Underage Democracy:
MOCK ELECTION

OVERVIEW:

The Forward Montana Foundation Mock Election is an 80 minute exercise and discussion of the voting process and turnout in Montana. We suggest the exercise is implemented over two class periods to provide ample time for discussion and questions. Different from traditional "Mock Elections", this exercise provides a realistic simulation of voting results in Montana. Students are introduced to ballot issue LR-126 (2014), and asked to vote as both themselves and as characters that mimic the results of the election. This exercise gives students a chance to explore voter access and how small changes can make a huge difference.

Time: 80 minutes
Grade level: 9th to 12th

Materials:
- ❏ POP Worksheet
- ❏ LR-126 Handouts
- ❏ Voter Character Cards
- ❏ Voter Question List
- ❏ Evaluations (Online)

OUTCOMES:

➔ Peer leaders will develop public speaking and leadership skills
➔ Student participants will be able to articulate what a ballot measure is and describe the process by which it becomes law
➔ Student participants will understand the importance that every vote plays in the outcome of an election and the barriers that prevent people from voting

SCHEDULE:

Day #1

5 Minutes	Introduction	Peer leaders introduce the purpose and outcomes of the Mock Election exercise.
30 Minutes	Ballot Measure Review	Peer leaders lead student participants through the process of passing a ballot measure and review LR-126.
10 Minutes	Mock Vote	Student participants cast mock votes for or against LR-126.

Day #2

5 Minutes	Review	Peer leaders review what the class learned the previous day.
15 Minutes	Vote Simulation	Student participants are assigned voter characters and divided based on the actual outcomes of the LR-126 votes.
30 Minutes	Discussion	Peer leaders lead student participants in a discussion of voter rights, voter responsibilities and barriers to voting.

MOCK ELECTION

This exercise is intended to be student-led. Individual students or groups of students can be responsible for implementing this exercise for credit, extra-credit, or extra-curricular interest. Be sure to provide student leaders with guidance throughout the process, all physical materials necessary, and time to evaluate their success.

> Pair this exercise with a relevant section in your curriculum to increase the impact for your students!

Two weeks before:

➔ Assign the exercise to a student leader or group of student leaders and provide them with the Student Facilitator Worksheet.

One week before:

➔ Review the Student Facilitator Worksheet with the student leader and ensure that they have an understanding of the exercise, confidence in leading the activities and discussion, and clarity around purpose and outcomes.

Day(s) of:

➔ Support student leaders in leading the lesson plan paying special attention to their facilitation of the discussion components.

Within one week after:

➔ Meet with student leaders to debrief their presentation and fill out the evaluation below and send it to Forward Montana Foundation.

MOCK ELECTION

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This mock election isn't your normal mock election. This exercise was created by young people for young people. By the end of leading this exercise, you'll develop skills that you can use forever - like public speaking, how to host purposeful meetings, and thoughtful evaluation. Plus, you'll learn about ballot measures, barriers to voting, and the importance of just a handful of votes in deciding an election.

Two weeks before:

➔ Read through this entire exercise and write down any questions you have for your teacher.
➔ Fill out the Student Facilitator Worksheet.
➔ Read the "How to Guide: Hosting Underage Democracy Online"

One week before:

➔ Review the Student Facilitator Worksheet and your list of materials with your teacher and bring your list of questions about the exercise.

Introduction Day:

➔ Introduce the Mock Election exercise.

Day(s) of:

➔ Make sure you have all the supplies you need to be successful.
➔ Based on how many students are in your class, calculate the breakdown of voters (instructions below).
➔ Lead your peers through the exercise!

Within one week after:

➔ Meet with your teacher to talk about what went well, what needs to be changed, and what you would do differently in the future.

If you have any questions throughout this process, don't hesitate to contact the Forward Montana Civic Education Organizer by email at devin@forwardmontana.org.

Day 1

5 Minutes: Introduction

This is your opportunity to set the tone and energy in the room. Start off by introducing yourself. Next, you'll explain the purpose and outcomes of the Mock Election using the Student Facilitator Worksheet. Finally, you'll describe a basic outline of what the schedule will be.

30 Minutes: Ballot Measure Review

Explain what a ballot measure is and the process it goes through to become law. From there, hand out the LR-126 worksheet to your peers. Invite everyone to read the ballot measure language on their own and answer the questions on the back of the LR-126 worksheet independently for 10 minutes. From there, move students into small groups to discuss their answers for 10 minutes. Finally, bring the whole class together to discuss

1. What is this ballot measure proposing?
2. What does vote yes mean? What does a vote no mean?
3. Was LR-126 easy to understand? Why or why not?
4. What was the hardest question to answer?
5. Did your small group disagree on any of the answers?
6. Do you think LR-126 passed or did not pass?

