

Importance of Voting



By Paul Engel

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- Are you as sick and tired of the constant drum beat of being told how important this elect is?
- Tired of constantly being harassed to register and vote?
- Have you take the time to consider just how much power you can wield with your vote?

Election day is just one week away. I'm sure many of you, like me, are ready for this election season to be over. For more than a year we've been hammered, badgered, and generally harangued with the idea of how important it is to vote. However, it has been my experience that the reasons given for our participation in the election process was more about getting their candidate elected or, more often, preventing their opponent from winning, than what actually makes voting so important. So as the day of reckoning for this crazy election cycle approaches, let's take some time and look at the importance of voting without all of the political party rhetoric.

Why Americans Vote

Contrary to what you've heard from politicians and the media, the Several States and the United States are all republics. But what does this mean?

[T]he constitutions of most of our states assert that all power is inherent in the people;

[Thomas Jefferson – Letter to John Cartwright, 5 June 1824](#)

In this country power does not come from government. Not from the President, not from Congress, not even from the Supreme Court. All power is inherent in the people as an inseparable part of our being. And while the direct exercise of this power may work in small groups like families, it quickly breaks down when applied to anything larger. This is why we create governments, to exercise our power collectively. How do we create governments and how do we structure them? In this country, we create governments in two ways: Sovereign governments are created by constitutions, and non-sovereign governments (like counties, cities and other municipal organizations), are created by charter. In either case, a government's forming document not only creates the government, but determines its form and powers. Again, here in the United States, all sovereign governments are republics:

The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government,

[U.S. Constitution, Article IV, Section 4](#)

Republican Form of Government

But what is a republican form of government and what makes it so special?

A commonwealth; a state in which the exercise of the sovereign power is lodged in representatives elected by the people.

[Republic: Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#)

To start with, a republican form of government recognizes not only that the power is inherent in the people, but that for them to exercise it directly would be problematic. Therefore, in a republic the people vest or lodge their power in people they hire to represent them in government. They choose who they wish to hire collectively by voting. But why is voting so important?

First we need to understand that, while all power is inherent in the people, they rarely agree on how to use it. Even when they agree on a goal they wish to reach, the people cannot seem to agree on how to achieve that goal. This is why democracies, where the people exercise their sovereign powers directly, are so chaotic. As John Adams wrote:

“Democracy... while it lasts is more bloody than either aristocracy or monarchy. Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There is never a democracy that did not commit suicide.”

[John Adams, letter to John Taylor, 1814](#)

To separate the process of policy making from the emotions of the masses, we have republics. Now the people can choose those among them whom they trust, and empower them to exercise their inherent power in their name. Emotions may still run rampant about the candidates, but once chosen, it is hoped that the representatives can rise above them. Also, by using representatives to exercise sovereign power, it's hoped they will take the time to consider and analyze prospective legislation and policies, allowing the rest of us to focus on our lives and families. However, there is nothing in the structure of a republic to prevent the representatives from becoming as emotionally driven as the people as a whole. This is why both the states and the United States are not just republics, but constitutional republics.

Constitutional Republic

Constitutional republics are a variation of a republic where the powers of representatives of the people are restricted by a constitution. This constitution acts as the supreme or fundamental law, establishing limits and boundaries to what the representatives can do. We see this in both the Supremacy Clause and the Tenth Amendment.

This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which

shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.

[U.S. Constitution, Article VI](#), Clause 2 – The Supremacy Clause

The Supremacy Clause establishes the Constitution as the supreme law of the land rather than the acts of the people's representatives. Only laws of the United States made pursuant (following) that Constitution are also considered supreme. Furthermore, every judge in every state is bound to this, regardless of what any state may have in their laws or constitution. Furthermore, the Tenth Amendment states:

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

[U.S. Constitution, Amendment X](#)

This further establishes that the powers of the United States are limited to those delegated to it by the Constitution. This means that the representatives of the people cannot act beyond the powers delegated to the government they serve.

The power to choose who will exercise power in your name is so fundamental not only to our governments, but to our way of life, that it is rightly called our civic duty. I would take it a step further and state it is the first and primary civic duty of all American citizens.

Why People Don't Vote

In the face of all of this, why do so many people not vote? Even in Presidential elections, which garner the most attention and participation, only about two-thirds of eligible voters actually cast ballots. In non-Presidential elections,

the rate drops to 40% or less. According to the Census Bureau, only about 70% of those eligible to vote in the 2022 election had actually registered to vote. With all that is at stake, why do so few Americans actually participate? I have a few theories why different people do not vote.

I believe a major reason why people do not vote is the fact that civics is no longer taught in schools. And when it was taught, voting was shown to be a duty, but not why it's so important. This seems to be the root of why so many people do not see hiring representatives as being very important. Add to that how often those representatives seem to ignore many of those they claim to represent, and you can understand why people discount the value of voting. Even worse, since most Americans were taught they were choosing leaders rather than hiring employees, they see themselves as serving those in government rather than what the framers of our government established: That they are public servants. If we the People were to come to the knowledge that we are hiring people to act in our name, perhaps we would start treating them more like the employees they are, and value our say in who we hire.

Another reason I hear people say they don't vote is that they don't believe their vote matters. I believe this comes from a couple of different misunderstandings about our governments. Yes, a single vote in a sea of over 200 million voters doesn't seem to make much difference. This comes from the fact that so many people are working so hard to focus our attention on a single race: The one for President. However, there may be dozens of races on the ballot that are far more important to your everyday life than who sits at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave, at least as far as the Constitution states. Those are members of Congress, your government and state legislature, and in many states, your judges. Don't forget county and city races as well. All of these have a greater impact on your day to day life than the President, not only because they are local, but because they can help protect you from the unconstitutional

actions of the President, Congress, and yes, even the federal courts. The other reason so many people think their votes don't matter is how our state election laws place a premium on the two major political parties when it comes to who appears on the ballot. How often have you been told you have to choose the lesser of two evils? Do you know what you get when you choose the lesser of two evils? You get evil! What if our state election laws allowed someone other than the political parties' chosen champions to appear on the ballot, without making them jump through obstacles not placed before the favored parties. So how are those state laws going to be changed unless we hire representatives who will actually work to change them?

