

Time to Boycott Voting

Let's Take Back Our Government

By Joel Hirschhorn

Takeaways

➔ First reform our political system and then maximize voter turnout.

After many years of political disappointment, more progressives, liberals and conservatives - and certainly moderates and independents - know in their hearts that voting for Democrats or Republicans is a waste. Just imagine if voter turnout was cut to 25 percent or less! Let the whole world see Americans boycotting a broken and corrupt political system and rejecting what has become a delusional democracy. To keep voting in an unjust political system makes us willing political slaves that the rich and powerful elites exploit.

Just leaving the major parties is not good enough and, besides, most Americans are not party members. We need a bolder strategy. We must humiliate the political elites in both major parties and the corporate interests that support both of them. We can send a shock wave throughout the political establishment by not voting in the 2008 presidential election.

Stop playing THEIR game. Take back control. Take back YOUR nation. Time to boycott voting. This strategy is consistent with the thinking of Gandhi and King: peaceful resistance to political tyranny that can bring the corrupt system to its knees. Ultimately, the most effective protest is through civil disobedience - to visibly and stubbornly refuse to respect what has become a corrupt, untrustworthy system. Before it can be fixed it must be deconstructed and then rebuilt. Taxation with MISrepresentation means we need a Second American Revolution; it must begin - not with violent action - but with massive withdrawal by citizens that have seen the light. We have a good head start with about half of eligible voters already so turned off that they don't vote. Obviously that has not been sufficient to change the system.

There will be negative, defensive knee-jerk reactions to this audacious strategy. Let's examine them:

Many will think that taking such action violates our responsibility as citizens. But taking that responsibility seriously as engaged citizens in the Jeffersonian sense must reflect that there is still a valid contract between citizens and their government. When we vote we have the right to a political system that respects we the people and gives us an authentic representative democracy. We have a right to a constitutional republic operating under the rule of law. But we have elected representatives that no longer have the public interest as their primary commitment, nor truly honor and respect our Constitution.

They have been corrupted by corporate and other special interests that fund their campaigns to get the laws, loopholes and largesse they want. They have been corrupted by power and the perks of office. They are political cowards and mostly intellectual midgets. The two major parties have a stranglehold on our political system that no longer merits our participation in their crooked game. Political parties are not part of our Constitution and the two-party duopoly has demonstrated that both Democrats and Republicans put their own interests above those of we the people, our nation and our democracy. We cannot vote our way out of our current, dreadful political system.

Whether you are on the political left or right, you will fear that not voting will help put in office people that support policies your abhor. But decades of objective political reality tell us that even people from the party that we align with do not, when elected, fulfill their promises and our hopes. Sadly, most Americans have become lesser-evil voters, deluding themselves that this is the best, least worse, yet awful choice. Instead of feeling bad about voting for candidates that we know in our hearts are not worthy of our votes and public office, we must have the courage to say "enough is enough; I will not play in this shameful game any longer." We must stop legitimizing and abetting our disgraceful government.

Many may fear that not voting sets a terrible example to children. But isn't it more important to tell America's children that true patriotism must reveal itself by rejecting a political system that no longer merits respect? Thomas Jefferson believed in periodic rebellion. Now is the time for all good Americans to come to the rescue of their nation, peacefully by boycotting elections.

The small number of third party members may be screaming: yes, don't vote for Democrats and Republicans; come over and join us! I have been a strong third party supporter, but we must face the painful truth. The two major parties have so rigged the political system in their favor and against third parties that voting for third party candidates for federal office is a futile action. We must first boycott voting to create sufficient pressure to open the system to genuine political competition. That requires a number of electoral reforms, possible if the nation gets its first Article V convention (see www.foavc.org). With reforms we can increase voter turnout to over 90 percent, as routinely seen in other democracies.

False patriotism may cause some to think that we must not show anti-American nations and terrorists that our government no longer has the trust of its citizens. But that has already been widely disseminated by endless polls and surveys, including the recent Zogby poll that found a record-low 11 percent support for Congress. Better to show our enemies that we the people have finally awakened and decided to re-assert our sovereignty and restore American democracy. Loyalty to country, yes; loyalty to government, no. Our populist American insurgency must begin with a boycott of voting.

Proof that this extraordinary strategy can work is that by now diehard Democrats and Republicans reading this are squirming in discomfort. So spread the word, if you have not deluded yourself about voting the nation into a far, far better place. Time to boycott voting. Join the picket line; admit that none of the above is the only rational decision when the choices the two major parties give us for federal officials are not worth a dime.

Voting in a delusional representative democracy is as harebrained as voting even though you know votes will not be honestly counted - which many fear may be true. We may have lost control of our government, but we still control our voting. Time to walk away from the brainwashing and fiction that it really matters which Democrat or Republican you vote for in primaries and general elections for federal office. Power elites want us to believe that. They collude with the corporate mainstream media that make tons of money from campaigns and want you to stay glued to suspenseful horse races. Loud-mouth political pundits that narrate the races are democracy's enemies. We must stop watching and listening to the political entertainment designed to keep us obediently mesmerized, as if the game is honest. Without an audience, these phony races and media circus will disappear.

Don't be fooled by the large number of candidates in the Democratic and Republican presidential primaries. It is a sham - a scheme to keep spectators glued to the illusory competition. Ron Paul has as much chance of being the Republican nominee as Dennis Kucinich has of being the Democratic nominee. With power elites controlling both major parties, zero chance for them and the other minor candidates, regardless of their grassroots support. Reflect on how both major parties accept lots of candidates in televised debates in the primary season. But come the general election with prime time televised presidential debates they keep out third party candidates that desperately need that exposure to rally meaningful support. Such is the hypocrisy and disdain of the two-party duopoly.

Come Election Day in 2008 we should party and celebrate (with TVs turned off) our populist boycott of voting and enjoy the camaraderie of fellow patriots. We must help them resist any late urge to vote, because by then millions of dollars will be spent by many special interests to make us feel

guilty and ashamed if we do not vote. I can hear Paul Revere now: The liars are coming! The liars are coming! All that advertising and pundit-screaming to herd us back into the voting booths will verify that our boycott strategy works.

With having the votes of only a small minority of the electorate, whoever becomes president will have no public mandate except major, systemic political reforms that satisfy the will of the people. Either that or accept being the president of a fake democracy on the world scene.

Be brave. Stick together. Save voting for a reformed political system worthy of respect and participation.

[Joel S. Hirschhorn is the author of *Delusional Democracy - Fixing the Republic Without Overthrowing the Government* that presents many electoral and other reforms; he can be contacted through www.delusionaldemocracy.com. Formerly, he was a senior official at the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment and the National Governors Association.]

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