

SUBJECT: Voting as a Social Determinant of Health

SUBMITTED BY: Student Association of the ACOFP on behalf of
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REFERRED TO: 2023 American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP)
Congress of Delegates

RESOLUTION NO. 10

- 1 WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (WHO) defines social determinants of health as “the
2 conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age
3 that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks”¹; and
- 4 WHEREAS, the US Department of Health and Human Services and the Healthy People 2030 initiative
5 list increasing the proportion of voting-age citizens who vote as one of their eight objectives to
6 improve health and well-being over the next decade²; and
- 7 WHEREAS, the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health recommends empowering all
8 groups in society through fair representation in decision-making about how society operates,
9 particularly in relation to its effect on health equity, and create and maintain a socially
10 inclusive framework for policy-making³; and
- 11 WHEREAS, voter suppression exacerbates health disparities and harms well-being by preventing
12 marginalized groups from voting for policies that will benefit their schools, housing,
13 healthcare, and communities⁴; and
- 14 WHEREAS, voter suppression policies may have lasting effects beyond the times where they are
15 enforced⁴; and
- 16 WHEREAS, in Oregon in 2016, when all eligible citizens were automatically registered to vote, nearly
17 68,000 additional votes were cast by people of color⁴; and
- 18 WHEREAS, predominantly White areas systematically receive more election resources than
19 predominantly non-White areas⁴; and
- 20 WHEREAS, African Americans are 10% less likely to vote than Whites and Latinx and Asian Americans
21 are 50% less likely to vote than whites⁷; and
- 22 WHEREAS, 63% of insured voters turnout to elections while only 34% of uninsured voters turnout⁹;
23 and
- 24 WHEREAS, citizens from the 10 healthiest states in the US voted at a rate 10% higher than citizens
25 from the 10 least healthy states in the US⁶; and

26 WHEREAS, eligible voters who do not vote are 1.3 times more likely to self-report poor physical
 27 health⁵; and

28 WHEREAS, states with voter suppression laws are less likely to expand Medicaid benefits and other
 29 legislation that promotes health equity⁴; and

30 WHEREAS, clinician-led, nonpartisan voter registration drives at university-affiliated health centers in
 31 the Bronx, New York was successful in registering 89% of eligible voters⁵; and

32 WHEREAS, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 empowers Federally Qualified Health Centers
 33 to provide voter services⁸; and

34 WHEREAS, the National Association of Community Health Centers ran a national voter registration
 35 campaign in 2008 where they registered over 18,000 new eligible voters⁷; and

36 WHEREAS, the Student Osteopathic Medical Association voted in October 2022 to recognize voting as a
 37 social determinant of health¹⁰; and

38 WHEREAS, the American Medical Association recognizes voting as a social determinant of health since
 39 June 2022³; now, therefore be it

40 RESOLVED, that the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP) recognizes voting is a
 41 social determinant of health.

FINAL ACTION: APPROVED as of March 29, 2023

References:

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2. Healthy People 2030, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Retrieved 12/10/22, from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>
3. American Medical Association Resolution 422. Voting as a Social Determinant of Health. <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/a22-422.pdf>. Published May 9, 2022. Accessed December 10, 2022.
4. HIng, Anna K. (2018) "The Right to Vote, The Right to Health: Voter Suppression as a Determinant of Racial Health Disparities," Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice: Vol. 12 : Iss. 6 , Article 5.
5. Brown, C.L., Raza, D. & Pinto, A.D. Voting, health and interventions in healthcare settings: a scoping review. Public Health Rev 41, 16 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40985-020-00133-6>
6. Edward P. Ehlinger and Carmen Rita Nevarez, 2021: Safe and Accessible Voting: The Role of Public Health, American Journal of Public Health 111, 45_46, <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2020.306011>
7. Liggett A, Sharma M, Nakamura Y, Villar R, Selwyn P. Results of a voter registration project at 2 family medicine residency clinics in the Bronx, New York. The Annals of Family Medicine. 2014;12(5):466-469. doi:10.1370/afm.1686
8. Text - H.R.2 - 103rd Congress (1993-1994): National Voter Registration Act of 1993. (1993, May 20). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/2/text>
9. Megan Schachter, The Electoral Determinants of Health: State Voting Laws and Their Effects on Health Outcomes, 32 Health Matrix 437 (2022)
10. Student Osteopathic Medical Association Resolution F-22-24. Voter Registration as a Social Determinant of Health. Approved October 27, 2022.