

# Common Reasons People Give for Not Voting and Some Suggested Responses

## 1. Apathy – people don't see any connection between their lives and participating in elections

- Ask people what issues they do care about.
- Provide lists of major issues if they can't think of any on their own. (It may be easier for you to talk about issues that matter to you, so make your own list!)
- Point out connections between voting and government action on these issues.

## 2. Lack of information- Don't know how to vote- Don't know who to vote for

- Provide information about online resources for how to register, where to vote, when to vote, etc. (See [LWVPalatinearea.org](http://LWVPalatinearea.org) for flyers with this information.)
- Keep information as simple and upbeat as possible.
- Provide information about online resources for learning about issues and candidates: for example\*:
  - Vote Smart (<https://justfacts.votesmart.org/> )
  - Ballotpedia ([https://ballotpedia.org/Elections#2020\\_election\\_coverage\\_by\\_office](https://ballotpedia.org/Elections#2020_election_coverage_by_office) )
  - League of Women Voters of Illinois Voter Guide (<https://illinoisvoterguide.org/>)
  - Local newspapers (these may also include editorial endorsements)

- \* We have discovered inaccuracies in sample ballots generated by these websites. **For your most accurate list of the candidates that will appear on your personal ballot, go to your county's website.** Generate a sample ballot and then use these additional sites to research the candidates and their positions on the issues.

## 3. Time constraints: Too busy, No time to vote; Voting isn't convenient

- Point out other the voting options now available: early voting, vote by mail.
- Election Day is a state holiday. (Illinois did this for 11/3/20 election though not everyone gets the day off).
- There are state laws requiring employers to give some time off during the day to vote, under certain circumstances.

## 4. Angry or frustrated with government (for example: they hate property taxes) and "retaliate" by not voting or they're all crooks

- Unfortunately, candidates don't know why you didn't vote and tend to care more about people who do vote.
- All they know from the vote results is which candidates, ideas and proposals prevailed. Even if none of the candidates' positions is perfectly aligned with your preferences, voting gives you an opportunity to nudge the discussion in your desired direction.
- Voting gives you a voice in making changes you want to see happen.

## 5. Elections are all rigged – no point in voting

- Voting gives you a voice in making changes you want to see happen.
- Our democracy does better when more people participate.

6. My one vote won't make a difference.

**Let's do the math.**

To make the math easy, say 100 people are eligible to vote on an issue:

All 100 people are eligible to vote.

If each person registers AND votes, then **51 votes** decide the election.

If only 60 people register to vote (even though 100 people are eligible) AND ALL 60 vote, **just 31 votes** win the election.

If 60 people register to vote, but only half (30) of them vote ... then it takes just **16 votes** to win the election.

Because many people did not vote, a small group of active voters — just 16 people — controlled the outcome.

The turnout for a presidential election in Suburban Cook County over the past 20 years has been in the range of low to mid 70% of registered voters. Non presidential election voting tallies are far lower, often far less than 50% of registered voters. Your vote can have a real impact!

**NOTE: When you talk to be people, be aware that the words you choose can help or hinder!**

*Red-Blue Dictionary* <https://www.allsides.com/dictionary>