

A case against apathy

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In a country that values democracy and governing through the consent of the people, it must be understood that the pandemic of voter apathy which pervades American society is unpatriotic and deleterious to the nation's values, on both a national and local level. Voter apathy is an issue that is recurrent in almost every demographic; though the reasons may be different, every members of every age group, class, and race can fall victim to voter apathy.

However, voter apathy does not only exist in the hesitation of voters to step towards the polling place. Deliberate disenfranchisement and obfuscation of the voting process has made it harder than ever for people to actively participate in the democracy that rules over their lives. Not only does the attitude of the voting population have to change; the system that allows the democracy to run in the first place must change as well. Nearly a decade ago, voter apathy, mostly among the younger demographics of voters, was at an all-time high in America. Campaigns encouraged young Americans to research the candidates for the very elections they were eligible for.

Currently, the general attitude that young voting millennials hold towards participating in their government has dramatically improved. In the halls of my high school, in the classrooms that my classmates learn in, in the courtyards and cafeterias that my generation communes in to break bread, nascent voters are debating about their political views to one another and expressing an earnest desire to take advantage of their right to suffrage. This is not to say that voter apathy among the youngest voting demographic is nonexistent. It pains me to hear my classmate, a friend who would turn eighteen before the general election, express disdain or simple disinterest in <https://assignbuster.com/a-case-against-apaty/>

regards to voting in November of this year. To see someone throw away such an opportunity that I could only dream of was painful to experience, especially since I would only become of age to vote two months after the general election.

The right to vote for all people, regardless of race, class, and gender, has been advocated for centuries by millions of Americans who sacrificed their well-being to change the society they lived in; it would only do them justice to exercise that which they worked hard to secure. The situation presented above was not the only incident to catch my attention. Now more than ever, with the most important election in the United States occurring, it is vital that Americans educate themselves on the current candidates and vote in the primaries, caucuses, and the general election. Unfortunately, current voters have expressed a certain detachment towards the election. This attitude acts as a reversed, political “tragedy of the commons”. The “tragedy of the commons” is a term in environmental science that explains how when a public resource is used by a public with no sense of knowing the impact their use holds, the resource is ultimately exploited and ruined beyond repair.

The same goes for elections where apathy runs rampant; if voters are led to believe that their vote would have no effect on the process, then they would refrain from voting. This attitude weakens the power of the governed and allows only the most devoted supporters of politicians to give their input on who should run their country. This attitude is what reelects politicians like Florida Governor Rick Scott, a politician with a track record for denying the existence of climate change (which threatens his state’s environment and <https://assignbuster.com/a-case-against-apaty/>

population the most out of the entire country) and taking away funds from education. Less than half of the state's voting population participated in the election that reelected Rick Scott. This attitude must be discouraged at all costs, to voters and to American society as a whole. We, the American people, must not let apathy govern the greatest country in the world.

The worst part about voter apathy is that passive voter apathy is becoming more prevalent in America; as a result of deliberate disenfranchisement, it has been harder than ever for disadvantaged Americans to vote. Voter ID laws, such as the ones implemented in Texas, require photo ID to register to vote in elections. This comes as a disadvantage to the elderly and members of the lower class. The elderly would not be able to vote either for lack of proper documents (since some regions hardly provide important documents like birth certificates) or lack of accessibility to the polls. Lower class voters would also fall victim to the struggles of being able to provide satisfactory identification and being able to reach a polling place.

Voting must be made accessible regardless of class, age, or upbringing. The new Texas voter ID laws are predicted to disenfranchise hundreds of thousands of voters in the state. If similar laws are to be allowed to pass in all states, who will be able to stop the privileged members of society from preventing the disadvantaged members of society from participating in their own government? Though voter apathy exists actively in the minds of many Americans and in many demographics, voter apathy must be counteracted to ensure the sanctity of American democracy. This means not only encouraging potential voters to learn about the election candidates and prepare to vote, but to also mobilize against those who wish to rig the

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election system for their own gain. When all of America is able to vote without obstacles, American society will be able to flourish under the complete consent of the governed.