

ALABAMA STATE CAPITOL
600 DEXTER AVENUE
SUITE S-105
MONTGOMERY, AL 36130



(334) 242-7200
FAX (334) 242-4993
WWW.SOS.ALABAMA.GOV
JOHN.MERRILL@SOS.ALABAMA.GOV

JOHN H. MERRILL
SECRETARY OF STATE

Nominating State Office:

Secretary of State John H. Merrill
Alabama State Capitol
600 Dexter Avenue
Suite S-105
Montgomery, AL 36130

Staff Contact & Project Lead:

John Bennett
Deputy Chief of Staff/Director of Communications
Office: 334-242-4133
John.Bennett@sos.alabama.gov

Project Title:

"We'll See You At The Poll Campaign"

Project Description:

The "We'll See You At The Poll Campaign" was designed as a collaborative effort to promote voter registration and participation amongst eligible Alabamians throughout the state. Through the use of digital media ads, instructional YouTube videos, printed materials, voter registration mobile units, and other efforts, the total number of registered voters and voter participation in Alabama has skyrocketed to an outstanding historical record since the implementation of the project.

General Subject Area:

Elections



Executive Summary

History:

When Secretary John Merrill took office in January of 2015, he was committed and determined to ensure that every eligible U.S. citizen that is a resident of Alabama is registered to vote and has a valid photo ID. With the help of his team and the people of Alabama, he has made great strides to accomplish this goal, which involves initiatives like voter mobile units, promotional materials like television advertisements, posters, and statewide commercial spots, online voter registration, the ERIC mailing, and a statewide Student Mock Election for children below the voting age.

In March 2015 and 2016, Secretary Merrill reached out to all members of the Alabama Legislature and asked each of them to provide three specific days and venues in their districts where the Secretary of State's Office could schedule a drive for voter registration and photo voter ID issuance. This invitation was also extended to all Probate Judges in the state. As a result, the Secretary of State's Office visited every county in Alabama with the mobile ID unit at least one time in both years. Since June 3, 2014, a citizen must be registered to vote and present a valid form of photo ID in order to participate in an election. These voter registration/photo ID drives allow citizens to take the first step in making their vote count. Between 2015 and 2016, 103 mobile units have gone out across the state of Alabama. **We have also sent staff members to the homes of individuals who are not able to visit the mobile location so we could produce a voter ID card for them at their home when it has been necessary.**

In 2015 and 2016, Secretary Merrill collaborated with renown college football coaches Nick Saban and Gus Malzahn and professional athletes Deontay Wilder and Charles Barkley to create voter registration promotional posters and television advertisements to improve voter registration and participation. The video advertisements were played on the jumbotron at Auburn University's Jordan-Hare Stadium and Bryant-Denny Stadium at The University of Alabama, as well as local and statewide television and radio stations, while posters promoting these efforts were/are available at local Board of Registrar's Offices and mobile units where citizens are registering to vote. Secretary Merrill also appeared in several commercial spots that were aired on television across the state in order to stress the importance of voter registration and participation.

In February 2016, the Alabama Secretary of State's Office unveiled the Electronic Voter Registration system to save taxpayer dollars, increase the accuracy of voter rolls, and provide a convenient yet secure option for Alabamians who wish to register to vote or update their registration information. Voters now have the ability to register via the Secretary of State's website at www.alabamavotes.gov/vote. Once their online registration has been completed, a paperless form is submitted electronically to the Boards of Registrars in their home county. **The implementation of online voter registration is a first in Alabama's history.** In May 2016, the "Vote for Alabama" app was officially released, which is available to all iPhones and Androids. The "Vote for Alabama" app is built to enable all Alabamians to register to vote and locate their registration information, including polling locations and the date of the next election in their area. In addition, this app allows users to become ambassadors for the Secretary of State's Office and reach members of the community that may be neglected by traditional forms of registration. Secretary Merrill also released an instructional YouTube video to aid citizens in the use of these new services.

In July 2016, approximately 1.2 million eligible Alabamians who were either not registered to vote or in need of updating their voter registration information received a Mail-In Voter Registration Application. This effort was in cooperation with the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), which identifies eligible citizens who are not yet registered to vote, and member states must contact those citizens, educating them on the most efficient means of registering. Alabamians who received the application had the opportunity to register to vote or update their information by mailing their form back to their local Board of Registrars Office, visiting www.alabamavotes.gov/vote, or downloading the "Vote for Alabama" app. ERIC is a non-profit organization with the sole mission of assisting states to improve the accuracy of America's voter rolls and increase access to voter registration for all eligible citizens. ERIC is governed and managed by states who choose to join and was formed in 2012 with assistance from The Pew Charitable Trusts.



In October 2016, the Secretary of State's Office hosted a statewide Student Mock Election for all students in grades 4-12 to voice their opinion in the 2016 Presidential Election. Each school received a unique code generated by the SOS IT Division to access the online ballots, and the event closed with an impressive 174,125 total votes from 441 public, private, parochial/Christian, and homeschools from across the state. The youths elected Donald Trump to the presidency with 75,878 votes, 66,871 students voted for Hillary Clinton, and Gary Johnson and Jill Stein finished with 17,191 and 14,185 votes, respectively. The Mock Election served many purposes. It not only taught students the importance of voting while allowing them to voice their opinion in the presidential election before the voting age, but it prepared all the teachers, principals, and parents who were involved for the real election on November 8, 2016.

Significance:

Secretary Merrill believes that the most fundamental rights Americans are afforded is the right to vote. The purpose of each of these initiatives is to encourage involvement within the electoral process and to ensure that each eligible citizen of Alabama is afforded the necessary educational materials to be an informed voter.