10 Minutes: Mock Vote

This will involve some physical movement, so be sure everyone in your class is able to be mobile. If they cannot, ask your teacher for help determining the best way to adapt the exercise.

Designate a "YES to LR-126" and "NO to LR-126" side of the room. Invite your peers to 'cast their ballot' by moving to the areas designated. Invite a couple of people from each side to talk about why they choose to vote yes or no. Take note of how many people voted yes or no. You'll talk about that tomorrow when you unveil the actual vote on LR-126.

Day 2

Before Class: Preparing for the Election Simulation

Before you can do the Election Simulation, you'll need to find what proportion of students are simulating what votes. You can use this table to help you with that:

Type of Voter	%	Formula	Total	Voter Character Card
Non-Registered Voters	12%	# of people in your class*.12		**Not Registered**
Registered Voters who didn't vote at all	44%	# of people in your class*.44		**Registered, but didn't vote**
Registered Voters who voted, but didn't vote on LR-126	9%	# of people in your class*.09		**Voted, but not on LR-126**
Voters who voted YES on LR-126	20%	# of people in your class*.20		**Voted YES on LR-126**
Voters who voted NO on LR-126	26%	# of people in your class*.26		**Voted NO on LR-126**

Once you've calculated how many of each voter character card you need, cut out the correct number of character cards. You can find the character cards at the end of this template.

5 Minutes: Review

A lot can happen in 24-hours. That's why it's really important to review what you talked about in class yesterday.

To review, invite the class to answer the following questions:

1. What is a ballot measure?
2. What is LR-126?
3. What does vote yes on LR-126 mean? What does a vote no on LR-126 mean?

10 Minutes: Voter Characters

Using the numbers you calculated before class, hand out the voter character cards at random to the class. Students should group together based on their character card. Explain that this breakdown is representative of voter behavior at the state level on LR-126 in 2014. In these small groups, each person will read their voter character out loud and discuss one of the following questions:

● If your voter character voted, what allowed them to vote?

● If your voter character did not vote, what barriers kept them from voting?

5 Minutes: Actual 2014 Voter Turnout

While students are sharing their voter characters, write the actual voter 2014 turnout numbers up on a whiteboard or chalkboard. Once all the groups are done sharing their voter characters, walk the entire class through the results and what they mean. Remember to remind students how the class voted yesterday on LR-126.

Numbers	What does this mean?
Total Eligible Voters: 765, 852 Total Registered Voters: 674, 264	88% of eligible Montana voters were registered in 2014
Total Registered Voters: 674, 264 Total Votes Cast in 2014: 373, 831	55% of registered voters turned out to vote in 2014
Total LR-126 votes cast: 361, 737 Total "YES" Votes on LR-126: 155, 153 Total "NO" Votes on LR-126: 206, 584	12,094 voters cast a ballot but didn't vote on LR-126 LR-126 failed by 51,431 votes
If we take the number of votes that LR-126 failed by and divide it by the total number of eligible voters, we learn that just 7% of eligible voters in Montana decided the fate of LR-126.	

15 Minutes: Discussion

Bring students back together in a large group. Lead them through a discussion of the following question:

● What surprised you about the election results?

● What allows voters to vote? What would ensure you voted?

● What barriers keep voters from voting? What would prevent you from voting?

● Will you vote when you're eligible? If you are eligible, are you registered to vote?

● Brainstorm 3 to 5 ideas that would remove barriers or make it easier for voters to cast their ballots. *Be sure to take notes and send these ideas back to Forward Montana Foundation!*

REMEMBER: You are leading a discussion on a topic, not presenting on what you think. Give everyone space and time to answer questions, and don't be afraid of a few moments of silence after you ask a question - give your peers time to consider your questions.

5 Minutes: Evaluation

Pass out the Student Participant Evaluations and have students fill them out independently. Collect the evaluation forms and mail or scan them back to Forward Montana Foundation.

EVALUATION:

Step 1:

Meet with your teacher within one week of leading your class through the Mock Election exercise to evaluate how the exercise went.

Revisit your POP worksheet to discuss the following questions:

➔ What outcomes did you accomplish? If you weren't able to accomplish an outcome, why?
➔ What went well?
➔ What would you have done differently?

