On April 26th, Maryland will have their primary elections. Like most, you can go to the polls to cast your vote on that day. If in doubt about where you must go, pull your voter ID card out of your wallet. It is listed on your card.

Want to vote sooner? Check the papers for the dates for early voting. You can cast your vote before Election Day at the Westminster Senior Center. If you don’t like waiting in line, this is the place for you. The number of election workers usually outnumber the number of people voting. In addition, you can go to a ZUMBA class at the senior center if you time it right.

There is yet ANOTHER way. Contact the Board of Elections and you can get an absentee ballot which you fill out at home and drop in the mail by a certain date to the board.

Not registered to vote? Why? Are you so happy with the way the county, the state and the federal government are run that you don’t even want to opine?

States differ on who can vote in primaries. Maryland is known as a CLOSED PRIMARY STATE. This means that if you want to vote for a Democrat in the Primary, you must be a registered Democrat. If you want to vote for a Republican, you must be a registered Republican.

As a member of the Republican Central Committee, I have manned the voter registration trailer at the fire department carnivals. People who’ve just moved into the area find it convenient to change their address. People who are not registered and are finally motivated to sign up can do it there. I would like to focus on the young folks who register at the carnivals.

The vast majority of them check the “unaffiliated” box (which many call “independent.”) While you ARE registered to vote, you are NOT allowed to vote in either the Democrat or Republican primaries. The only vote you can cast is for School Board, which is non-partisan. My question to the youngster is, “Why don’t you care about who gets elected in Carroll County?” They look bewildered. My pitch is this:

The last time a Democrat was elected in Carroll County was in the last century. It has been the case that whomever wins the Republican Primary wins the general election. Nothing against Democrats. It’s just the fact that if you want to actually have a voice in who holds office in Carroll County, you must be a Republican voter in the primary.

If you live it Baltimore City, the same applies in reverse. Remember Theodore R. McKeldon? He was a Republican mayor of Baltimore. He was elected in 1963. This means that Baltimore hasn’t elected a Republican mayor for FIFTY –THREE years. There is a pretty good chance that there is no one alive who voted for a winning Republican Mayor in Baltimore City.

My point, to the students, is this. If you live in a county or city that regularly elects the winner of the same political party, your vote counts the most if you are a member of that party and vote in the primary. If you are registered as “unaffiliated” you are wasting your vote unless the only thing you care about is the school board.

There is an exception. Most municipalities in Carroll County hold non-partisan elections.