



2020 ELECTION TOOLKIT

Ideas and Tips for Tripling Your Vote

What's Included

| | |
|---|----|
| A Letter From Ellen Carmichael, CARE Action..... | 2 |
| What's at Stake For America and The World? | 3 |
| What Does Advocacy Look Like in 2020? | 3 |
| Step 1: Make a Voter Plan..... | 4 |
| Step 2: Inform & Educate Candidates and Voters..... | 4 |
| Amplify Your Voice On Social Media | 5 |
| Triple Your Vote With 1 Click | 6 |
| Send An Op-Ed or Letter To The Editor | 6 |
| Attend a Representative's Virtual Town Hall..... | 8 |
| CARE's Key Advocacy Issues..... | 9 |
| Overcoming Advocacy Fatigue | 10 |

A Letter From Ellen Carmichael

Executive Director, CARE Action

CARE Action needs your vote, voice and leadership

Dear Friends,

During incredibly challenging times, in a rapidly changing world facing a global health pandemic, rising poverty and hunger, and racial injustice, **CARE is asking you to use your voice and show candidates that voters like you demand strong U.S. leadership right now in building back a more just and equal world.**

In 2020, CARE and CARE Action are tackling unprecedented challenges the same way we have been for 75 years — **working shoulder-to-shoulder alongside the most vulnerable communities around the globe to fight poverty and achieve social justice.** We share this work with thousands of advocates, partners and supporters nationwide who speak up for U.S. policy reforms that move our mission forward. Creating change for a better world — from ending global poverty to removing the barriers to women’s and girls’ empowerment and eliminating gender-based violence — starts with supporters, like you.

We each have a stake in building a better world, because American values and our role as a global humanitarian leader depends on it. The stakes are high and critically important:

- The world faces the **worst humanitarian crisis since World War II** with nearly 80 million people forcibly displaced from their homes.
- 1.2 billion people worldwide live in **extreme poverty.**
- Women and girls face **disproportionate rates of gender-based violence**, including rape, sexual harassment, and exploitation, made even worse by COVID-19 lockdowns.
- Women are dying from **preventable pregnancy-related complications** at a rate of 1 every 104 seconds. When compounded with COVID-19, the damage to women, children and families is devastating.
- **Global hunger and malnutrition rates are rising** and likely to double with the spread of COVID-19.

The world is looking to the United States for meaningful action towards a more just and equal future. They’re watching the protests that magnify the racial and social injustices and gender inequality that’s been rampant throughout American history. They’re waiting to see how the U.S. will lead from here. **This election, your voice and vote are part of that leadership.**

The 2020 election is here, and CARE Action is committed to helping you inform candidates and voters about the importance of global justice issues, know how, when and where to vote, and how to encourage three of your friends to join you. **Thank you for working alongside us** and for using your vote, voice and power to build back a just, equal world for everyone.

Warmly,

Ellen Carmichael
Executive Director
CARE Action

What's at Stake For America and The World?

It's time to stand up and make 2020 the year we finally put gender equality and racial and social justice front and center on domestic and global agendas so that everyone thrives. With economies shuttered due to COVID-19, there is a very real possibility that more than 500 million people will slip back into poverty and we may not be able to reach the millions of people already in need of humanitarian assistance to survive.



As a CARE supporter, you value America's standing as a global humanitarian leader and know how deeply connected we all are despite the miles that stand between us. You understand that helping women lead, eradicating racial and social injustice, and making women equal, especially during COVID-19, are among the greatest challenges of our generation, but it can be done

Whether you plan to vote by mail or in-person this year, we want you to be educated, responsible and safe while practicing your right to vote. Take the first step now by visiting the resources below and learning the values that CARE and our supporters stand for today.

- [5 Reasons Why Your Vote Matters](#)
- [We Need to Do Better: CARE's Statement on Fighting For Equality, Inclusion, and Social Justice.](#)
- [CARE's Global Response to COVID-19](#)

What Does Advocacy Look Like in 2020?

Standing up and taking action looks different this year in the midst of COVID-19, with video conversations and virtual events replacing in-person activities. Instead of meeting face-to-face with candidates and campaign staff, CARE advocates are Zooming with their communities and representatives to share what they stand for and why they're voting this year. One phone call, video chat, and text message at a time, CARE advocates are making a difference in challenging times. **Get started below with the tools you need to make your voice heard and your vote count in 2020.**

Five Reasons Why Your Vote Matters in 2020

CARE advocates know that when you engage with candidates on the issues and amplify your own voice, you send a powerful message that you are passionate about ending global poverty and creating a more just and equal world. That's why it's so important to vote.

