

Why has political participation declined over time what strategies would you reco...

[Science](#), [Social Science](#)



Political Participation Affiliation: Introduction Political participation of citizens through voting accords the people a share of the governance in the country. All the people cannot be political leaders but can contribute to leadership of their own country through participating in the elections and choosing the political leader they want. Political participation in the United States through voting is however marked with restrictions which mean that not every individual residing in the US is allowed to vote during the elections. The reasons for political decline all come down to two major restrictions which are voter registration and non-citizens not being allowed to vote (Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle and Ansolabehere, 2013).

Voter registration restriction

The bill signed into law by Bush which tried to ease the voter registration process by allowing the registration to be carried out when people are getting their driver's license or even joining the military did nothing to ease the declining political participation. This is so because not all people have time to go in and register even though they are going to get their driver's license as most are nervous enough about the test to even think about registering as a voter. The other reason is that there are a group of ignorant people who are not aware about them being required to register as a voter before being allowed to vote and by the time they do, it is too late for them to register and hence they simply forego the voting process. Others are not patient enough to go register and they also fore go voting in the elections.

Non-citizens restriction

The non-citizens make up the second largest reason why political participation continues to decline, the number one being the age. USA has

over 20 million non-citizens and majority of them are over 18 years of age which is the minimum voting age. This therefore means that there are millions of people who are eligible to vote but are restricted to do so even though they reside in the US and are also governed by the same leaders they wish to vote for.

Strategies to increase voter turnout

There are many strategies that can be employed to increase the number of voters turning out to vote in any election in the US compared to the number of people who are allowed to vote. Some of these strategies should be based on the two main restrictions discussed above. The first of these strategies is the complete elimination of the voter registration process. During the period of elections, the election officials should use the necessary legal documents to prove the voter is a citizen and is above 18 years. All these information is available in the government database and hence will not be taxing for the election officials and will allow a large number of people to participate in the voting process.

The other strategy is to allow the non-citizens who are permanent residents as well as those in the process of applying for a citizenship a chance to participate in the voting process. This is important because they are residents of US and would also like a chance to elect a leader they deem fit for office like the rest of the citizens. Allowing a number of the non-citizens to vote will definitely increase the declining political participants.

Conclusion

Europe unlike the US has no restrictions of a qualified voter having to register in order to be allowed to vote. This has improved their voter turnout

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and increased the political participation of their citizens tremendously. US should borrow a leaf from the Europeans and lift the restrictions. This combined with allowing non-citizens with permanent residence status to vote will have a large impact on the voter turnout and ultimately the election results.

Reference

Lowi, T., Ginsberg, B., Shepsle, K. and Ansolabehere, S. (2013). American Government: Power and Purpose, 13th Ed. New York: W. W. Norton Incorporated.