Step 2:

Fill out the Forward Montana Foundation evaluation form(s) below:

Educator Evaluation	Student Leader Evaluation	Student Participant Evaluation
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfGcD98KbPUKagfCCVhFGBYLGYPhSAadbi8ND-tsPPIZPDREg/viewform	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScPs3CBRil6d5iuYLFH7LNxOfT-wyONTRNNcNB8sx_e3gvp0g/viewform	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScnWOTrDEx3HguexBFimsPTna8w9_y9s1LqGZdpm2FhlXveww/viewform

Step 3:

Celebrate! It can be hard leading our peers and you've done a great job!

STUDENT FACILITATOR WORKSHEET

Purpose:
- ➔ Why should your peers care about engaging in elections?

- ➔ Why are you interested in leading this exercise?

Outcomes:
- ➔ What three things do you hope your peers take away from participating in the mock election?

- ➔ What two skills do you hope you develop by leading the mock election?

Process:
- ➔ What part of the mock election are you most excited to lead? Why?

- ➔ What part of the mock election are you most nervous to lead? Why?

- ➔ What do you need to make this exercise successful?

- ➔ If you're working in a group, what parts of the exercise will you lead?

LR-126 LANGUAGE

Referendum Text:

LEGISLATIVE REFERENDUM NO. 126 AN ACT PROTECTING THE INTEGRITY OF MONTANA ELECTIONS BY ENDING LATE VOTER REGISTRATION ON THE FRIDAY BEFORE ELECTION DAY AND ELIMINATING ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION; ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH THE NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT; PROVIDING THAT THE PROPOSED ACT BE SUBMITTED TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF MONTANA AT THE GENERAL ELECTION TO BE HELD IN NOVEMBER 2014; AMENDING SECTIONS 13-2-301, 13-2-304, 13-19-207, AND 61-5-107, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The 2013 Legislature submitted this proposal for a vote. LR-126 changes the deadline for late voter registration from the close of polls on election day to 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the election. LR-126 also moves the deadline for changes to an elector's voter registration information from the close of polls on election day to 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the election. The National Voter Registration Act referenced in the title of LR-126 does not require elimination of election-day registration, and does not require moving the deadline for changes to an elector's voter registration information.

Answer the questions below.

1. What is being proposed in the referendum?

2. What does a vote YES mean?

3. What does a vote NO mean?

4. What makes this easy or hard to understand?

5. How would you vote?

VOTER CHARACTER CARDS

Not Registered	Sam (22) You didn't know that you had to register every time you moved. When you went to re-register on Election Day, but the line was too long and you had to get back to class.
Not Registered	Tori (36) You have a felony on your record and didn't think you could register to vote in Montana because of it. (Note: In Montana, you can register and vote if you have a felony on your record).
Not Registered	Hannah (38) You didn't even know there was an election this year or that you needed to register to vote. "Where do you even register to vote?"
Not Registered	George (26) You thought you could register to vote online, but when you went to find the online form, you couldn't find it. When you called the Election's Office, you learned you can't register to vote online. You didn't have time to register at the Election's Office.
Not Registered	Geoff (52) You registered to vote, but there was a problem with your form. You never called the Election's Office back to fix it.
Not Registered	Helen (48) You just moved from Oregon where they have Automatic Voter Registration (AVR). You figured every state did this and didn't register.
Registered, but didn't vote	Shelby (34) You're a single mom with two young, rambunctious sons. You couldn't find anyone to watch them on such short notice and you can't afford a babysitter.
Registered, but didn't vote	Rachel (30) You got a ballot in the mail, but you might have thrown it away. You didn't think you could get a replacement ballot, so you didn't vote.
Registered, but didn't vote	Roger (68) The County recently centralized all the polling locations to the County Fairgrounds. Your ranch is nearly an hour away on icy roads from the fairgrounds and you just can't risk it.
Registered, but didn't vote	June (83) You signed up to vote by mail, but don't have a stamp to mail it back. You're homebound and your family lives far away. Your nurse doesn't come until the day after the election, so you couldn't mail in your ballot.
Registered, but didn't vote	Derek (20) You were excited about voting, but rode your bike to the wrong polling location. When they showed you the polling location that you were supposed to vote at you knew you couldn't reach it on your bike before you had to go to work.
Registered, but didn't vote	Jerry (23) You didn't vote because you were studying abroad and didn't know you could get your ballot overseas.

