

Register To Vote—Now?

BY HOWARD PEARRE

“A Republic ... if you can keep it,” said Benjamin Franklin when someone in the Philadelphia crowd shouted out asking what the founding fathers had created.

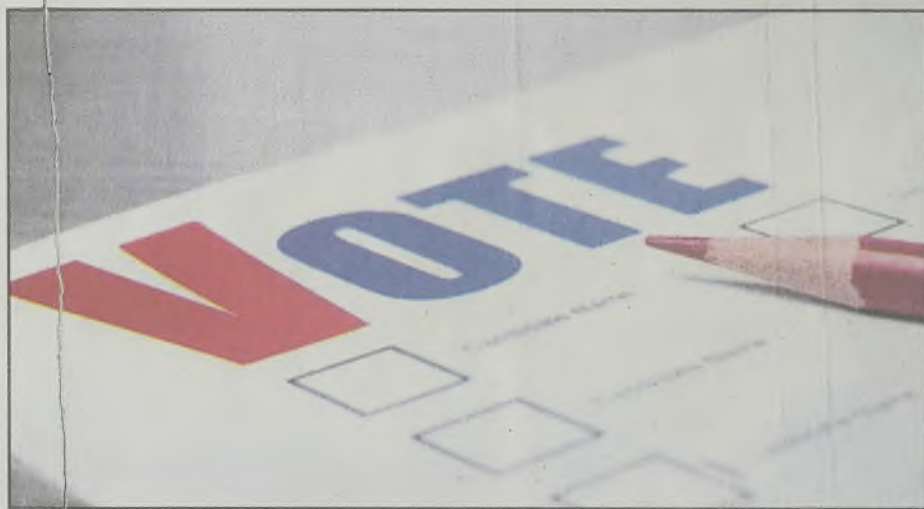
Last November, millions of Americans did their part and We, The People, kept our republic. The Grand Experiment in democracy was tested, and in spite of a violent mob’s attack on the Capitol on January 6, Joseph R. Biden was sworn in as the 46th president of the United States.

The 159 million citizens who voted, including more than 5.5 million North Carolinians, helped choose a new path for the country.

In less than two years, the Grand Experiment will be tested again. After spring primaries that are scheduled for March 8, 2022 (less than a year from now), every congressional seat in the country, including 13 in North Carolina (or possibly 14, depending on 2020 Census apportionment) and one of the state’s U.S. Senate seats, will be on the line. Citizens will flock to the polls or mail in witnessed ballots.

The country will choose either to continue moving forward or to reverse its direction; however, only citizens who are registered will be able to have a say about that direction. We need only look back to 2016 to see the disastrous consequences of an unwise choice.

If you voted in 2020, you probably are registered to vote in 2022. Even so, now is a good time to check your registration status to be sure. There is no reason to doubt the integrity of our state and county elections boards and processes based on their performance in 2020, but individual voters still have ultimate responsibility to



assure their registrations are valid and accurate.

If you did not vote in 2020, have moved, or changed your name, now CERTAINLY is the time to check your status while there still is plenty of time to take corrective action. Even a move across the hall in an apartment building could mean trouble if your registration does not reflect the new address. It is also a good time to check with family members, neighbors, and friends at church, work, or school to spread the word about checking their registrations. During the 2020 election, much was said about voting being suppressed, particularly for targeted groups. Powerful interests throughout the country tried mightily to do exactly that. Many of these strategies failed, but only because determined citizens persisted and demanded to fulfill their duties and privileges to vote. Sadly, however, many citizens played into the hands of those interests and voluntarily suppressed their own votes by failing to register and/or cast their ballots.

The campaign to suppress voting in the 2022 election is gaining steam in state legislatures throughout the country. Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp recently signed into law a bill that allows county boards to eliminate Sunday vot-

ing (read: “Souls To The Polls”) and makes it illegal to provide food and water to voters who have to stand in line to vote, sometimes for hours. If you think the same could not happen in North Carolina, you’ve not been paying attention. Will we keep our republic? You will get to decide, but only if you are registered to vote!

Department of Veterans Affairs. He is a former precinct chief judge with Forsyth County Board of Elections and has provided voter registration training sessions. He is a member of the Winston-Salem Writers.

How to check or update your registration

Howard Pearre retired from N.C. Vocational Rehabilitation and the

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FOOD LION

7,500 appointments available at joint vaccination event planned for April 10

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

Forsyth County Department of Public Health, Novant Health, and Wake Forest Baptist Health will hold a mass COVID-19 vaccination event for individuals 18 years of age and older on Saturday, April 10. The event will be held at two locations: the Winston-Salem Fairgrounds Education Building and Novant Health’s mass vaccination site at Hanes Mall.

Appointments for Fairgrounds, 414 Deacon Blvd., are now available at <https://beatcovid.wakehealth.edu/preregistrationWSFG410.cfm>. Appointments at Novant Health’s Hanes Mall location can be scheduled at GetVaccinated.org.

Forsyth Public Health, Novant Health and Wake Forest Baptist Health are also scheduling first dose appointments during the week for their normal vaccine operations using other vaccines.

On Saturday, April 10, approximately 7,500 doses will be available from a shipment the three organizations received of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine, which is a single shot vaccine. All three vaccines that are now available are built on years of research and have been proven to be effective in preventing hospitalizations and deaths.

It’s important for those who book an appointment to either attend the appointment or to cancel or reschedule at least two hours ahead of time so staff can schedule someone else. Those who need to cancel should follow the instructions in their appointment confirmation email.

Vaccinations are the best way to contain COVID-19 and protect against the disease. Currently, 23% of Forsyth County residents 18 years of age and older have been fully vaccinated. On Wednesday, April 7, every adult in North Carolina will be eligible to get the vaccine.

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