I believe a major reason why people don't vote is apathy. More and more of the American people have become too lazy to do for themselves. They want all of the benefits of living in a constitutional republic without any of the responsibilities. They are more than willing to sit back and enjoy the blessing of liberty without lifting even a finger to help secure them. Apathy and sloth are probably the chief reason so many people do not vote.

I did hear one reason why some people won't even register to vote that surprised me: They didn't want to be called for jury duty. Jury candidates are chosen from databases of citizens, as I understand it, primarily from voter registration databases. This is because you must be a citizen to be on a jury, and since being a citizen is a legal requirement to vote in all 50 states, registered voters are a good pool of people you can reasonably assume are citizens. This topic is so important that I'm writing an entire article on the subject.

Why People Should Vote

With all of the reasons people have not to vote, the next logical question is, why should they? The answer is simple: If the people do not vote, then we are no longer a republic. As

the number of people who actually cast ballots shrink, the United States becomes more and more an oligarchy, where a select few make decisions for everyone. And if that isn't enough to get you to vote, consider this, too. Look around at the other people in your state and your district, the other people who do vote. Do you want to leave the future of your rights, your liberty, not to mention the rights and liberty of your family, in the hands of those people?

Sure, your preferred candidate for President may not win, but what about Governor, legislator, judge, or even dog catcher? How are any of them supposed to win if the people who agree with them can't be bothered to vote? Remember, elections are how we hire people to represent us, to exercise our sovereign power in our name. Don't you want some say in who that is? Consider the words of James A Garfield:

[N]ow more than ever before, the people are responsible for the character of their Congress. If that body be ignorant, reckless and corrupt, it is because the people tolerate ignorance, recklessness and corruption. If it be intelligent, brave and pure, it is because the people demand these high qualities to represent them in the national legislature ...

[A Century of Congress, p.486 – James A Garfield](#)

That means that the character of Congress, that branch of the federal government whose approval rating rarely tops 20%, is who has borrowed the United States into de facto bankruptcy. If that group made up of politicians whose most famous trait is their ability to lie, their character is, at least in part, your fault. That's true whether you vote or not. And what is true for Congress is true of every elected office. We the People are responsible for their character, and to be blunt, the American people have done a horrendous job. Just look at what else Mr. Garfield said almost 150 years ago:

Now, as always, Congress represents the prevailing opinions

and political aspirations of the people. The wildest delusions of paper money, the crudest theories of taxation, the passions and prejudices that find expression in the Senate and House, were first believed and discussed at the firesides of the people, on the corners of the streets, and in the caucuses and conventions of the political parties.

[A Century of Congress, p.486 – James A Garfield](#)

When We the People step aside, when we refuse to do more than complain about our governments, we leave no one else to establish the policies, opinions, and aspirations of this country but the political parties. By walking away from our duty to include our opinions and aspirations in the election process, we have not only failed our fellow Americans, we have been derelict in our duties.

Sure, our candidates don't always win, but does that mean we give up? After 17 years trying to pass legislation banning the slave trade in America, John Quincy Adams was asked why he kept going after all those years of failure. His answer should be our siren song today: "Duty is ours. Results are God's."

How we Choose to Vote

As I pointed out at the beginning, much is said to encourage, coerce, and even browbeat, in the effort to get people to bother to register and vote. However, little is ever said about how we decide who to vote for. Congress is not ignorant, reckless, and corrupt because people don't vote, but because of how those of us who do vote decide who to vote for.

The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution;

[U.S. Constitution, Article VI](#), Clause 3

Each and every officer of both your state and the United States is required to swear or affirm that they will support the Constitution of the United States. When was the last time you asked them to prove it? When was the last time you checked to see if those exercising your power, in your name, actually bothered to fulfill their oath of office? And let's be honest, how many of you would even know if one of your representatives were supporting the Constitution or not? Perhaps Congress, and the rest of our governments for that matter, are ignorant, reckless, and corrupt because We the People are ignorant, reckless and corrupt. After all, if you are ignorant of the power and limitation of a hired employee, how can you hold them accountable? If you are so reckless with your vote to waste it based on race, sex, political party, or just good looks, why wouldn't they be just as reckless with the powers you have entrusted them with? Since it appears most Americans seem to vote based on who is going to give them the most filthy lucre stolen from the American people, I would say that qualifies us as being corrupt.

Conclusion

As James A. Garfield said, if we don't like the character of our Congress, it's our fault. If we are embarrassed by the person holding the office of President, it's our fault. And the same can be said for each and every elected office in this nation. If you think you can escape responsibility by not participating, then you are not only a fool, but a deserter.

The republic for which our flag stands is crumbling under the weight of collectivism, tyranny, and elitism, in no small part because the people who believe in individual rights, in liberty and justice for all, cannot be bothered to go to the polls every couple of years to vote. Governments have made registering to vote so simple all you have to do is check a box when you get or renew your drivers license, yet still millions of American citizens who are eligible to vote cannot be bothered. Each state has extended early voting to make it

easier for people to work it into their busy schedules. And for those who are still unable to make those schedules, there is absentee voting. Yet still we can expect one-third of those eligible voters to abandon their duty and turn not only their future, but the future of their fellow Americans, over to others. How can we call ourselves the land of the free, if a third to half of us are not brave enough to cast our vote?

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