

Hi there this is Carleen.

I decided today that, rather than to write my blog for the day, I would vlog – or do a video blog - today simply because...I voted today. And in Cook County, we have 100 items on our ballot - judges and referendums and federal elections and state elections. I printed out 8 pages beforehand - doing my research to take what I wanted in with me, to make sure of how I wanted to vote – and they didn't have anything in alphabetical order so I had to keep flipping back and forth. Ugh! Anyway.

So, because of that I don't want to type. So, I'm doing this and my topic for today is voting. It's saving our democracy. It's saving our rights and protecting our rights and protecting our neighbors and our family and our friends and our fellow citizens. Because right now those things are at risk and if we don't do something about it, we will lose those rights. One thing that I think is always true is just because we say "I have the right to..." - by the constitution, by law, by whatever – just because we

say that, doesn't mean we always will be able to say that. It doesn't mean that our children and grandchildren and nieces and nephews - the younger generations - it does mean they'll be able to say that. Because if we don't fight to *keep* those rights, to *protect* those rights, then the younger generations are going to have to live without them or they're going to have to start from zero to get those rights back. And that's one hell of a flight. And our ancestors – the generations before us - already fought those fights to get the rights that we have. And that is not that far behind us. For those of us who are LGBT, it's the generation before us - just before us - that did a lot of the fighting. Most of the fighting. The majority of the fighting. They got us where we are today. Those people are seeing what they fought for come to fruition. They've seen those rights come to fruition, but, worse, they're seeing them now slowly being ripped away by an administration that's just horrible. They're just horrible. For some of us it's just that soon - civil rights was within my generation. I was born in 1968 so the outcomes of those fights were within my lifetime. But those fights aren't over. We're

seeing attacks on civil rights daily. We're seeing attacks on freedom of speech daily. So, we *have* to vote. We *have* to vote!

If you're not voting, don't call yourself a Patriot. That's, I think, one of things that bugs me the most - is that there are people out there who call themselves patriots and who call themselves lovers of the Constitution and who call themselves lovers of America and, yet, they fight against what this country was founded on. Remember, this country was founded by immigrants. We were *founded by immigrants*. And what are we trying to do? We're trying to push those immigrants out of our country, trying to push them away. We're saying "we're the best country, we're the land of opportunity, but not for you. *Not for you*." And that's not cool in any way, shape, or form. Native Americans - we came to *their* land. we are the immigrants. We came to *their* land. You want to talk about taking away people's jobs, taking away people's rights, taking away people's lands, taking away people's lives...that's what we did to them. And, now, how are we treating them? We're

treating them like they aren't even citizens of *their* country. They should be kicking *us* out. They are the ones. They're the ones who own this country, so to speak. It's their country. We came in and made problems. So, vote.

If you are a woman and you are not voting, I wonder. If you have the ability to vote, you should be registered and you should be voting.

Because women's rights are being ripped away. We're being treated like 2nd class citizens. The #me-too movement is being put down as overblown. As "oh they're all just lying" or "it's dangerous to be a man these days." Look at what happened with Kavanaugh. He's on the damned Supreme Court. But the women who testified against him are being vilified. Their lives are being threatened. Not Kavanaugh's. He's sitting pretty. Their lives are being threatened. Their lives are being upheaved and ruined. So, women you should be voting.

Young folk - 18 and up. At 18 you can vote. We spend our childhood and our teenage years just wanting to be an adult just wanting to do

what the grownups can do. And then we turn 18 and here's a big thing that we can do and we don't do it? What's up with that? I have voted in every election since I turned 18 years old. And you should be too.

