

Dear LSC Community

In considering the upcoming election next month, I spent some time reviewing the history of voting and voter rights in this country. It is a fascinating history of trying to find the balance of how a representative democracy should work. It is a passionate history of fighting to overcome racism, sexism, classism, and multiple deliberate attempts to suppress the vote in the quest for power. People have fought and died trying to gain the right to vote. Today it is every American's right to cast their vote for the candidates who will lead this country at many levels. We must not abuse or lose that right, particularly through disinterest, misinformation, or election exhaustion. And, as has been historically recorded, we must still be wary of continuing attempts to suppress voting at all levels.

Declining to vote is of course each person's option, but that option is riddled with consequences. Not voting muddies the will of the people. Not voting in protest of the candidates ensures that one or the other will be elected anyway and negates any preference a non-voter may have had. Not voting due to a one-issue preference is also problematic. The one issue you are focused on may or may not be part of a larger issue that is in your interest. So, you see, any non-vote carries many possible negative outcomes.

What to do? Well, do your research, and check your facts. And fact check the facts: know where those facts have come from. There is so much misinformation and "alternative facts" spread by social media today and it is hard to hear the truth through the noise. Do your research and understand what each candidate is actually saying rather than hear it redefined through spokespeople or social and mainstream media or memes. Make your choice and VOTE.

My message today can be simplified: VOTE because you have the right. VOTE because those who came before you gave you those rights. VOTE because it does matter.

Be well, be safe.

Patricia L. Rogers, Ph.D.
President
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References

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