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350 East Main Road, Middletown, RI 02842
(401) 842-6500 | MiddletownRI.com

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CONTACT: Matt Sheley at (401) 842-6543 or msheley@middletownri.com



BOARD OF CANVASSERS BRINGS VOTING DRIVE DIRECTLY TO MIDDLETOWN HIGH

MIDDLETOWN, R.I. (MARCH 30, 2022) – When he woke up Tuesday morning, Caleb Williams admitted he wasn't thinking about registering to vote.

But during lunch period at Middletown High School later in the day, the senior said the process set up by the Middletown Board of Canvassers was so easy, it almost didn't make sense not to.

Part of an ongoing voter drive across Rhode Island before the Nov. 8 elections, Williams said he was excited about having his voice heard.

“It feels good,” Williams said, smiling after completing the necessary paperwork. “I’ve always wanted to vote and now I’m registered.”

Asked what issues he was most concerned with, Williams said there was one item that worried him most right now.

“Gas prices, definitely,” said Williams, who’s considering pursuing a career in HVAC work after graduating. “I know that’s just one thing, but it’s something a lot of us are talking about.”



As far back as they could remember, Board of Canvassers members Lucie-Anne Dionne-Thomas and Adeline C. Rose said they’ve taken part in voting drives at the Valley Road school.

Up until a few years ago, the group set up a table outside the cafeteria, but that wasn’t as effective at attracting attention. On Tuesday, the canvassing crew was one of several groups

with tables along an exterior wall of the cafeteria, including the Boys & Girls Clubs of Newport County and the Middletown Prevention Coalition.

Shortly after an announcement from Dean of Students Ray Clancey about the voting drive, several students approached the canvassing table, interested to hear more.

Senior Jacoby Smith said he wasn't aware of the voting drive before the bulletin from Clancey, but he was glad he heard it.

"I don't have any (issues) right now that I'm going to vote on, but I know it's the right thing to do," Smith said, who's eyeing college and playing football at the next level.

"I'd say money and financial policy are big for me when I vote," senior Wyatt Hafner said. "Things like spending less and gas prices, stuff like that."



Fellow senior Margaret MacKechnie said almost from the moment she heard about the voter initiative during the morning announcements, she knew she was going to register to vote.

"I think it's one of the most important ways we can be heard," said MacKechnie, who's looking at colleges and potentially a career in engineering or technology afterward. "For me, that's climate change, student loan debt, racial equality."

As students completed the form, Dionne-Thomas and Rose answered questions and helped them respond to items that might be unclear.

The duo also asked students if they were interested in becoming poll workers on Election Day, a job they could earn community service hours or get paid for.

“Of all the things we do, this is one of my favorites,” Dionne-Thomas said. “To see students so excited about voting and making a difference.”

“I’ve been working with canvassing for 20 years and we’ve had this (voter drive at the high school) for as long as I can remember,” Rose added. “We usually do at least one before the election.”

Both said they were impressed with the response and behavior of the students, which they said was top notch.

“We try to make it really easy for them,” Rose said. “There’s so much going on for them right now and they shouldn’t have to think much about registering to vote.”

“We’re here to help them,” Dionne-Thomas said. “Voting is one of the most important things we can do as citizens and it’s a big difference between how we are here and why Middletown is such a great place to liv



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