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1. Midterm Elections and Primaries—What you need to know to maintain your vote.

The consensus among experts, according to AARP (June, 2022), is that some states have adopted measures that could restrict people’s ability to vote. Arizona has made it easier to purge people from the voting rolls and requiring proof of citizenship to vote. (The latter may be postponed until after November, 2022). The use of drop boxes has been reduced in Florida, Georgia and Texas. Texas requires either your social security number or driver’s license number on the application to request an absentee ballot; and that must be the driver license number used when first registering to vote. What should voters do:

- Check with your state to make sure your registration is up to date. Go to www.nass.org/Can-I-vote It is a tool to help you find out from your state if you registered.
- Check with your state election website to determine whether you need to show identification at the polling place and what kind to bring.
- Check with your state’s election website to see if the rules governing absentee or mail-in ballots have changed.

2. And the Primaries keep coming. There are several states that have yet to hold their statewide primaries. Be sure you are registered to vote.

July 9: Maryland

July 26: North Carolina (run-offs if needed)

August 2: Arizona, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Washington

August 4: Tennessee

August 9: Connecticut, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Vermont

August 13: Hawaii

August 16: Alaska, Wyoming, South Dakota (run-offs, if needed)

August 23: Florida, New York, Oklahoma (run-offs, if needed)

September 6: Massachusetts

September 13: Delaware, New Hampshire, Rhode Island

3. Reduction in Medicare Premiums for 2023. According to the Associated Press, Medicare recipients will get a premium reduction next year, due to overestimating the cost of covering an expensive new drug to treat Alzheimer’s. The premiums for Part B increased \$22/month this year. The amount of the reduction has not yet been announced.

4. How accurate are at-home COVID-19 tests? At home antigen tests can be quite accurate, especially if you have symptoms when you take them. Though the brands of rapid antigen tests have different level of accuracy, several are above 90% accurate when used by a symptomatic person (Consumer Reports, May, 2022). Most insurers, including Medicare Part B, will cover the tests. You can order tests from the federal government at www.COVIDtests.gov or check with your insurer or pharmacy. For more information, visit <https://www.cms.gov/how-to-get-your-at-home-OTC-COVID-19-test-for-free>

5. Can the at-home COVID-19 test be used after the expiration date? According to the US Food and Drug Administration, “the shelf-life is how long the test should work as expected and is measured from the date the test was manufactured. The expiration date is set at the end of the shelf-life. In some cases, the expiration date for a test may be extended. An extended expiration date means the manufacturer provided data showing that the shelf-life is longer than was known when the test was first authorized.” One can visit <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-covid-19-and-medical-devices/home-otc-covid-19-diagnostic-tests#list> to see if their “at-home test” has an extended shelf life. For example, the iHealth Test (in the orange and white box) has shown that most tests have been extended by 3 months past the date stamped on the back.

6. The History of Juneteenth. Last month, we celebrated Juneteenth, when the last slaves were freed after the Civil War, in Texas. National Public Radio did a podcast on the complete history of this event. (A special thank you to FEA-R member, Norma Sanders, for sharing this link.) Learn more at: www.npr.org/2021/05/25/1000159311/the-history-of-juneteenth

7. Haven't registered for the DoDDS Reunion in Kansas City (July 13-17)? Hundreds of your retired colleagues will be in Kansas City for the 34th DoDDS Reunion. If you would like to attend, you can register at the door for \$110. Visit <https://www.mydoddsreunion.com/> for more information (and to see who will be there!).
