

### Low U.S Voter Turnout

America the free, bombs bursting in air, give me liberty or give me death. Each of these statements emerged from courageous individual in a struggle for a free nation. Freedom from what? Oppression, unjust laws, taxation without representation just to name a few. Freedom for who? All citizens regardless of race, religion, personal affiliations or lifestyle choice. Freedom from what? Foreign powers, pirates, internal unrest, and defense. What does freedom mean to you? Is it having the right to do what I want with who I want when I want to do it. How do we preserve this freedom? That is a very important questions and a topic of discussion outlined in this document.

As a democratic republic we elect the representatives who make and enforce laws and policies. So how do we separate and balance power between our elected representatives and the governed? One very simple word is centered at the core of each of these questions. We as a nation have sacrificed life, family and property for this right. This one word and the power it possesses has been gifted to us as U.S citizens to safeguard the freedoms our forefathers granted us. So what is this all-encompassing word that holds the key to each of the questions above? This one magical word contains only four simple syllables. "VOTE". Many U.S citizens do not understand the power of a vote or care to understand the significance of the right to vote.

What percent of eligible U.S citizens actually vote. Would you be shocked if this number was 28 percent? That is a sobering statistics. According to the Robert Schlesinger report from US News the U.S 2011 censuses reported 310 million plus and growing. Of this population approximate 90,000 plus voted. This would suggest 72 percent of U.S citizens have authorized 28 percent of their fellow citizens to make decisions on their behalf. Let's put this into a different perspective. Let's say a board of directors had ten

individuals who each had one vote. A meeting is scheduled and all ten stake holders are invited to determine how the profits should be split between the ten board members. Seven of the ten board members make the cognitive desiccation to not attend this meeting. After all they each only have one vote. Three board members show up and the meeting is called to order at the designated time. Since none of the other seven showed up they pass a unanimous ruling by those in attendance to split the 10 million three ways with the members present. They each go home with 3.33 million each. Who do you think benefited from attending and casting their one vote? Who lost out for assuming their one vote did not count so never bothered showing up to vote? This is an extreme example however it serves as a good example to make a point.

We must recognize other factors may preclude individuals from casting their votes. Let's consider the Black African Americans. The journey to the ballot box has always been a challenging one for this group. The first opportunity offered Blacks was established by a Constitutional ruling called the three-fifths rule. This basically gave three-fifths of a vote to blacks. This was latter repelled allotting a full vote to each black. However, the journey to the ballot box is still a troubling one for blacks. Today over 6 million blacks are barred from voting due to legal issues associated with imprisonment or past issues. Kemba Smith Praia is one such example. Her case drew national attention when she was barred from voting in her home state of Virginia more than a decade after receiving a presidential pardon.

Why is it important to vote this year? It is always important to vote regardless of the year. However the stakes are particularly high this year with the economy stuck in neutral and threatening to slip into reverse. That being said, the economy will move forward when employers feel confident enough to begin hiring. The choices voters make this November will either strengthen or weaken employer confidence. When you mark your ballot, ask yourself, "Will my vote help create real private-sector jobs for me and my family? Will my vote put us on the path to reducing our crushing federal

debt? Will my vote begin to reverse years of high unemployment? This will be a pivotal election and both parties will have their get-out –to-vote efforts turned up. But voting is something Americans often take for granted? That is in stark contrast to the people of Iraq who braved death threats in 2005 to vote in tier first free election. On the other hand Americans have it easy. Perhaps too easy. Having the right to vote isn't enough. We have to use it. Washington citizens are more active than most when it comes to voting. But even here, the number of people voting in major elections has dwindled over time. According to the Secretary of State's office, back in 1952 nearly 91 percent of eligible adults in Washington were registered to vote, and 80 percent of them went to the polls. In 2008, only 72 percent of eligible adults were registered. Even though a high percentage of them voted, the lower number of registered voters meant that only six out of 10 eligible people voted. This supports my earlier analogy of the 10 board members who each took home 3.33 million each because the other seven did not show up to vote.

This is a big election year in our nation. In addii9ton to the presidential race we have items such as Initiative 1185 that will let voters decide – again – if they want to require a two-thirds majority vote of the Legislature to increase taxes. Hopefully, the answer will be “no” again. Initiative 1240 would allow charter public schools to continue receiving money via a voucher system. Voters should say yes to this opportunity to provide parents with more choices for their children's education.

But however you must –VOTE!!!

In spite of everything, some folks believe they can't make a difference.....NOT TRUE.

Remember the 2004 Washington governor's race? It was the closest political race in U.S history. Republican Dino Rossi was declared the winner in the initial automated count and again in the automated recount. It wasn't until after the second recount done by hand that the democrat Christine Greogire was declared the winner by 129 votes.

The only way to guarantee you don't make a difference is to not vote. And, as the old timers say, if you don't vote, you can't complain. This year October 29 is the deadline to register in person. General election ballots will be mailed out to registered voters on October 19. Your completed ballot must be postmarked no later than Election day. If you are dropping off your ballot in person, you must deposit it in a designated ballot drop box or at your county election office by 8:00 p.m on Election Day.

Voting is easier –and more important- than ever these days...GET OUT AND VOTE.