



Our view: Change the future today: Vote early

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You don't have to wait for Election Day to vote in Louisiana. In 2006, a state law took effect that changed the term "absentee voting" to "early voting."

That means you no longer need to have a reason to vote before Election Day.

Early voting for the Nov. 4 election began Tuesday and will continue, except Sunday, through Tuesday, Oct. 28.

Voting hours are 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the registrar's office in each parish.

The Rapides Parish Registrar of Voters is in the Rapides Parish Courthouse at 700 Murray St. in downtown Alexandria.

That small change in legal language makes it easier than ever to vote, and we urge taxpayers to start a new tradition by planning to vote early.

There's always a chance that something will come up on Election Day that will keep you from getting to the polls.

Why take the chance?

And why leave all the decisions to the other guy or gal?

Voter turnout has been abysmally low for non-presidential elections. On Oct. 4, about 30 percent of Louisiana's 2.9 million registered voters bothered to vote. We thank the 30 percent -- and wonder why the rest of the electorate seems not to care.

Everyone in Louisiana talks about change, improvements and an end -- once and for all -- to the corruption that has hobbled the state and its reputation and left its citizens at the bottom of the heap when it comes to anything vital.

Much is at stake during this election cycle, starting with the election of a new president who will set the course for the United States.

Citizens have a responsibility to take an active part in the democratic process. It starts with voting -- electing officials who will heed the voice of the people -- and then holding them accountable.

Voting is your chance to speak your mind.

No one is in the voting booth with you. Just you, your hopes and the future.

Lots of other matters will be decided Nov. 4, in Louisiana and across the nation.

In Rapides Parish, for example, voters will be electing a U.S. senator and two judges and considering seven proposed changes to the state Constitution. Some also will vote for city marshal and City Council members.

Do the right thing: Vote today.

Read online about the seven proposed constitutional amendments. Go to the Web site for the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana at www.la-par.org.