[Read the top five reasons why your vote and your voice matter more than ever in 2020.](#)

Step 1

Make a Voter Plan: Know When, Where and How to Vote

Whether you're a first-time voter or you've been voting for years, **everyone needs to check their voter information, especially as states roll out new rules given COVID-19 lockdowns.**

Visit [CARE's Civic Action Center](#) to:

- Verify your voter registration status
- Register to vote online
- Find your polling place
- Request an absentee ballot in your state
- Understand election restrictions under COVID-19
- Visit your official state website for more guidance

New voters should start their voter registration online as soon as possible, and then begin to plan whether they will vote early, by mail, or in-person on November 3.

Returning voters should confirm that they're registered at their current address so that their ballot or voter information is delivered to the correct location. **Using CARE Action's online tools, you can also find out how to get an absentee ballot, where your polling place is, and how soon you can vote by mail.**

Get started on your voter plan now at care.org/elections

Step 2:

Inform & Educate Candidates and Voters

The urgency to speak out in solidarity with those who are so often overlooked and underserved has never been greater. You've heard CARE say that your vote *and* voice matter. **This is where your voice comes in.** You can speak out and educate, inform and influence your friends, family and candidates in easy ways:

- **Talk to your friends, families and colleagues about how powerful their vote is** to achieving social and racial justice worldwide. Use this toolkit to help with talking points and conversation starters.
- **Educate candidates about the values that are important to you** and your hopes for how this election will shape our future. Learn more about meeting virtually with candidates and representatives below.
- **Use your powerful influence to help people understand what's at stake** for America and the world. Get educated on these topics using the resources in this toolkit.

We want every voter to take part in this historic election process so that together, we build back a world that's safer, healthier, more just and equal for all. Unfortunately, **only about 56% of eligible voters cast ballots in the 2016 election¹**. In 2020, we need to do better. We're asking you to **use your voice to have important conversations**, whether that's in-person, on the phone, by text, through social media, with an email or op-ed or letter to the editor. **We know these conversations are challenging, so we're providing samples, templates and ideas to get you started.**

Only 56% of eligible voters cast ballots in the 2016 election. In 2020, we need to do better.

Source: Pew Research Center

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/05/21/u-s-voter-turnout-trails-most-developed-countries/>

1. AMPLIFY YOUR VOICE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

A single post on your Facebook or Instagram has the potential to reach and influence hundreds of people. Posting several times about the issues you care about can make an even greater impression. **Use our sample social media posts and images below to share on your newsfeed or Story.** Tag friends and family to ensure they see it, and when appropriate, tag specific representatives or candidates who you want to influence. Don't forget to respond to comments on your post and share resources, like CARE's Civic Action Center, for those who want to learn more about your advocacy.

- This election cycle, we have the chance to fight for the dignity of women and girls everywhere. Visit @CARE's Civic Action Center and make sure you are ready to vote on Nov. 3: care.org/elections
- I know that a more just, equitable world depends on voters like me making my voice heard on November 3. Are you ready? Join me on @CARE's Civic Action Center and check to see if you're registered to vote. care.org/elections
- 🗣️🗣️🗣️ So, you're ready to vote, but are your friends? Commit to encourage three friends to vote on #ElectionDay and @CARE will help you get them to the polls: <https://bit.ly/3heJWWA>
- Hey friends! Do you want to TRIPLE your impact this election? Start by asking three friends to vote on #ElectionDay w/ @CARE: <https://bit.ly/3heJWWA>



Click on the images above to download and post from your social media accounts.

2. TRIPLE YOUR VOTE WITH THREE FRIENDS

[Triple Your Vote With 1 Click](#)

One of the most important things you can do right now is triple the impact of your vote by encouraging three friends to vote in-person or by mail in November's historic election. Sometimes a nudge from a friend is all they need!

[Make your commitment here to triple your vote](#) and CARE Action will send you helpful information on how to get others to join you at the polls or the kitchen table with a mail-in ballot ahead of November 3. To see global change, we need every single person who cares about the eradication of poverty and social injustice to make their voice heard.

3. SEND AN OP-ED OR LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF YOUR LOCAL PAPER

Connect With Your Regional Advocacy Manager

CARE Action's team of Regional Advocacy Managers are your connection to CARE's legislative agenda and global work. They can work directly with you to craft your Letter to the Editor or Op-Ed, submitting your final piece, and answering questions on advocating with CARE.

- Jonathan Young, West: jonathan.young@care.org
- Katie Kraft, Midwest: katie.kraft@care.org
- Savannah Fox, Northeast: savannah.fox@care.org
- Whitnev Griggs, Southeast: whitnev.griggs@care.org

Op-eds and letters to the editor are great ways to influence and educate a wide audience. They're also surprisingly easy to write and get published. Specific guidelines are usually provided on a newspaper's website. Both should be based on information the newspaper has recently published and/or current events they've referenced. Check out our tips below or reach out to one of CARE's Regional Advocacy Managers for personalized, one-on-one training on submitting and publishing your piece.

