

Your Right, Privilege & Duty

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Suffrage the right to vote, many in the United States take this privilege for granted and all too often people forget that it is a duty.

The right to vote wasn't always granted to all. The Constitution of the United States provided the right to vote by white males but even that was restricted by the individual colonies. Each state only allowed white male landowners and taxpayers to vote and some colonies took it a step further by determining what religion was appropriate for a voter.

Voting was a great privilege when it was extended to all males 134 years ago, women 84 years ago and 18-20 (year olds) 33 years ago. Before each was granted there were long hard struggles to achieve the right to be counted in our nations decisions.

It is your duty to be an informed voter. Your duty is to our nation, your children and the ones before us that fought so diligently to gain the privileged right to vote. So why do so many choose not to vote? The small group that I polled had pretty much the same answers.

1. *One candidate is as bad as the other.*
2. *I don't get into politics.*
3. *I don't know whom to trust.*
4. *I don't have time.*
5. *Who cares one person can't make a difference.*
6. *I'm not rich so my opinion doesn't count.*

My response to their answers:

(1-3) Trust in yourself, gather your important issues and compare them to the candidates in hand. Watch their speeches so you are able to discern whether they are truthful and answer questions asked. There are no perfect politicians; they are capable of making mistakes just as we are. Will you ever find a perfect match? Probably not, my husband and I are not always agreeable on issues but we always manage to make the same voting choices

(4) Make the time it only takes a few minutes and you get time off work.

(5-6) The question is do you feel you count? Voting is one of the few times we are all equal, one person one vote. It allows you to speak out for your beliefs (schools, housing, crime, affirmative action, racial profiling, jobs, safety, environment, social security). Do you really want to leave your and your children's livelihood up to the rich and special interest groups? Take control of your future, elected officials make decisions that affect your quality of life and it's up to you to choose officials that stand up for you. The amount of people not voting is alarming, over half of our society. For now if you are not voting you really don't count. As for me I plan to put my little old one vote to use. 54% of the voting aged citizens chose not to vote and 31% of the registered voters failed to show up to vote.

*Information obtained from [Population Characteristics](#) by Jennifer Cheeseman Day & Kelly Holder