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4-8-9-5-0-1. I scribble down those six numbers as I match an application, ballot, and candidate list together to be sent out in the mail.

4,000 masks. Too many or too little? Might as well add more just to be safe.

217 voting machines. They feel unnecessarily heavy after spending four hours pulling them off shelves to be cleaned and recalibrated.

28 precincts, but don't forget about nursing homes, satellite sites, early voting, and the quarantine tent. There's voting there too.

One Person. One Vote.

"Are you a citizen of the United States?" Yes.

"Are you a resident of the state of Tennessee?" Yes.

"Have you ever been convicted of a crime that is a felony?" No.

"Will you be 18 years of age or older on or before Election Day?"

No, I wish.

These questions required of every registrant reveal a truth that I cannot escape for this moment: I cannot vote. My birthdate, a mere few days too late, dictates the reality that I cannot have a say.

One Person. No Vote.

So, what can one person do? While I, myself, cannot vote, I can make sure that as many people as possible do.

In this election cycle, I have spent many hours after school and on weekends at the Sumner County Election Commission. Following my brain-enriching, demanding exploration through the world of calculus each day, I trek across town and wedge myself into the hardest working machine in the county: the election office. The pieces of this wheel churn fast, producing results that affect the community, state, and nation. At first glance, it would appear that the addition of a spritely young part like myself wouldn't fit in with the more 'antique' pieces that have been whirling around here for decades, but it turns out I can get right up to speed—well, as soon as Betty gets me caught up on how to operate a flip phone.

One person. One vote. 783 people. 783 votes. 112,523 people. 112,523 votes. The numbers climb and climb as the machine spins around and around, but behind each number is a name, a face—a person. Some are classmates, neighbors, family friends. Most I'll never meet or know, but with each push of a stapler, pass of a paper, and stamp on an envelope, I empower one person to make their voice be heard.

All of the human parts of the machine are necessary to completing this extensive effort. With Pat helping downstairs with the voting machines, Eddie daily collecting the

overflowing trash cans, and Julie keeping everyone in good spirits with encouragement that only an eighty-year-old grandmother can provide, each of us contributes to making the election commission a living, breathing success. Together we form a crucial unit, carrying out the promise of a free and fair election.

On November 3rd, and in the few weeks before that day, all of our hard work pays off. As a poll worker for Early Voting, I see the fruits of our labor as I watch each voter come through the door. I hand out the thousands of gloves I counted out a couple of months ago, set up and break down the sneeze guards I laboriously packed, and greet people of all shapes and sizes from all walks of life who take time to make their voice be heard and choices be counted. As a machine operator, I instruct voters how to vote with the electronic machines and sometimes have to gently remind them that their jabbing on the screen won't accomplish anything—it's not a touch screen. The hundreds of people waiting in line outside the door, even in the pouring rain, inspire me and prove to me that my work is worth the effort; democracy is worth fighting for.

On Election Day, I scuttle across the county, witnessing the full realization of this election machine. After starting in the early morning by assisting with the unlocking of absentee ballot boxes, I head over to the hospital to help a few people vote, transport a replacement printer to Guild Elementary, spend the afternoon and evening machine

at Creekside Fellowship as machine operator, and end the exhausting but exhilarating day back at the Commission packing up all of the election supplies.

As a poll worker, I ensure that our election runs safely and smoothly even with the uncertainty of a pandemic. I make my mark in service—helping every one person exercise their one vote.