- **Stick to the wordcount and your news source's guidelines:** A letter to the editor (LTE) is short (around 250 words or less) and references a story or column. An op-ed can be longer (400-500 words) and makes a new point or counterpoint to the article.
- **Learn about the issue:** Familiarize yourself with CARE's issues and talking points and make sure your LTE is accurate before submitting. CARE's Regional Advocacy Managers are available to help review your piece and offer feedback.
- **Find your angle:** The more tailored, local and timely you are, the higher your chances for success. Find a "hook" for your piece to make it stand out. Add compelling statistics from this toolkit or from CARE's website to add legitimacy to your argument.
- **Get inspired:** See our sample template and look for other examples that have already been placed in your local or national papers.
- **Make a call-to-action:** Keep your call-to-action, or what you want someone to do, prominent and clear. Don't forget to mention CARE!
- **Promote:** Send your published LTE to your member(s) of Congress via social media or their website, share with CARE's Regional Advocacy Manager's, promote it on social media and share it with your community, CARE staff and your fellow advocates!

Here's a sample op-ed you can customize and make your own

As the U.S. records almost 200,000 deaths, it has become abundantly clear that COVID-19 is one of the greatest challenges our generation will face as it focuses global attention on the stark social and economic injustices that are rampant everywhere. In addition to personal and economic devastation caused by the disease, the world is also facing:

- The highest level of humanitarian need since 1945
- A record 80 million people displaced by conflict
- 820 million who don't have enough to eat.

Here in the U.S. and abroad, these devastating crises are threatening to erase decades of global progress toward ending poverty. The United States does not exist in the world alone. We're fundamentally connected in countless ways to all other countries on earth. Our health, safety, security, economy, culture, progress and global standing are directly connected to the wellbeing of all countries. What we're seeing in other parts of the world is caused in part by our engagement or lack of engagement as American citizens.

At the same time, spiking global and American social unrest, unemployment, hunger, poverty and deaths from COVID 19, alongside the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and countless others, magnify the systemic racism that has always existed. Millions of people now recognize how much work must be done. These crises demand a global response on a massive scale to balance inequities that harshly impact our most marginalized and vulnerable citizens. They demand that women be heard because their leadership, resiliency and capacity for changemaking are vital for ensuring global health, safety, and recovery for all families. In short, we must make women equal.

I am an advocate for CARE, the global humanitarian organization that has worked for more than 75 years to reduce poverty and eradicate social injustice by working alongside women. I've learned that advocacy is powerful and that our representatives listen to our opinions and depend on them to influence their decisions. However, they only listen when citizens show up and use their voices. As we approach Election Day this November, using our voices by voting has never been more important. The world is counting on you.

Here's a sample letter to the editor you can customize and make your own

Dear Editor,

Your article today (provide date) titled, _____ (fill in with title of any appropriate, current article) is an excellent example of why every voter needs to show up for Election Day 2020. It's time for everyone to stand up and make sure that gender equality, racial injustice, economic disparities and COVID 19 recovery are the most important issues that candidates and voters talk about during this election cycle.

I am an advocate for [CARE](#), the humanitarian organization that works alongside a global community to advance gender equality and eradicate poverty so that everyone thrives. The complicated issues we're facing globally need clear solutions and strong U.S. leadership.

Together, we can build back a more just and equal world.

Sincerely,

_____(your signature)

4. ATTEND A REPRESENTATIVE'S VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

Members of Congress host town hall events so they can meet their constituents face-to-face. **Town halls are excellent opportunities to ask your representatives questions, make comments and requests, and listen as they explain their ideas, policies, and plans.** They're also great ways to meet fellow constituents who may be interested in hearing what you have to say. **Now that everything's gone online, town halls look a little different than they used to but, that may actually provide better opportunities for constituents to take part.**

- To find out when your representatives are attending a town hall meeting, go to:
 - Your representative's website and look for events they'll be hosting or attending
 - The [Town Hall Project](#) to find events near you
- Invite friends and family members to log on with you
- If you get the opportunity to engage with your elected office or their staff, introduce yourself, tell them where you live, mention that you are a CARE supporter, and tell them that you think one of America's strongest values is our longstanding ability to provide effective, sustainable foreign assistance and the importance of gender equality.
- Ask how they will support that value in the months and years to come, along with any other questions you have.

You might be asking, **do these four methods really work to influence, educate and inform voters and candidates? Yes!** Our representatives care what their constituents think and share. According to a recent survey conducted by the Congressional Management Foundation, a significant percentage of Congressional offices felt that social media became more important during COVID-19 for understanding constituents' views and opinions. No matter which tools you use, just reaching out is critical.

