Your Vote Counts

By Anne Marie Morgan
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With voter apathy at an all-time high, this year's election could be decided by a minority of activists. What happens in November will determine the direction of this nation into the 21st century.

Although there is profound disagreement about which candidate will win the presidential election this fall, there is a nearly unanimous feeling among analysts that the election will be extremely close.

Because most people don't exercise their right to vote, elections are increasingly being decided for all of the people by the minority who do.

In 1984, for example, only 68 percent of eligible voters were even registered. Of that number, only 36 percent actually did vote. That means only 25 percent of eligible voters exercised their right to vote in 1984.

In the "off-years" (the non-Presidential election), such as 1986, the turnout is even worse. But the consequences can be large. One estimate says that if a total of just 50,000 voters **nationwide** had voted Republican instead of Democratic in 1986, the Republicans would have retained control of the U.S. Senate. (50,000 voters is less than one-tenth of one percent of the total voter turnout that year. It averages about one-fourth of a vote per precinct.)

Had Republicans kept control of the Senate, Robert Bork probably would have won confirmation as a U.S. Supreme Court judge. His candidacy was supported by many conservative and Christian organizations.

Low voter turnout predicted

The Washington-based Committee for the Study of the America Electorate has concluded, "There is every likelihood that turnout in November will be both down and the lowest in 40 years."

It is possible that only half of the estimated 170 million eligible voters are likely to cast ballots. Sixty-five million eligible Americans are not even registered to vote.

According to Curtis B. Gans, director of the committee, "There are no burning issues and, decent as the candidates may be, they are neither charismatic nor do they project vision. And we have had a period in which it has seemed increasingly rational and respectable not to vote."

Voter apathy increases in local races

In local and state elections, turnout is frequently even lower, since voters often do not bother to complete their ballots.

Voter turnout in primary elections (to decide **who** goes on the ballot) and in school board elections is worst of all. It usually averages just 10 percent of eligible voters.

One reason cited for low turnout in these races is the erroneous belief that one person's vote simply won't make any difference. But, in today's politics, just the opposite is true.

Because so few citizens vote, those who do are very powerful. Here's why: if only half of registered voters vote in an election, and a candidate wins by 55 percent, this means that only 27 percent of the registered voters elected the winner. This is clearly not a majority.

Minority rule in elections.

Low voter turn-out produces the most startling results in Congress. When (as in 1978) only 35 percent of the potential election voted—and only a bare majority (19 percent) of that 35 percent voted for the majority party in Congress—that 19 percent gave the party complete control over Congress and all legislation.

This demonstrates how a minority actually dominates national politics. With a minority electing our leaders, anti-family policies can be enacted even though most people do not believe in them.

The reverse side of the coin is this: since a minority of voters can swing an election, elections are very winnable. Victory comes through identifying those citizens favorable to the candidate, registering them to vote, and getting them out on election day. The apathy of some becomes opportunity for the activists.

The importance of one vote

Your voting precinct is, basically, your local neighborhood. Many elections have been decided by just one vote or less per precinct. For example, by only one vote per precinct:

- Democrat Averill Harriman was elected Governor in New York in 1954;
- Democrat George McGovern was elected U.S. Senator from South Dakota in 1960;
- Republican John Warner was elected U.S. Senator from Virginia in 1978.

Here are other examples:

- Woodrow Wilson won California by less than one vote per precinct, giving him the electoral votes needed to win the presidency in 1916.
- Harry Truman carried California and Ohio by one vote per precinct in 1948, giving him the winning margin.
- A Texas party convention voted for Lyndon Johnson in a contested Senate election by just one vote in 1948 and launched his career.
- John Kennedy, in 1960, won the presidency by an average of only one-half vote per precinct.
- In 1984, Ronald Reagan lost Minnesota—his rival's home state—by less than one vote per precinct.

Mobilizing to win

This fall critical elections will be upon us. Not only the presidency, but one-third of the U.S. Senate and the entire House of Representatives will be elected. The outcome will influence laws and public policy into the next century.

For the pro-family movement, the next president probably will have the opportunity of appointing replacements for three members of the U.S. Supreme Court who are now in their 80s. It is an election for the very soul of America. Three important questions must be asked.

1) Are you and all your friends registered to vote and committed to voting on election day? Each person should try to bring one person to the polls who otherwise wouldn't have voted.

Start with like-minded citizens—including teenagers 18 or older—in your neighborhood, office, civic associations, and churches. Offer to take them to the voter registrar, if not already too late. (In many states, registration closes 30 days before election day, which is November 8 this year). Make sure that college students and others who need them have absentee ballots.

2) Have you critically examined the candidates' positions and voting record on the issues? No one will agree with you all the time, but does the candidate stand with you on the most important issues?

Is your view of the candidate based on television commercials or possibly biased news reports? Contact the candidate's organization and ask direct questions, but also contact a state or national pro-family organization which may be researching the candidates' positions. Distribute this information to others.

3) Would you spend just a few hours or just a few dollars to help a good candidate get elected? Volunteers are important. And many do not realize that you can help out with any race—even outside your district. Lastly, take a carload of your friends to the polls. It could make the difference between a good candidate winning or losing.

With or without your input, laws and public policy will be made. To be apathetic is to surrender these decisions to others.

Left squeals over 'pledge issue'

By Pat Buchanan
Syndicated columnist

"What is it about the pledge of allegiance that upsets him so much?" Vice President Bush wondered aloud the other day.

