary Benson announces 2024 "I Voted" Sticker Contest Design Winners

<https://www.michigan.gov/sos/resources/news/2024/09/04/secretary-benson-announces-2024-i-voted-sticker-design-contest-winners>

I Voted Sticker Contest rules and entry form:



2024 "I voted" sticker contest

Home > Elections > How to vote in Michigan > 2024 "I voted" sticker contest

Contest rules

Design

- Designs must be completed using [official entry form](#).
- Designs **MUST** include the phrase "I Voted" **AND** be nonpartisan in nature.
- Artwork must be original, non-AI generated, and not contain copyrighted or trademarked designs.

Entry

- Entries must be submitted by Sun, June 30, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.
- A maximum of two entries per person will be allowed.

Finalists, winners, and ordering

- Finalists will be selected via online voting open to the public on this page. Voting will occur throughout the month of July.
- Winners will be announced in August and will receive special recognition from Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson.

- Winning stickers will be available for election clerks to order for the November election.

Design tips and suggestions

- Entries can be created using your preferred method (digital, paint, crayon, mixed media, etc.)
- When submitting your entry, provide as high quality of resolution as possible.
- Most importantly, be creative and HAVE FUN!

*Final artwork will be scaled down to a 2" circle

Contest entry

By entering their contact information, entrants acknowledge they are over the age of 13. Entrants under the age of 13 must provide the name and contact information of a parent or legal guardian.

The contact information provided will only be utilized to contact winning entrants. Contact information for all entrants will be deleted after contest winners are notified.

The Michigan Department of State reserves the right to modify final designs for printing purposes, including cleaning, recoloring, and re-creating. By entering the contest, entrants affirm their design is their original artwork. Entrants allow the department to use, reproduce, edit, or publish their submission in whole or in part, and relinquish any rights to the submitted artwork and design upon submission.

All fields are required, unless labeled as (optional).

First Name

Last Name

Entrant's City

Entrant's School (optional)

Entry Category (choose one)

Elementary/Middle (K-8)

High School (9-12)

General (open to all Michiganders)

Attachment (Maximum file size is 10 MB)

No file chosen

Personally identifiable information collected on this form is limited to what is needed to complete your entry. Submitting an entry is voluntary. The names, grades, and schools of the winning entrants will be made public following the conclusion of the voting, as applicable. By submitting an entry, you consent for MDOS to use the submitted personal information as described. As a public body, MDOS is subject to the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), MCL 15.231 et seq., and information such as an entrant's name or grade may be disclosed in response to a FOIA request. For other ways your information is collected and may be used, visit [our policies](#).

Date of last update: 5/16/24

Sticker Examples:



Werewolf Sticker



Images of all the winning stickers

Photos from 2024 Michigan Student Voting Summit:



Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson moderates a panel discussion





Student task force members visit the White House in the Fall of 2024.

You did a tremendous job in ensuring
our election process was administered
efficiently and with professionalism.

Your patience and incredible communication
with the Clerk's staff and the public
did not go unnoticed.

Thank you!

Angelica

Thank you letter from City of Frankenmuth addressed to task force member Isiah Sageman.