

Civics in the classroom: 2009 Mock Election starts Oct. 26

Local News

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - Before Washington voters weigh in on November's ballot issues, students across the state will have their own say about this year's much-hyped measures.

Starting October 26, students grades K-12 can participate in the annual Washington State Mock Election, a program of the Washington Office of Secretary of State that educates future voters about the principals of voting.

"This is a fantastic way for students to understand the responsibility voters have in making important decisions for the state," said Secretary of State Sam Reed. "We are eager to use this project to get a new generation of voters excited about having a voice in Washington."

This year in the Mock Election, older students will vote on actual statewide measures Initiative 1033 and Referendum 71. Younger students will take a stand on more age-appropriate issues listed on their special ballots.

A non-partisan educational tool that promotes civic awareness in classrooms, the Mock Election can be found online at www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/mock . Educators will also find free "I Voted" stickers, lesson plans, and voting instructions on the Web site under Teacher Resources.

The Mock Election has historically drawn immense participation from schools all over Washington, with nearly 18,000 students voting last year.

"The Mock Election was truly a great introduction to the voting process," said Elizabeth Coghlan, a teacher in the Clover Park School District, who had her class participate in the 2008 Mock Election.

Online voting this year opens Monday, October 26, at 9 a.m. and closes Friday, October 30, at noon. For more information and to order free "I Voted" stickers, e-mail just4you@secstate.wa.gov or visit www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/mock .