

Consistent Nursing Presence Through Questionably Unprecedented Times

For global readers, it is election season in the United States. On Tuesday, November 5, 2024, Americans will select the 47th president.

Election season. Those words evoke sighs, spur eye rolls, emblazon debates, strain relationships, spark activism, and fan hope. The *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing* team works months ahead of each issue. I drafted this editorial as former President Donald Trump recovered from an assassination attempt during a Pennsylvania rally on the tail of new federal felony convictions, President Joe Biden dropped out of the 2024 election, and Vice President Kamala Harris accepted the Democratic presidential nomination and announced Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz as her running mate. By publication, Americans will be about one month from casting ballots. Only time will reveal the threads of history.

Many people claim these are unprecedented times in the United States, and a majority of people across gender, race, ethnicity, age, education level, and partisanship find it stressful or laboring to discuss politics with someone of another belief (Pew Research Center, 2023). However, U.S. history records assassination attempts, stopped campaigns, female presidential candidates, international conflicts, and rising civil disagreements. America has experienced compressed tension throughout its brief 248-year history. Nurses have long led political advocacy and national patriotism (Pollitt, 2016, 2018).

Before many nurses had the right, enfranchisement, or access to vote in any government election, they organized into professional associations to create professional and social changes (American Nurses Association, 2016; Pollitt, 2016, 2018). Nurses marched and lobbied for voting rights (Pollitt, 2016, 2018). However, gaining the right to vote did not guarantee it, as voters across all demographic categories experienced discriminatory tactics. Known and unknown nurses have leveraged their expertise to care for others' electoral participation—lending their mental and physical power (Pollitt, 2016, 2018). Figure 1 details select U.S. voting, nursing, and oncology histories.

Many people, including myriad nurses, have gone before you, risking ridicule, imprisonment, and death for your right to vote—and for you to exercise that right. Unprecedented times or not, nurses are trusted professionals, consistently focusing on the health and well-being of others (American Nurses Association, 2015; Brennan & Jones, 2024). No matter your preferred party, ex-

ercise your right. Vote in the coming election(s). Visit usa.gov/how-to-vote to find voter registration details, early voting dates, and locations.

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KEYWORDS

nursing; oncology nursing; political advocacy; professional associations

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