

Dear Erin, Chris, Michael, and Norman,

The below-signed groups are requesting that November 3rd, 2020 be a day off from school for primarily the Upper School students, faculty, and staff in order to let as many people as possible (students, faculty, & staff) either work at polls, stand in potentially long lines, or encourage others to get out to vote. This election is one of the most, if not the most, consequential in our nation's history, and every member of our community will be deeply affected by policies resulting from this election at the local and national level. These policies will cross racial, gender, and ability lines. They will affect people of all social classes, but significantly they will affect the already oppressed and disenfranchised members of our community the most. As members of a Quaker community dedicated to enacting social change to make the world a more equitable place, we must commit ourselves to allow as many people as possible the opportunity to use their voice and give up their time to help others on this momentous day.

In the United States, there is a history of voter suppression. Many people have been systematically denied the right to vote, which disproportionately affects marginalized populations. Many of Friends Select's affinity groups represent communities that had to fight for their right to vote, and to this day are not granted equal access. Therefore, we feel it is our responsibility to make it as easy as possible for members of our community to participate in democracy.

It is the school's duty to set a precedent for students to vote. When we wake up on November 4th, we want to be able to say that the Friends Select community did everything it could to make this election day as accessible as possible. Because of COVID-19, voters are worried about missing school or work to travel farther to vote and waiting in especially long lines at the polls. Regardless of age, there are a multitude of ways to participate in this election by making sure every eligible community member has a fair opportunity to vote, work the polls, or encourage others to do the same. Many older students, faculty, and staff have signed up to canvas or to work the polls. Even students not able to participate in these activities might have to watch younger siblings while their parents vote, drive their older family members to the polls, or accompany others who may have concerns about voter intimidation.

We understand that the week of November 2nd is already a short school week and that it is possible that we will have to miss more school than planned post-election, but this moment is more important than any one school day. There is more to be learned by participating in our democracy than in a classroom on November 3rd. This moment transcends our day-to-day lives, and it is our duty to allow our community to participate in this election to the fullest extent possible.

Thank you for reading and for your consideration of this request.

Signed,

Asian Student Union  
Black Student Union  
Jewish Student Union  
Qlub  
White Anti-Racism Group  
Quake  
Feminism Club  
& others in the Upper School Community