



**Make Freedom Count Patch
Girl Scouts West Central Florida Council's Own Patch
D,B,J,C,S,A**

For program information contact customerconnections@gswcf.org or call the Resource Center 813-281-4475. Patches are available WHILE SUPPLIES LAST. For current pricing or to purchase/order patches contact the Resource Center. Shipping and Handling charge will apply.

To earn the Make Freedom Count Patch, complete at least two activities from each of the Discover, Connect and Take Action sections..

A Historical Perspective of Voting in Florida

Early in our nation's history, the Framers of the Constitution decided that each state government could make the decision about who would be granted the right to vote. Most of the state governments extended this privilege to white male property owners. African Americans, women and Native Americans were denied this right. The Framers felt that property owners would be careful to vote for people who would protect property. Voting rights have evolved over the years. It took many years of hard work by these groups to achieve the equality in voting that has become our way of life today.

Our government officials are constantly working to improve and uphold the American democratic process and it is because of this that the United States serves as an important model for political freedom throughout the world.

Florida has had six Constitutions since it became a state on March 3, 1845. The first Constitution was drafted in Saint Joseph, now known as Port St. Joe. Presently, Florida is governed by the Constitution of 1968.

Florida limited the types of people who could vote up until the Civil War, during which time Florida seceded from the Union. After the Civil War, Florida's state government reorganized under Reconstruction. The new Constitution of 1868, provided for a centralized government. During Reconstruction, Florida's black citizens, previously slaves began to be involved in state politics. John Wallace, a black man, served in the Florida House of Representatives from 1871-1874, and the Florida Senate from 1875-1881. The Seminole Tribe was also entitled to a member in the House and the Senate. Women still did not get the right to vote in Florida until the 19th Amendment was passed. ON August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment passes with the state of Tennessee the last state, passing the amendment by a single vote, at the very last minute, during a recount!

- **Discover:** Girls understand themselves and their values and use their values knowledge and skills to explore the world.
 1. Identify and/or visit a polling place, which is the location where your parents/guardians vote. Write a short report or draw pictures describing what you observed.
 2. Name five (5) objects that are necessary in a polling place in order to conduct an election. [http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S/liuhki55htrpc1uw43nn2l30\)\)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-116-1954-XXVIII-POLLING-PLACES-EQUIPMENT-SUPPLIES.pdf](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S/liuhki55htrpc1uw43nn2l30))/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-116-1954-XXVIII-POLLING-PLACES-EQUIPMENT-SUPPLIES.pdf)
 3. Visit your local Supervisor of Elections office.
 4. Who is the Supervisor of Elections for your county? What functions does the Supervisor of Elections office perform? What are ways people can get involved with the election process? Use your Supervisor of Elections' website to find out!
 5. Find out the date of the next election in your county.
 6. Read a local newspaper and highlight articles that cover issues affecting your community. Design a service project that addresses one of those issues.
 7. List two (2) or more areas in your community where voter registration applications are displayed.
 8. Write a short essay or draw pictures describing the type of voting equipment used in your county.
 9. Name five (5) historical events in the US that define our election process today.
 10. List five (5) elected state officials and the length of term they are elected to serve.
 11. Identify the members of the Florida Legislature that represent the county where you live.
 12. Research to find instances in which one vote or a only a few votes made a difference in an election. Write a short report discussing what you found.
 13. Find out at what age you are eligible to vote. How can people who are not old enough to vote make their voices heard? Discuss this with your troop and write down your answers.
 14. Design a ballot box.
- **Connect:** Girls care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally.

1. Contact your League of Women Voters to identify groups within your community that are involved with voter registration activities. Contact these groups to see how you may become involved.
 2. Make a poster or other visual display that shows why people should vote and exhibit it at your school or local library. Example: An event or historical figure that illustrates how voting makes a difference.
 3. Write a short story or draw pictures on why voting is important and share with others.
 4. Interview a candidate running for statewide, county or city office.
 5. Draw pictures of things people do to make them good citizens and share or display at a public place.
- **Take Action:** Girls learn to identify issues in their local and global communities and come up with realistic possibilities for action.

1. Design a logo that might encourage people to vote.
2. Interview five (5) people to find out: (a) If they are registered to vote; (b) If so, did they vote in the last election? (c) Did they vote absentee or their polling place on Election Day? If they are not registered to vote, give them the number of their local Supervisor of Elections office.
3. Make up a song, poem or skit about voting. Display or perform it for another troop/group on in a public place.
4. Pretend that you are running for office. Make a PSA/commercial using a video camera or tape recorder that incorporates "How Your Vote Counts". Play the commercial for your troop.
5. Conduct a survey on what makes someone a good citizen. Present your findings to your troop.
6. Pretend that you are an elected official. Prepare a speech to convince people why they should vote. Present the speech to a group of people.
7. Research how to properly address and write a letter to a congressional representative. Choose an issue you have an opinion about and write a mock letter to a congressional representative. Tips on how this can be found at www.congress.org.
8. Participate in "Kids Voting Tampa Bay" activities on Election Day.

Girls may think of other activities they would like to complete instead of/in addition to the ones listed above.

Other Resources

- ❖ [Thewhitehouseproject.org](http://thewhitehouseproject.org)
- ❖ Journey series "It's Your World Change It" GSUSA 2008
- ❖ <http://forgirls.girlscouts.org/teens-13-17/> (Make a PSA: Dear Mr. President... How will you get us there?)

