

*What will I do to improve participation in this year's elections?*

For so long, Native Americans had to comply with the changes that were forced upon them by colonization. Through the fights of Frank Harrison and Harry Austin, Native Americans were granted the right to vote on July 15, 1948. Now, I am given the opportunity for my voice to be heard and I have a choice in what happens in our society.

Today, June 24<sup>th</sup>, the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, stating it is not a constitutional right to get an abortion. As a young, Indigenous woman, I am targeted at a higher level from this ruling. An occurrence like this reminds us why it is so important right now to be an active member in our local, state, and federal elections. We need to protect our rights as women and fight for our voices to be heard on a larger scale. Voting is one way we can achieve this.

How I plan to improve my participation is by first keeping up to date with what elections are happening and reviewing each candidate. The Navajo Nation Presidential election is happening this year and I plan to vote during the 2022 General Election. I also plan to help with the campaign of Ethel Branch. My father, Mihio Manus, is currently on her campaign team, and I want to volunteer to provide any further assistance she might need. Traditionally, Navajo people are under a matriarchal society. I want to advocate for a campaign that I think will help progress female empowerment and leadership among our tribal nations.

To conclude, I see the adversity Native people have faced over decades to receive basic human rights. Through the actions of the Supreme Court ruling, it now seems they are trying to regress these human rights. I am now choosing to not stand by and be complacent with these actions. Our rights should never be taken for granted, which is why I plan to become more

involved in upcoming elections. Our people are strong, resilient, and able to face the challenges that persist today.

*What will I do to encourage my community's participation in this year's elections?*

I think the best way for me to encourage my communities to participate in this year's election is by spreading awareness about general information: whether that be voting deadlines, candidates, voting sites, and sharing informational articles about how to register to vote. This is all important information that needs to be share more among our Native population.

Attending ASU, I have been able to participate in events that connect me with my fellow Indigenous students. My work at the American Indian Student Support Services allowed me to be in positions where I have direct contact with incoming students. Last year, I was a Peer Ambassador for the SPIRIT program. This is a two-week program that introduces Indigenous students to campus life and resources at ASU. I had a group of 12 students that I mentored for the two weeks. Through this, I was able to connect with these students one-on-one and help guide them through their journey.

This year, I have the honor of being an ambassador again. I plan to share voting resources with my students and push why it is so important that our Native youth vote. When I was an incoming freshman, I remember how intimidating and overwhelming it was to come to a huge university such as ASU. I want to be someone that they can look to for answers and guidance in this process. This is why I feel that it would be beneficial for me to walk through the steps of registering to vote and make them feel included for the upcoming elections.

Any action helps when promoting our Native youth to vote. Being the oldest sibling, and oldest grandchild on both my maternal and paternal sides, I will share with my brothers and sisters the history of how we received our voting rights and encourage them to start thinking

about their participation in elections. I never want them to be put in a position where they feel like their voices don't matter and think they can't make change happen.