



Patagonia encourages its employees to help communities overcome hurdles, such as mail-in voting | Photo source Tiffany Tertipes on Unsplash

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## PURPOSE-DRIVEN RETAILER LAUNCHES VOTING RIGHTS CAMPAIGN



### Employees can get paid time off to volunteer at polls and support get-out-the-vote projects

**Spotted:** Leading outdoor clothing and equipment supplier Patagonia is well-known for its “business unusual” approach. From indigenous land management to mining and pollution prevention, founder Yvon Chouinard’s principled stance on environmental issues informs every aspect of the brand’s products and processes. The company’s latest campaign focuses on voting rights and access across the United States. As in previous election years, Patagonia closes its headquarters, distribution centre and retail outlets on the day of the election.

This follows Patagonia’s use of clothing tags that read: “Vote the assholes out.”

With this latest campaign, employees have four additional days of paid leave with which to volunteer as poll workers or otherwise support voting rights. The company is also part of the Time to Vote coalition of more than 1,000 United States-based businesses focused on finding ways to get more people to the polls, without losing out on pay.

Many of the brand’s retail locations are partnering with local voting rights groups to help disseminate up-to-date policy and procedure information for areas particularly at risk of low voter turnout. From the lack of preparedness for mail-in voting to the lack of transport to and from poll stations, Patagonia encourages its employees to help communities overcome local hurdles. The company is also providing photocopiers at certain voting locations to help citizens meet local stringencies that make voting more difficult.

Written by: Keely Khoury

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Email: [Corley.Kenna@patagonia.com](mailto:Corley.Kenna@patagonia.com)

Website: [patagoniaworks.com](http://patagoniaworks.com)

## Takeaway:

Australia and Turkey are two of a handful of countries that enforce compulsory voting in national elections. In other countries, including the United States, **voter turnout** continues to decrease, while social and political polarisation is only worsening. Talking across the political aisle is a notoriously difficult task and one that many people shy away from because of the effort it entails. As with public health campaign “nudges”, innovators must find new and creative ways to motivate and connect communities with the act of voting and the potential outcome of not participating.