Excellent question. And the squeals from the Left over Mr. Bush's raising of the "pledge issue" suggest the Vice President is getting dangerously close to the family jewels.

What are the facts? In 1977, Governor Dukakis vetoed a bill requiring public school teachers to lead children in a daily pledge of allegiance to the flag; he used, as political cover, an "advisory" opinion from the Massachusetts Supreme Court that part of the bill was unconstitutional.

> **'Just shut up, gays, women, environmentalists. Just shut up. You'll get everything you want after the election. But just for the meantime shut up so that we can win.'** —*Cong. Peter Kostmayer (D-PA)*

The Democratic-controlled legislature overrode his veto; and though the law has never been enforced, it remains on the books and has never been challenged in the court.

Seeing Mr. Bush elevate the pledge issue, the liberal press is squealing like piglets on the way to slaughter. "What, then, is George Bush's point?" asks *New Republic* editor Michael Kinsley. Why is he making this "demagogic" appeal to the "brutish side of the American voter"?

Well, Michael, the point is to end the journalistic cover-up of your candidate's record and ideology.

Mr. Dukakis did not have to veto that pledge of allegiance; he wanted to veto it. Why? Because, Governor Dukakis, as a professed "card-carrying member of the American Civil Liberties Union," wants all open expressions of patriotism and religious belief driven out of America's public schools. It is as simple as that.

With the nomination of the Little Duke, the social radicals of the ACLU have moved closer to the levers of executive power than ever before in American history. They are now one step away; for Michael Dukakis is no late convert to the ACLU church.

As long ago as 1970, he introduced bills to wipe out all state laws against blasphemy, sodomy, abortion and bestiality. No Supreme Court decision required young Dukakis to do such a thing; he was acting out of his ACLU ideology and convictions.

The new ACLU agenda calls for legalization and official recognition of homosexual marriages, for the elimination of tax exemptions for all churches and synagogues, for the removal of the phrase "under God" from the pledge of allegiance.

Does Mr. Dukakis agree? Will he denounce this agenda and resign? Where the devil is our watchdog press?

Surely, it is as valid to demand that Mr. Dukakis state his views on the radical agenda of the ACLU, of which he is a "card-carrying member," as it was to demand of Barry Goldwater that he denounce the John Birch Society, to which Mr. Goldwater did not even belong.

The Left seems terrified the ACLU agenda will be revealed, become an issue and be draped around the neck of candidate Dukakis. When George Bush mentioned Dukakis' "card-carrying" quote to the GOP platform committee, the old radical, I.F. Stone, went ballistic. Mr. Bush, Stone said, has "injected into the campaign a pale whiff of the witch-hunting, McCarthyite '50s."

Why is it "witch-hunting" to quote Dukakis' own words?

"How desperate Mr. Bush must be to become so shrill...is Jeffersonianism to become suspect again?" Stone wailed. Come off it, Izzy; "T.J." never went for homosexual marriages.

That Mr. Dukakis is not, as he claims, a "member in good standing" of the Greek Orthodox Church, that he is, as he claims, "a card-carrying member of the ACLU," is a critical, legitimate issue. Such associations provide an insight into Mr. Dukakis' deepest beliefs and suggest what kind of men and women he will appoint to the coming vacancies on the United States Supreme Court.

While the ACLU and its fellow travelers profess to believe in majority rule, in truth, they believe nothing of the kind. For decades, they have applauded as an autocratic high court imposed upon this nation, undemocratically and unconstitutionally, a radical agenda the majority of Americans deeply resent and never approved.

We never voted for forced busing or racial quotas; we never voted to drive prayer and the Ten Commandments out of the public schools; we never voted to legalize pornography, or to make abortion, (a felony in the '50s) a constitutional right; we never voted to abolish the death penalty.

These "reforms" were imposed by a dictatorial court whose future character will be determined by either Michael Dukakis or George Bush. This is the overarching issue; the Left is in danger of losing control of the court, of seeing its radical revolution reversed, and Michael Dukakis is its last, best hope for an ACLU court dictating to the nation right into the next century.

Distorting the First Amendment: hypocrisy and hysteria

Item: An editorial in the August 14th *Daily Transcript,* a newspaper published in Dedham, Massachusetts, said that the decision of the General Cinemas Corporation not to show **The Last Temptation of Christ** in any of its 318 theaters was "a slap at the First Amendment" because it cut off "the film-maker's right to free speech and made a decision for its patrons about what is good or bad for them to hear and see."

Correction: The last time we looked at the First Amendment, it said only that "Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech." It said nothing about requiring private groups (like General Cinemas) to provide a vehicle for speech they find offensive. Suppose we submitted an article to the *Daily Transcript* that its editors found to be offensive or libelous. Would their refusal to publish this article be a denial of free speech? Or would it be an exercise of reasonable editorial judgment? Hardly a day goes by that the *Transcript* doesn't decide what its readers should see in print. So how can their editorialists criticize the General Cinemas Corporation for following the same policy?

—From *The New American*

If the American people knew where Dukakis stood on the ACLU agenda, it would reject him in a landslide. That is why the liberal press is denouncing the "pledge issue" as irrelevant; that is why raising the ACLU connection is branded "McCarthyite." The Left fears the truth will emerge from behind the carefully crafted image of Mike Dukakis, Greek immigrant's son, who shares the same traditional values as you and I. But liberal Congressman Peter Kostmayer, a Dukakis man, gives the game away.

"Just shut up, gays, women, environmentalists," Kostmayer says. "Just shut up. You'll get everything you want after the election. But just for the meantime shut up so that we can win."