August 25, 2022

Re: Use of student work study funds for voter registration

Dear Administrators of Illinois Colleges and Universities:

I write to inform you of a new opportunity this academic year to encourage student participation in our democracy. This spring, the U.S. Department of Education issued guidance stating that federal work study funds may be used to support voter registration work.\(^1\) Postsecondary institutions already play a critical role in expanding access to voter registration under the federal Higher Education Act and the Illinois Election Code. This new guidance offers an additional way to engage students in the democratic process and instill a lifelong commitment to civic participation.

The Department’s guidance outlines permissible uses of work study funds to support voter registration activities:

- Institutions may use work study funds to compensate students for voter registration activities that occur on or off-campus.
- Students employed by a postsecondary institution may receive work study funds as compensation for voter registration work.
- Work study funds cannot be used for employment by third parties, including federal, state, or local agencies and private non-profit organizations, if the student’s work relates to partisan or nonpartisan political activities, including party-affiliated voter registration.\(^2\)

Voter registration activities must comply with Illinois law, including local rules governing appointment of deputy registrars\(^3\) and the state requirement that organizations conducting voter registration drives must file a distribution plan with the State Board of Elections if they plan to...
request more than 50 copies of the federal voter registration form. Institutions or students planning voter registration activities should contact their local election authority to ensure compliance with any local rules regarding collection and submission of voter registration forms. Local election authorities for each jurisdiction are listed on the State Board of Elections website.

As we approach the 2022 election, it is vital that young people have a voice in the direction of our nation by exercising their fundamental right to vote. I encourage you to use this new tool to promote voter registration on Illinois campuses.

Respectfully,

KWAME RAOUL
Attorney General of Illinois

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