

Voting: Fair and Equal

“The right to vote must be open to our citizens irrespective of – race, color, or creed—without tax or artificial restriction of any kind. The sooner we get to that basis of political equality, the better it will be for the country as a whole.”

— Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt

“That we have the vote means nothing. That we use it in the right way means everything. Our political work has only begun when we have the ballot. And that work should be carried out... as any good work which we undertake is – it must be thoughtful, idealistic, clean, effective.”

— Lou Henry Hoover, First Lady of the United States

“Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves—and the only way they could do that is by not voting at all.”

— Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt

“Every citizen of this country should be guaranteed that their vote matters, that their vote is counted, and that in the voting booth, their vote has as much weight as that of any CEO, any member of Congress, or any President. Our democracy is the centerpiece of who we are as a nation, and we must take action to ensure that the American people have full confidence in our electoral system.”

— Sen. Barbara Boxer

“To make it hard, to make it difficult almost impossible for people to cast a vote is not in keeping with the democratic process.”

— Rep. John Lewis

“The true, and only true, basis of representative government is equality of rights. Every [person] has a right to one vote, and no more, in the choice of representatives. The rich have no more right to exclude the poor from the right of voting, or of electing or being elected, than the poor have to exclude the rich; and wherever it is attempted or proposed on either side, it is a question of force, and not of right. Who [are they] that would exclude another?—that other has a right to exclude [them].”

— Thomas Paine

“We should be unfaithful to ourselves if we should ever lose sight of the danger to our Liberties if anything partial or extraneous should infect the purity of our free, fair, virtuous, and independent elections. If an election is to be determined by a majority of a single vote, and that can be procured by a party through artifice or corruption, the Government may be the choice of a party for its own ends, not of the nation for the national good.”

— Pres. John Adams

Voting Is Sacred

“Voting is a civic sacrament”

— attributed to Rev. Ted Hesburgh, CSC

“The average [person] votes below [oneself]; [a person] votes with half a mind or a hundredth part of one. A [person] ought to vote with the whole of [self], as [one] worships or gets married. A [person] ought to vote with [one’s] head and heart, [one’s] soul and stomach, [one’s] eye for faces and [one’s] ear for music; also (when sufficiently provoked) with [one’s] hands and feet. If [a person] has ever seen a fine sunset, the crimson color of it should creep into [that person’s] vote. The question is not so much whether only a minority of the electorate votes. The point is that only a minority of the voter votes.”

— Gilbert K. Chesterton

“Let each citizen remember at the moment [one] is offering [one’s] vote that he [or she] is not making a present or a compliment to please an individual--or at least that he [or she] ought not so to do; but that he [or she] is executing one of the most solemn trusts in human society for which [one] is accountable to God and [one’s] country.”

— Samuel Adams

“Every man and every woman in this Nation—regardless of party—who have the right to register and to vote, and the opportunity to register and to vote, have also the sacred obligation to register and to vote. For the free and secret ballot is the real keystone of our American Constitutional system.”

— Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt

“I therefore urge upon all the voters of our country, without reference to party, that they assemble tomorrow at their respective voting places in the exercise of the high office of American citizenship, that they approach the ballot box in the spirit that they would approach a sacrament, and there, disregarding all appeals to passion and prejudice, dedicating themselves truly and wholly to the welfare of their country, they make their choice of public officers solely in the light of their own conscience. When an election is so held, when a choice is so made, it results in the real rule of the people, it warrants and sustains the belief that the voice of the people is the voice of God.”

— Pres. Calvin Coolidge

“Voting is the expression of our commitment to ourselves, one another, this country and this world. And the imperative to vote is genuinely nonpartisan.”

— Sharon Salzberg

“Provide wise, discerning, and reputable persons for each of your tribes, that I may appoint them as your leaders.”

— Deut. 1:13

Voters Are the Government

“The continuing health and vigor of our democratic system depends on the public spirit and devotion of its citizens which find expression in the ballot box.”

— Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt

“If American women would increase their voting turnout by ten percent, I think we would see an end to all of the budget cuts in programs benefitting women and children.”

— Coretta Scott King

“Every voter ought not merely to vote, but to vote under the inspiration of a high purpose to serve the nation. It has been calculated that in most elections only about half of them entitled to vote actually exercise their franchise. What is worse, a considerable part of those who neglect to vote do it because of a curious assumption of superiority to this elementary duty of the citizen. They presume to be rather too good, too exclusive, to soil their hands with the work of politics... Popular government is facing one of the difficult phases of the perpetual trial to which it always has been and always will be subjected. It needs the support of every element of patriotism, intelligence and capacity that can be summoned.”

— Pres. Calvin Coolidge

“Let us not be afraid to help each other—let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and Senators and Congressmen and Government officials but the voters of this country.”

— Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt

“Now more than ever before, the people are responsible for the character of their Congress. If that body be ignorant, reckless and corrupt, it is because the people tolerate ignorance, recklessness and corruption. If it be intelligent, brave and pure, it is because the people demand these high qualities to represent them in the national legislature... If the next centennial does not find us a great nation... it will be because those who represent the enterprise, the culture, and the morality of the nation do not aid in controlling the political forces.”

— Pres. James Garfield

“The job facing American voters... in the days and years to come is to determine which hearts, minds and souls command those qualities best suited to unify a country rather than further divide it, to heal the wounds of a nation as opposed to aggravate its injuries, and to secure for the next generation a legacy of choices based on informed awareness rather than one of reactions based on unknowing fear.”

— Aberjhani

“Voter apathy is civic abdication.”

— Charles M. Blow, New York Times columnist

“Democracy is not a spectator sport.”

— Marian Wright Edelman