95% of Congressional offices believe that personalized messages from constituents are important to understand their views and opinions on issues.

Source: Congressional Management Foundation



CARE's Key Advocacy Issues

CARE's mission is the same as it has been for decades — **to empower women to reach their full potential, eradicate poverty and achieve social justice.** The COVID-19 pandemic and rampant racial injustice have reinforced our commitment to building a more just and equal world for everyone. Here's what CARE is focused on right now:

- **WOMEN, GIRLS AND COVID-19**

The COVID-19 global pandemic impacts everyone, but women and girls carry the heaviest burdens. They're caretakers, frontline workers, educators, health workers, and so much more. **Women are leading in their communities and are the key to changing our world for the better, and as such, they must be at the center of global COVID-19 response efforts.** They must be included in conversations and given the resources they need to keep themselves and others safe. Congress and the Administration have a responsibility to ensure that the most vulnerable communities worldwide have access to water, sanitation, hygiene, education, healthcare and nutrition and that the unique needs of women and girls are met.

[Learn more about CARE's Rapid Gender Analysis of COVID 19](#)

- **GENDER EMPOWERMENT**

Women and girls make up the majority of the 1.2 billion people who live in extreme poverty. All around the world, racial injustice, social and cultural norms, violence and **discriminatory rules, behaviors and traditions limit women's opportunities and choices.** They're blocked from accessing vital resources, going to school, finding jobs, receiving health care, choosing their own marriages, or planning their families and futures. In addition, an estimated one in three women globally experiences gender-based violence in their lifetime and that number rises in humanitarian emergencies.

[Learn more about CARE's work to empower women and achieve gender equality](#)

- **FOREIGN ASSISTANCE**

Foreign assistance utilizes only one percent of the total federal budget, yet it packs a valuable punch. The lifesaving assistance it provides combats deadly diseases (including pandemics), provides access to basic education for millions of girls, helps families access clean drinking water, provides small-scale farmers with the knowledge they need to grow healthy, sustainable crops and so much more. Right now, the world is facing a global pandemic, rising hunger and poverty, and the biggest refugee crisis in modern history with more than 80 million people displaced from their homes and countries. A robust and secure foreign assistance budget can help the U.S. and the world to address all of that while we build back a stronger, healthier and more equal world for everyone.

[Learn more about the world saving power of the foreign assistance budget.](#)

- **HEALTH**

By focusing on women's, children's and adolescent health, CARE helps prevent hundreds of thousands of deaths and disabilities every year. **Reproductive healthcare provides women with the information, resources and services they need to time and space healthy pregnancies, avoid pregnancy-related deaths and disabilities and raise healthy children.** CARE also addresses women's health needs in response to violence and children's nutritional health needs. When women and families are healthy, they're empowered to build healthier lives, futures and communities.

[Learn more about CARE's work to improve the health of women, girls and children](#)

Overcoming Advocacy Fatigue

Maybe it's the stress of COVID-19, crowds of people, speaking in public or talking to strangers, but everybody gets a little anxious when it's time to advocate. We get it. Even those who do this a lot get nervous from time to time. It's natural! The issues we stand for are important and we care about them deeply. For some, however, anxiety stands in the way of their ability to participate in some forms of advocacy. There are lots of ways you can use your voice, vote and influence to help get out the vote. The most important thing is to find what works for you. Here are some ideas:

- Tell your [Regional Advocacy Manager](#) what you are and are not comfortable with. They're here to support you and will never push you farther than you want your advocacy to go. They can also help you design an advocacy plan that eases your mind, shares your voice and helps you to [Triple Your Vote](#).
- Post CARE's pre-made social media posts on your feeds and stories or, go to CARE's feeds and like, comment and share.
- Vote! It's the most important way you can advocate for real change right now. If you live in a state that does not already vote by mail, and you don't want to visit a polling place, use the [CARE's Civic Action Center](#) to map out when, where and how to vote in your state.
- Educate your circle. You don't have to join a crowd, speak to an audience or confront a member of Congress to have a big influence on this year's election. Just talk to *your* people, *your* friends and family, coworkers and neighbors and those who you trust will listen. Tell them about the importance of U.S. leadership in building back a more just and equal world. Tell them you're voting. Ask them if they've made a plan to vote this year – and offer to help them too. These conversations make a huge difference.
- Ask friends for support to take part in advocacy opportunities that make you nervous. Sometimes, it's easier to do hard things if we have a friend do them with us.
- Use your unique talents. Make art, write blogs, take photos or dance it out. Find your own way of expressing yourself, sharing your viewpoint and influencing your people so that everyone gets out to vote.

We all care about making change happen and making it possible for everyone to use their voice and vote. We're here to support you, just like you support us. We're in this together. Let's advocate your way!

