

# As a grad student, why should you register to vote locally?

Q: If I register to vote, will I be forced to register my car in CT and get a CT driver's license?

A: **No**. This is a very common misconception. If you decide to register your car or get a driver's license here, you can check a box indicating you'd like to register to vote ("motor voter") but the reverse is not true. It takes about 120 seconds to fill out the form and the same will be true when you move and wish to re-register when you graduate.

1. **This is where you live now** even if only for two years. Registering takes all of 2 minutes. When you graduate and move, it will be that easy to change back again. You don't need to give your social security number, you don't need to change your drivers license, you don't even need to be in your new residence a minimum amount of time. Its painless.
2. **Things that affect your daily life** can be improved or solved by your Alderman – trash pickups too early and waking you up? Want a tree planted in your front sidewalk? Need to know who to call for recycling information? You need someone that will be responsive to your concerns so you can get on with your life.
3. **Your vote counts more here** than most places in the US because New Haven has a legislative body (the Board of Aldermen) in which elected officials represent only about 4000 people. Alderman elections are sometimes decided by less than 20 votes. A primary in Hamden this September was decided by 3 votes.
4. **Environmental and social problems** that are traditionally thought to be only solvable at the national or international level are most promisingly being addressed at the local level. An example is Climate Change as many municipalities like New Haven are taking concrete steps (some led by FES alumni) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There's even an FES class centered around the idea. In fact, it is finally becoming widely realized that **many environmental problems can ONLY be solved at the local level** since that's where **land use control** is held. Land use affects power plant siting, environmental justice issues, parks designation, open space, sprawl and urban infill, economic development, brownfields, and the list goes on.
5. There is a **unique opportunity** in New Haven since you finally have a Mayoral administration and Board of Aldermen that is sympathetic to environmental problems (thanks in part to Green Party candidates taking Democrat seats) but lacks the expertise necessary to push the envelope. If someone **trained and experienced in environmental and health issues** was elected, some serious change for the better could happen.... and will. Its also an opportunity in that the presence of viable third party candidates gives you greater choice and therefore a **stronger democracy**.
6. You may feel like you don't know local issues as a "newcomer" and you should therefore not vote. But about **half of Ward 9 is populated by grad students just**

**like you** and to leave that voice out would be anti-democratic. You may not know that the Cross Sound Cable is one of the city's biggest issues but your alderman will also deal with larger-reaching issues like air quality, land use, zoning, affordable housing, economic justice, rent control, and transportation, which you may be very concerned about. Besides, just ask Vic and he'll bring you up to date personally.

Q: To whom should I mail the form?

A: New Haven Town Hall, Hall of Records Rm. 201, 200 Orange St., New Haven, CT 06510. Or you can put it in my Sage Hall mailbox (under "Edgerton") and I will turn it in with all the others I collect regularly from around the community.

Q: Can I vote here in New Haven and in my home state at the same time?

A: No

Q: Who can register?

A: US Citizens, living in CT, over 17 years old who, if convicted of a felony in the past, have served their time and are not on parole.

Q: How do I know if I'm in your ward?

A: I'm in ward 9. A detailed map is at <http://home.earthlink.net/~phrederica/ward9map.pdf>. Zoom in for details.