

5.2 Voter Turnout

Explain the roles that individual choice and state laws play in voter turnout in elections.

1. Which of the following forms of political participation is most popular in American democracy?
 - a. Voting in presidential elections
 - b. Voting in midterm congressional elections
 - c. Voting in local elections
 - d. Voting in gubernatorial elections

2. Which of the following best illustrates grassroots political behavior?
 - a. The Supreme Court, using judicial review, rules an Act of Congress unconstitutional
 - b. The governors from all 50 states meet in Washington DC to advocate for infrastructure projects
 - c. A member of Congress announces his intention of running for president
 - d. A group of local teachers get together to pass a law to lower the voting age in their state

All voting is a sort of gaming,... I cast my vote, perchance, as I think right; but I am not vitally concerned that that right should prevail. I am willing to leave it to the majority. Its obligation, therefore, never exceeds that of expediency. Even voting for the right is doing nothing for it. It is only expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail...Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence.

On Civil Disobedience, Henry David

Thoreau

3. What is the main idea of Henry David Thoreau’s quote above?
 - a. Voting is an imperfect science
 - b. It does not matter if somebody votes or not
 - c. Voting is more than a ballot, it needs to be a lifestyle
 - d. Voting is meant for men only

Turnout of U.S. Voting Eligible Population, 2000-2012

2000	55%
2002	41%
2004	61%
2006	41%
2008	63%
2010	42%
2012	59%

Source: McDonald, United States Elections Project

4. What conclusion can be drawn from the voting data above?
- Voting around the world is more popular than in the U.S.
 - Voting rates are relatively high in the U.S.
 - Presidential elections elicit a higher voter turnout
 - Congressional elections draw high turnout rates
5. All of the following demographic characteristics would describe the typical voter EXCEPT
- White
 - Older
 - College-educated
 - Non-religious (Secular)
6. Not everyone who wants to vote can. Some of us can be labeled “cannot voters.” There are a number of institutional obstacles that prevent certain citizens from voting. All of the following are examples of these institutional obstacles EXCEPT
- Lack of absentee provisions
 - Citizenship requirements
 - Strict registration requirements
 - Prohibition against convicted felons
7. All of the following could be classified as “do not voters” EXCEPT
- Members of minority groups
 - High school dropouts
 - Young people
 - Retired professionals
8. A Democrat would most likely say
- “Make voting easier”
 - “Only the educated should be allowed to vote”
 - “Voting is for old people”
 - “Requiring voter ID is the right thing to do”
9. A Republican would most likely say
- “Make voting easier”
 - “Only the educated should be allowed to vote”
 - “Voting is for old people”
 - “Requiring voter ID is the right thing to do”
10. The Motor Voter Bill (1993) required all states to offer opportunities to register to vote when renewing your driver’s license. In effect it made registration easier. Who was most likely to have advocated for this?
- Democrats
 - Republicans
 - Libertarians
 - Independents

11. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002 modernized voting procedures. It hoped to eliminate any possibility for fraud on Election Day by improving the machinery used in counting votes. Who was most likely to have advocated for this?

- a. Democrats
- b. Republicans
- c. Libertarians
- d. Independents

12. In a recent Supreme Court decision it was argued, "It is for state legislatures to weigh the costs and benefits of possible changes to their election codes, and their judgment must prevail unless it imposes a severe and unjustified overall burden upon the right to vote, or is intended to disadvantage a particular class," (See *Crawford v Marion County Election Board*, 2008)

The Supreme Court justice who wrote this opinion would most likely be a

- a. Democrats
- b. Republicans
- c. Libertarians
- d. Independents

13. The health of our democracy can be measured by looking at political efficacy. Efficacy relates to our belief that we can affect our governmental institutions. All of the following would be examples of high political efficacy EXCEPT

- a. Higher voter turnout in presidential elections
- b. Higher turnout in political party primaries
- c. Higher turnout in street rallies for economic justice
- d. Higher rates of political apathy

14. Evidence suggests that the single greatest factor determining political opinion is

- a. Family influences
- b. A teacher
- c. Experience
- d. A close personal friend

15. What is the number one determinant of a person's vote?

- a. Family influence
- b. Income
- c. Race
- d. Partisan identification

16. Clearly candidate centered campaigns have changed our political landscape. Candidate centered campaigns have helped to make the process more democratic, utilized new technologies and provided greater intimacy with voters. Which of the following, however, is seen as a negative consequence of candidate-centered campaigns?

- a. Weakened political parties
- b. Decreased the cost of campaigns
- c. Decreased voter turnout
- d. Centralized campaign strategies