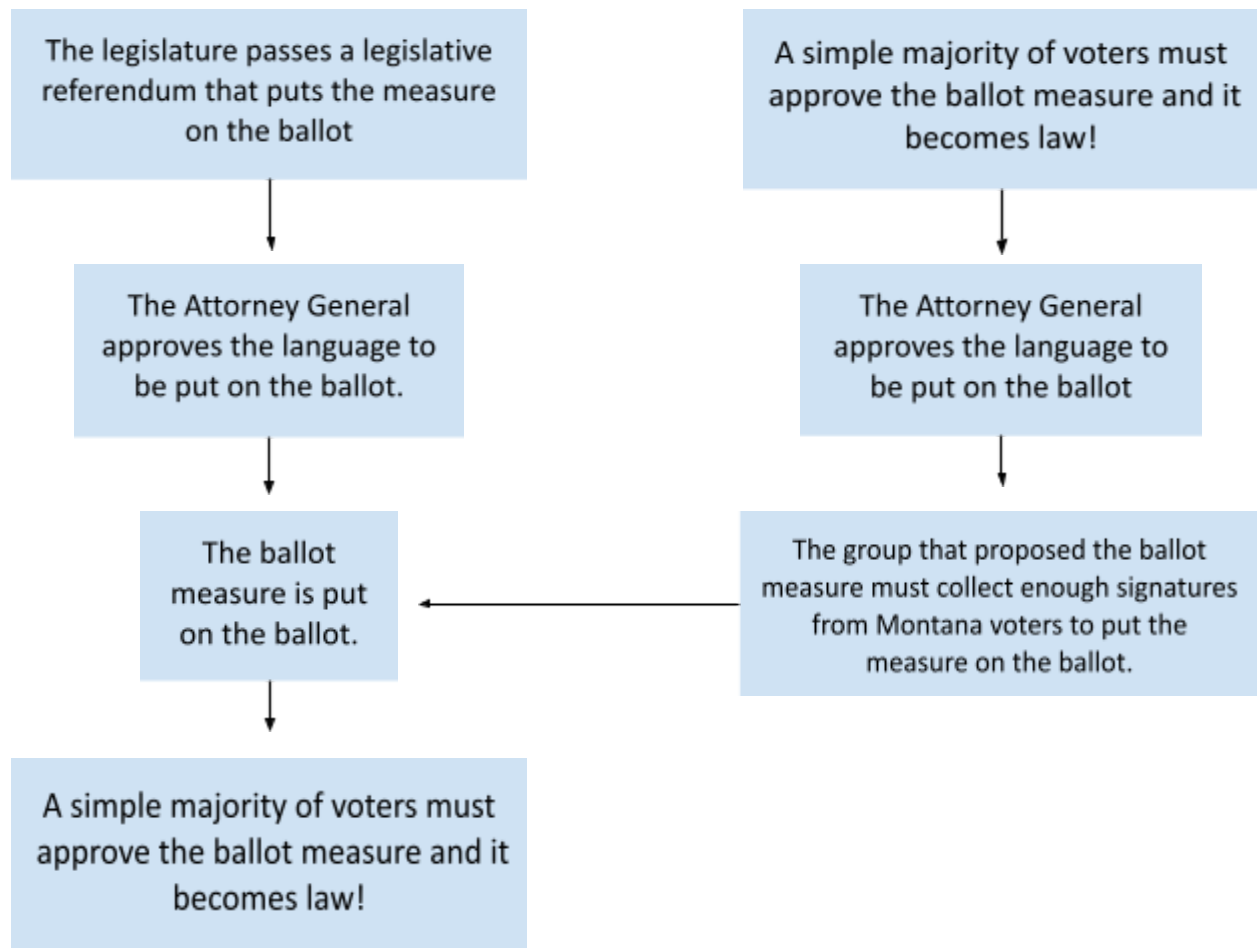|	
Registered, but didn't vote	Kim (22) It's midterms. You're taking your GRE next month. You have a date tonight and it's homecoming this weekend. You just forgot to vote.
Registered, but didn't vote	Ethan (46) You didn't vote because you don't get paid time off at work. You can't afford to take an unpaid day off work and the polls closed before you got off.
Registered, but didn't vote	Sarah (32) You just started a new job and you're really busy getting the hang of everything. You just didn't have the time to vote.
Registered, but didn't vote	Jason (18) You registered to vote in your government class. Neither of your parents vote though. If they don't care, why should you.
Voted, but not on LR-126	Randy (46) You voted the rest of your ballot, but skipped voting on LR-126 because you didn't know what it was.
Voted, but not on LR-126	Jackie (27) You voted for a friend that was running for the Senate, but didn't understand what the ballot measures were so you skipped them all.
Voted, but not on LR-126	Jameson (53) Yout voted for the school levy that was on the ballot because you have kids that attend the local high school. You skipped a lot of the candidate elections and the other ballot measures because you didn't know what they were.
Voted, but not on LR-126	Samantha (24) You didn't know there was a back page on the ballot, so you missed out on voting in all other judicial races and all the ballot measures.
Voted, but not on LR-126	Dustin (87) You got frustrated trying to figure out what the ballot measures actually meant and decided that you wouldn't vote for any of them.
Voted YES on LR-126	Jim (52) You voted during your paid lunch break at work.
Voted YES on LR-126	June (36) You recently moved to the area to start a new job. Since you're new to the area, your boss gave you time to go update your driver's license and voter registration during the workweek. You signed up to get your ballot in the mail and voted last week.
Voted YES on LR-126	Travis (31) You moved this summer. Since you work at the County Courthouse, you just went to the Election's Office and updated your address while you were at work.
Voted YES on LR-126	Karen (49) You've always voted, so you voted this year.
Voted YES on LR-126	Helen (31) You don't have a personal vehicle, but you were able to vote because you hitched a ride with some friends from your apartment building to your polling location.