Granted, for a while I didn't do the primaries. OK I was wrong, I was young. But in every general election, for every president since I was 18 years old, I have voted. You should be too, young people. And you know what, if you're not a young person and you're watching this, but you have kids or grand kids or nieces or nephews who will fit into that millennial or "young" group, you should be saying to them "Are you registered to vote? No? Let me go take you to register to vote. Let me show you how online." In Illinois there were people registering to vote *today* so that they could vote *today*, in this election. Illinois, you can register to vote at the poll. Bring your 2 forms of ID. Get yourself registered. VOTE. And if you're in a state that you can register at the poll, do it. And if you didn't get registered and time this year, first of all [*handslap*], but second, go register to vote in your state right now so the when the next election comes up, you're ready. I'm not talking

about the next election being 2020. You've got local elections. there're some local elections that happen, you know, in March – mayor, city council, school board. They don't all happen in November and they don't all happen on the same schedules. So, make sure you're getting that done. Get yourself registered if you're not. And if you are registered and you didn't vote [*handslap*]. But also make a pledge that you are going to educate yourself, you are going to get to the polls the next time, and you are going to commit and you are going to take your citizenship seriously. Because there are people who *want* to become a citizen of this country. And in order to become a citizen of this country they have to take a test. Did you have to take a test for your citizenship? If you didn't and you don't vote that's an insult to all the people who fight so hard to learn and to pass that test to become a citizen. My great grandmother - my mom used to tell me the story - my great grandmother was so proud of her citizenship that she would say to people "I have papers to prove that I am a citizen of this country. Where are your papers?" Because she was proud of the fact that she

came here and she struggled and she learned and she was able become a citizen of the greatest country in the world. And yet we have that right we are citizens by birth and we don't do it. We take it for granted. So why aren't you voting?

Today is November 3rd. Election day is November 6. But early voting is going on throughout the country. I voted today it's Saturday. That polling place is open tomorrow, on a Sunday. So, check. You may be able to vote tomorrow. Maybe you could go on Monday. But you definitely have to vote by Tuesday. you have to get it done. No excuses. "Oh, I work and I can't get the time off work." Your employer has to give you that time. They have to. There's no "oh no, you can't take time off to vote." They have to give you that time to vote. I don't know about you, but my poll opens at 6 o'clock on election day. 6:00 a.m. And they close at 7:00 p.m. on election day. So, when I was working, I would go at 6:00 a.m. And I'd be there when it opened. I would vote and then I go to work and I be right on time. And if you leave work that

you get home in time, there is time for to go after work, too. It's the weekend. If you work a Monday through Friday job, you've got Saturday and Sunday. It took me 10 minutes to vote. But that was also because I came prepared; I had my list and I knew who I was voting for and why. So, I knew when going down my ballot, who I was saying yes and no to with the judges and in who was getting my vote. I did the work ahead of time. You can do the work ahead of time, too. The polls don't need to be open for you to do the research, to do the work. So, you do the work and you go in with your list - you can take that in with you - and you vote. 10 minutes. Get it done and get on with your life. You'll stand in line for 30 minutes for a lottery ticket. You'll stand in line overnight to get that discounted Xbox at Best Buy on Black Friday. You will desert your family on Thanksgiving and start camping out Wednesday night and stay there until stores open on Friday. But you can't take 10 minutes to vote? Where are our priorities people? Where are our priorities? In the 2016 election, the guy in charge right now, the one sitting in that White House, on that hallowed ground, that guy

there, only got 25% of the vote from registered voters in this country. That's because about half of us sat out. Just said "my vote's not important" "my vote doesn't count" "what does it matter? It's lesser of two evils." If you were one of those people who said "which is the lesser of two evils?" you know, kiss my ass. We're finding out who the lesser of two evils is, right? Because you believed the lies the people told about Hillary Clinton. Because you're so frightened a strong, smart woman being in charge, you believed the lies and you voted for Stein or somebody else. You threw away your vote to somebody who had no chance and let trump go right through those doors. And look at what he's done over the last 2 years. Look at what he's done.

So, this is my call to you. This is my vlog. This is my contribution to National Blog Posting Month. Get out. Vote. Get it done. Because we have to do something to take back control of our country. Because if we don't, it's over. It's over. We're already at the point where we can't say we're the best country, the strongest country, the most democratic

country. Democracy is in peril. All the world-wide polls are showing that we are no longer seen as that strong, independent country that has democracy. That's going away. That is going away.

We have a guy in the White House who wants to be emperor, he wants to be dictator, he wants to be king. And we have a bunch of people in Congress who are willing to let him do that. We have jokers in Congress. Time to take it back. Time to take charge. Be an American citizen. Get it done. VOTE. If you are registered to vote, and you have not voted, go do it now.