



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on June 19, 2012

Inciting the Idiot Vote

Joining the ranks of drug pushers are what I would call polling-place pushers. These are people who run get-out-the-vote drives or at least agitate in that regard, and they are more to be feared than any corner dope peddler.

As an example, pollster John Zogby [recently lamented](#) how the young people who catapulted Barack Obama to the presidency are now losing interest in voting. He said to the League of Women Voters (LWV), “I truly am worried about today’s twenty-somethings.” I have seen them move from hope and grand expectations for themselves and their world to anxiety and disillusionment.”



That’s one way of saying it. A more accurate way is this: They’ve made that common transition from naivety to cynicism, which often happens when you’re slapped in the face by reality — especially reality you voted for.

This transition is no surprise, as naivety and cynicism are actually two sides of the same coin. After all, the naïve person and the cynic will tend to see others, respectively, through rose-colored glasses and in dark colors regardless of the moral status of those observed. Thus, neither judges others very well and both are defined by *ignorance of reality*. This is why the same people are so often both naïve sorts and cynics — at different points in life. The young starry-eyed idealist becomes the old cynic because he had the wrong ideals. And this is perhaps inevitable unless the underlying cause, ignorance, is remedied.

This brings us to the crux of the matter. Zogby says that we need “a game plan to target first-time voters,” but this cart-before-horse thinking places action before competence. How about targeting young people with Civics 101, a strong dose of constitutionalism and inculcation with virtue? For it is *not* your civic duty to vote.

It’s your civic duty to become qualified to vote.

Thus should we never encourage the apathetic to cast ballots, for disinterest correlates with incompetence. After all, how many people have ever achieved proficiency in an area through disinterest in it? Has this mindset ever bred skilled golfers, musicians, or artists? Are the apathetic ever good Samaritans? Would someone claim that, somehow, giving everyone a chance at a 747’s helm would make airline travel better? And I can’t imagine it would improve brain surgery if we, in the name of being democratic, gave every John Q. Public a chance to cut open a skull in the operating room.

Nonetheless, voting is the one area where this common-sense principle goes out the window and we’re to believe that greater voter participation — despite great voter ignorance — will somehow yield a healthier republic. Forget Thomas Jefferson’s counsel that education is the “true corrective of abuses of constitutional power.” All hands on deck! We need more help sinking the ship.



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Lest some think me naïve, I'll mention that many pushing the puerile to the polls are Machiavellian political operators trying to capitalize on the idiot vote. And some would cite Zogby as an example, as he told the LWV that we not only have to "engage" young people, but "especially young women." Now, he might have said this simply to pander, as he was speaking to a women's group. Then again, whom do young people — *especially young women* — generally vote for? Hint: the same ideological set Zogby supports.

Be this as it may, however, the fact is that just as millions of good Americans believe mantras such as "Our strength lies in our diversity" simply because they've been repeated often enough, so do many unthinkingly subscribe to the notion that polling-place quantity means political quality at election time. But low turnout isn't to be lamented; it's to be applauded. After all, if someone doesn't have the get-up-and-go to get out and vote without being prodded, it's a given that he doesn't possess the greater initiative necessary to inform himself on the issues. In this case, he shouldn't be voting in the first place.

This is why low voter turnout is just a matter of man's nature taking its course. Sure, those uninterested in politics won't study it, but they also won't be very likely to vote. That is, unless the Machiavellian and the misguided push them into action before education.

Speaking of which, John Zogby said when referring to young voters, "We can't afford to lose them." But he is wrong. We can lose the ignorant through education or we can lose them through apathy, but if we are to keep our republic, lose them we must.



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