Voted YES on LR-126	Justin (37) You've always voted, so you voted this year.
Voted YES on LR-126	Quinn (46) You signed up to vote by mail. When you got your ballot, you filled it out right away.
Voted YES on LR-126	Jared (24) You just started a new job and you're really busy getting the hang of everything. You would have forgotten to vote, but a Forward Montana Foundation volunteer called to remind you to vote. They even helped you find a ride to the polls.
Voted YES on LR-126	Denise (57) You're homebound, but you learned from a local voter advocacy group, that you're legally entitled to voting support from the local election's office. Elections' staff helped you fill out your ballot and verified your signature.
Voted YES on LR-126	Chuck (67) You got a voter guide in the mail from a local group you trust. You reviewed the candidates and issues and were prepared to vote your whole ballot on Election Day.
Voted NO on LR-126	Mary (18) Your parents and older sister always vote by mail. They get their ballots and fill them out together. So, when you registered to vote, you signed up to vote absentee, too!
Voted NO on LR-126	Monica (78) Your retirement home offers a ride service to the polls on Election Day.
Voted NO on LR-126	Paul (36) You signed up to vote by mail. When you got your ballot, you filled it out right away.
Voted NO on LR-126	Arthur (61) You've always voted, so you voted this year.
Voted NO on LR-126	Louis (37) You have three kids, but you and your wife were able to vote because you have a nanny that watches the kids during the day.
Voted NO on LR-126	Kali (36) You have three kids, but you and your husband were able to vote because you have a nanny that watched the kids during the day.
Voted NO on LR-126	Karly (36) You got a voter guide in the mail from a local group you trust. You reviewed the candidates and issues and were prepared to vote your whole ballot on Election Day.
Voted NO on LR-126	Haley (24) It's midterms. You're taking GRE next month. You have a date tonight and it's homecoming this weekend. You would have forgotten to vote, but a Forward Montana Foundation volunteer called to remind you to vote. They even helped you find a ride to the polls.

Voted NO on LR-126	Tom (39) You travel for work and you're often out of town for Election Day. Luckily, you're friends with one of the County Commissioners and she reminded you that you can vote by mail a few years ago. You've voted by mail ever since.
Voted NO on LR-126	James (51) You're a professor and you get the day off of work to go vote.
Voted NO on LR-126	Vanessa (28) Your polling location is right next to a bus stop. Since the bus service is free in your town, you were able to hop on and go vote!

HOW A BALLOT MEASURE BECOMES A LAW

The legislature passes a legislative referendum that puts the measure on the ballot

A simple majority of voters must approve the ballot measure and it becomes law!

The Attorney General approves the language to be put on the ballot.

The Attorney General approves the language to be put on the ballot

The ballot measure is put on the ballot.

The group that proposed the ballot measure must collect enough signatures from Montana voters to put the measure on the ballot.

A simple majority of voters must approve the ballot measure and it becomes law!

Learn more on the Montana Secretary of State's website: sos.mt.gov