"VOTER APATHY: THE SILENT BARRIER BETWEEN US AND THE CHANGE WE CRAVE. LET'S SHIFT THE PARADIGM, AND BECOME THE VOICE AND VOTE OF CHANGE!"



A recent study published in the Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law indicated feelings of influence on community engagement, how people participate in politics, and individual wellbeing extend beyond feelings of despair, hopelessness, and other extenuating circumstances. Other studies have examined how economic hardship and social isolation contribute to lower voter turnout and apathy.

Findings further suggest that depression and despair negatively impact and influence political participation. This political, or voter, apathy results in an informational lack of interest in elections, political events, public meetings, and an overall lack of interest in the electoral process. Voter apathy may be seen as a silent terminator of democracy, turning once vibrant communities into silent spectators. The very fabric of democracy is weakened by the disengagement of voters from the political process.

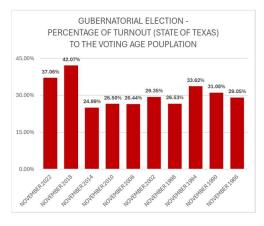
Oftentimes, the feelings of despair and hopelessness that stem from voter apathy occur when individual voters believe their vote does not matter. As a result, they become less inclined to vote or participate in political discussions. Studies have indicated that economic hardship and social isolation lower voter turnout.



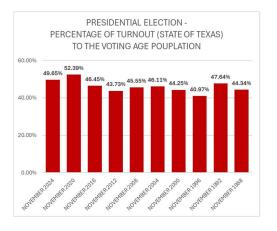
An individual's inability to provide food for their family or find gainful employment causes the priority of voting to be absent. Thus, voting is unimportant when financial distress overshadows other priorities in an individual's life. Addressing the underlying economic challenges and disparities is critical to confronting and eliminating voter apathy.



The graphs show that the voting population turnout for gubernatorial and presidential elections has never been higher than 45% and 55%, respectively. Recognizing and reducing voter apathy is critical, and political activist organizations like MOVE Texas are demonstrating that young people can be motivated to engage in their communities and participate in elections.



Source: <u>Turnout and Voter Registration Figures (1970current)</u>



Source: Turnout and Voter Registration Figures (1970-current)

The University of Houston MOVE Texas organization actively and consistently promotes voter awareness, engagement, and participation on the college campus. Holding multiple Treat & Chat Table Forums, this organization is steadfastly focused on mobilizing, organizing, voting, and empowering young voters in Texas. Treat & Chat Forums create a safe space for discussions about political subjects and topics that matter to young voters. Engagement is these conversations that allow young people to see the importance and power of their voice and their votes.

Organizations like MOVE Texas play a pivotal role in reversing the trend that has resulted from voter apathy by encouraging young voters to act through their participation in the political process. MOVE Texas has focused on increasing voter participation among young people by making voting accessible and relevant to students. The impact of MOVE Texas extends beyond individual elections.



The organization fosters a culture of civic engagement that encourages young people to take leadership roles and become active participants in their communities. When students believe their voices are being heard and matter, they are more likely to maintain their involvement in the political process throughout their entire lives.

Written On: April 28, 2025 Written By: Madison D. Durio

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