

After I viewed the video, I was reminded of the importance of voting rights for Native citizens from all 574 Native Nations and the 50 states that surround them. The video portrayed obstacles that are not new to Native people. It's never a smooth path, however, persistence, positive forward-thinking, and prayer lead to resiliency and success. It is those three qualities: persistence, positive thinking, and prayer, that the ancestors and Native leaders portrayed to build up Native Nations to where they are now, and it will be those same three qualities to maintain to continue what was started.

I aspire to continue my education and take what I learned from the video to be a part of organizations on campus. I plan to attend the Sandra Day O'Connor Law School in Phoenix, Arizona. I recently learned that the law school has a proactive student organization called Arizona Native Vote Election Protection Project. The focus of this project is to promote and encourage Native voters in Arizona to participate in elections. They also provide resources and access to polls and ballots in Native communities around the state. I think being a part of a project like this is a perfect example of leadership and persistence that Frank Harrison and Harry Austin started for the future generations. This is a great way to stay involved and informed of electoral processes. I look forward to being a part of this organization when I arrive at ASU.

Aside from being involved with school organizations, I think reading and talking with people who are involved with voting registration and state capitol bills is valuable in staying up to date with bills, rulings, and registration/electoral processes. Last Spring semester I had a classmate who worked in Phoenix and was the tribal liaison in the state capital building, in other words, she represented 22 tribes and regularly visited with them. She would occasionally update the class in bills that were current and discussed the importance of voting as Native people.

Again, knowing people who are passionate about this topic and who can effectively communicate the importance is what is needed in Indian Country to lead the future generations.

Lastly, when it is an election year, I will do my best to remind my family and friends the importance of voting and to participate. I believe the best way to do that is to educate them on what I learned. I want them to know that their voice does matter because it is imperative that we have people in office who can listen to the needs of Native People; and I strongly believe that can be seen in voting.