

U.S. Voter Turnout is Low Because There's Little to Vote For

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Voter suppression plays an important role in keeping Black turnout below that of whites, but does not explain why *overall* U.S. voter participation is far below most developed countries on the planet. The reason is simple: the rich control both political parties and, as a result, “the U.S. offers the narrowest spectrum of electoral choices in the industrial world.” Voting has relatively little impact on how the country is run.

President Obama wants you to believe that the political map of the United States would be transformed – “completely changed,” he says – if citizens were required by law to vote. Obama told a [town hall meeting](#) in Cleveland that mandatory voting would “counteract” the influence of money in the U.S. electoral process. That’s a hell of a statement from the guy who wrecked the public campaign finance system by opting out of it in 2008, and outspent his Republican opponents in both of his runs for the presidency. Obama ought to have his picture on a million dollar bill.

But, why does the United States have the [lowest voter turnout](#) in the industrialized world, including Russia? It’s not because Americans are happier with the way they’re living than the rest of humanity. The U.S. ranks 17th on the global [Happiness](#) index and 23rd on the [Satisfaction with Life](#) scale. And, although racial exclusion in voting is very important when comparing Black voter turnout with whites, white Americans also vote in numbers far below almost all of the rest of the developed world.

Americans don’t vote because both major political parties are answerable to the same people: the moneyed classes, the power structures that determine the issues that will be on the political agenda long before the party primaries begin. This is called the hegemony of the bourgeoisie, the rule of the rich.

The corporations and bankers choose the menu; the only option citizens have is whether to select from the pre-packaged list of candidates, or stay home. Almost [two out of three](#) chose not to vote in 2014. They were not behaving irrationally. Since both major parties are controlled by the rich, only the most minor tinkering with the way the country is actually run, is tolerated. No matter how many people vote, very little changes, because the U.S. offers the narrowest spectrum of electoral choices in the industrial world – which is why it has the lowest voter turnout.

Blacks Corralled by Democrats

The Democrats want to keep their lock on the Black vote, but they have no interest in Black

people voting their own political agenda, for the simple reason that Blacks are the most left-wing constituency in the country and must, therefore, be kept in check by the Democratic Party machinery. It is the Democrats who have for decades sought to break up concentrations of Black voters, spreading them out across a number of districts. This gives the Democratic Party a better chance to win seats in more districts, but it means that only those Black candidates that can appeal to a substantial segment of white voters can win election. The Black political conversation is left in a state of arrested development. Ultimately, even the Black political landscape turns into a desert, and rational Black people choose not to vote.

There is much more to politics than voting. The Sixties was the most productive decade in Black American history, but the victories came mainly from the street. The vote can be put to good use, but not when it's cast for a Republican or a Democrat. Which is why so few votes are cast on Election Day in the United States.

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