2014 is the year of elections. In June, we elected a new provincial government, and it is now time to decide upon the leadership of the city we call home. On October 27, Ontario will head to the polls to elect the mayors, councillors, and school trustees of their respective municipalities.

During this time, we are once again faced with the assumption that students “don’t vote”. But are students really the only ones not showing up at the polls? In 2010, the voter turnout for the Hamilton mayoral election was 40.5%, while the voter turnout in Ward 1 was 40.7%. Voter apathy is not just a student issue, but rather a much broader issue facing municipalities nationwide. However, I believe that now more than ever, students are engaged in their city’s politics, have a desire to exercise their right to vote, and will have a greater impact in the 2014 election.

The McMaster Students Union (MSU) continues to utilize the MacVotes campaign to not only engage students in the election process, but to also ensure that students have the information required to make an informed vote. At msumcmaster.ca/macvotes, you can find the documents necessary for voter identification, as well as the time, date, and locations of this year’s polls. You will also be able to find information about your mayoral and Ward 1 candidates, as well as their respective platforms.

Another integral component of the MacVotes campaign is the MSU Mayoral All-Candidates Debate, which will take place in the McMaster University Student Centre on Wednesday, October 22 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. During this debate, students will have the opportunity to ask the candidates any questions they may have, and learn more about how candidates will contribute to student life in Hamilton. I sincerely encourage everyone to join the election conversation, both at the debate and online. Use the hashtag #MacVotes to make your voice heard in the Twitter-verse.

As members of the wider Hamilton community, McMaster students have a say in the leadership and future direction of our city. Visit msumcmaster.ca/macvotes to learn how, when, and where to vote. It is time we demonstrate that we are not only engaged citizens, but that we also have valuable input to give. Do you have issues with your landlord? Vote in this election! Do you have something to say about the city’s transportation system? Vote in this election! Do you have any opinion, big or small, of the city in which you study and live? Get out and vote in this election on Thursday, October 27.