Impacts/Results:

As a result of Secretary Merrill's efforts, over **586,950** Alabamians have registered to vote since he took office on January 19, 2015, which currently sets the total to over **3,321,270** registered voters in the state. **1.25 million** voters participated in the March 1, 2016 Presidential Primary Election, making it the largest turnout (40.68%) in a gubernatorial or Presidential Primary Election, while a record **2.1 million** Alabamians voted in the November 8, 2016 Presidential General Election. **All of these numbers are records for the State of Alabama!**

Supporting Materials:

I. Media: 2015 & 2016 Voter Registration Promotion Posters & Television Advertisements

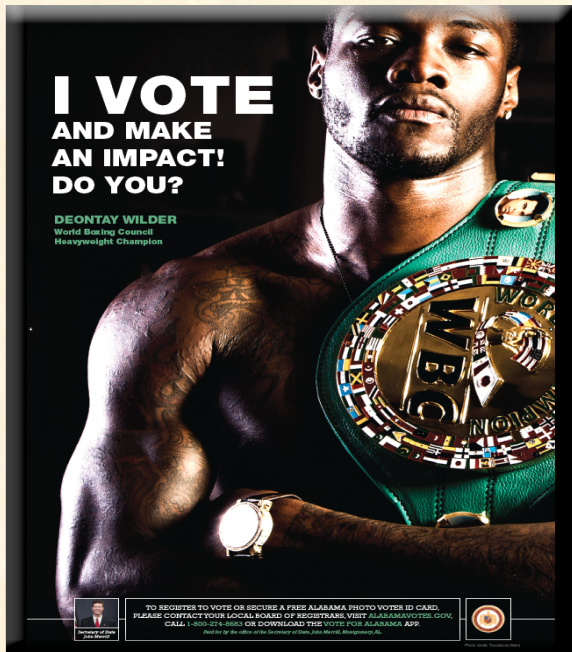
Alabama Head Football Coach Nick Saban, Auburn Head Football Coach Gus Malzahn, World Boxing Heavyweight Champion Deontay Wilder, and former NBA Star Charles Barkley assisted Secretary Merrill with encouraging voter registration by promoting Alabama's Photo Voter ID Law in the state through television and radio advertisements and one-of-a-kind collectible posters.



**University of Alabama Coach
Nick Saban-2015**



**Auburn University Coach
Gus Malzahn-2015**



**World Boxing Heavyweight Champion
Deontay Wilder-2016**



**Former NBA Star
Charles Barkley-2016**

I. Media: 2015 & 2016 Voter Registration Promotion Posters & Television Advertisements Continued

The following videos are available on the Alabama Secretary of State's YouTube page and have been played on television and radio stations throughout the state.

What Do You Mean You're Not Registered To Vote?!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAcVN6d5PgY>

Boom! Gus Malzahn Wants You To Register To Vote



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flfV7kBu0G0>

World Heavyweight Champion Deontay Wilder Votes! Do You?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zY9WkpSequ8>

Charles Barkley Wants You To Register To Vote!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpwGWuD-luw>

I. Media: 2015 & 2016 Voter Registration Promotion Posters & Television Advertisements Continued

Secretary Merrill was featured in multiple commercial spots that were aired on television across the state in order to stress the importance of voter registration and participation.



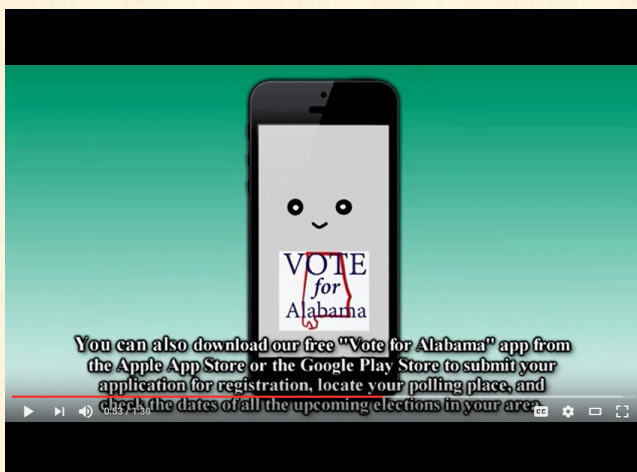
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B-ejmhJwsQjyeIRWU0ZycU1YTHM>

*To view each commercial spot, click the above link and select the folders to access the videos.

II. Media: Instructional Videos

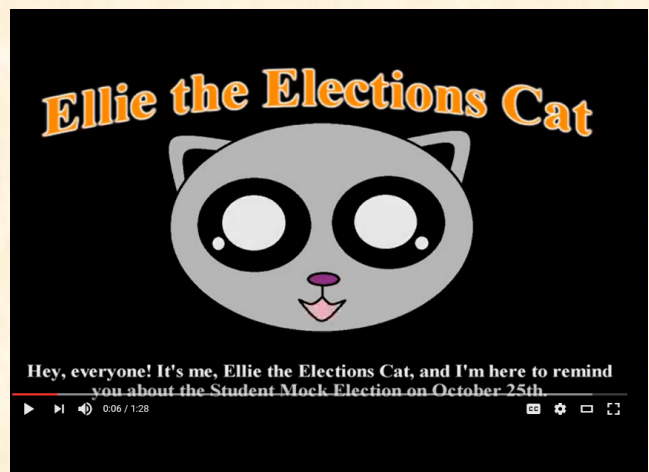
The following videos are also available on the Alabama Secretary of State's YouTube page and were created to serve as instructional guides for eligible, prospective voters who are 18 years and older, as well as the 4th through 12th grade students and Alabama teachers who participated in the Statewide Student Mock Election.

How To: Register to Vote in Alabama



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REG5ObX-g8M>

Ellie the Elections Cat Mock Election Promo



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPIXag-tuiw>