**Voting and Elections**

**Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other. *(Oscar Ameringer, labor organizer)***

**Nearly 6 million paper ballots cast by Florida voters in the disputed 2000 presidential election are still preserved in a climate-controlled room in Tallahassee, at the cost of $43,000 a year. *(Palm Beach, Florida, Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 19, 2010)***

**If voting changed anything, they'd make it illegal. *(Emma Goldman)***

**Once, in India, a group of 100,000 Hindus voted to become Christian. But there were 37 denominations at work in their area, so they gave up their plan through inability to agree on which denomination to be identified with. *(Christian Advocate)***

**Grover Cleveland got more popular votes in the 1888 presidential election, which he lost, than he got in the 1884 presidential election, which he won. *(Uncle John's Bathroom Reader: Extraordinary Book of Facts, p. 120)***

**Voters in 93 percent of the 376 counties with the highest per capita number of coronavirus cases overwhelmingly went for Trump. Most of the counties were rural -- in Montana, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, and Wisconsin. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 20, 2020)***

**First woman: "Now that the election's over, maybe the politicians can get back to work," Second woman: "You bet. It must be about time to start raising money for the next campaign." *(Jan Eliot, in Stone Soup comic strip)***

**An election is coming, Universal peace is declared, and the foxes have a sincere interest in prolonging the lives of the poultry. *(George Eliot)***

**Joe Biden became the first presidential candidate in history to top 80 million votes this week, as the counting of remaining ballots in several states continued. Biden amassed 6.2 million more votes than Donald Trump, with 51.1 percent of the total to Trump's 47.1 percent. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 11, 2020)***

**On February 11, 1812, Massachusetts governor Elbridge Gerry manipulated the boundaries of voting districts to gain an advantage for his party. Thus began the practice of gerrymandering. (*The Daily Chronicle)***

**Do you ever get the feeling that the only reason we have elections is to find out if the polls were right? *(Robert Orben, humorist)***

**The GOP's campaign to restrict voting: After a record turnout in the 2020 election, Republican-controlled states "are taking their voter-suppression efforts to new extremes," said Ari Berman. Georgia, which gave Joe Biden a narrow victory and elected two Democratic senators, "is ground zero" for new voting restrictions. The state legislature is promoting bills to end no-excuse absentee balloting, limiting such ballots to people over 65 and requiring voters to get the signature of a witness and attach a copy of a photo ID. Another bill would cut back on Sunday voting, in an obvious attempt to limit black turnout through the "Souls to the Polls" voting drives held by black churches. Until this year, Georgia Republicans supported and expanded mail-in balloting, because it helped older and rural voters. But during the pandemic, many Democrats used mail-in ballots, leading to Donald Trump's Big Lie about widespread fraud. (Every ballot in Georgia was recounted by hand.) At latest count, Republicans have introduced 253 bills to restrict voting access in 43 states, justifying these anti-democratic restrictions by saying their supporters don't "trust" elections. If Democrats do not enact a proposed federal voting-rights bill to safeguard access to the ballot, "the consequences of democracy" will be dire. *(The Week magazine, March 12, 2021)***

**Take it from me – elections matter. *(Al Gore)***

**If voting could really change things, Congress would make it illegal. (The American Legion magazine)**

**The world's most populous democracy, India, has 900 million eligible voters. The country can't handle all of them voting at once, so they will cast ballots in seven phases spread over five weeks. More than 1 million polling places will be set up (the U.S., by contrast, has about 117,000), partly because of India's vast size, and partly because of a law that says that no citizen should have to travel more than 1.25 miles to vote. (*The Week magazine, April 19, 2019)***

**In elections, issues are more important than problems. Candidates should be most interested in those concerns that can be expressed in ways that show the public they have differing views, including views about social issues such as crime, welfare, educational discipline and race and gender preference. That offers the public a choice. Get elected by dividing. Govern by unifying. *(Ben J. Wattenberg, in Values Matter Most)***

**Seventy-three parties were on the ballot for an election in Italy in 1968. One was Friends of the Moon, which sported exactly one candidate. (*Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 337)***

**Some Iraqi politicians are telling voters if they don’t vote for them, they’ll go to hell. Imagine trying to use your religion to get votes. Thank God politicians in this country don’t try that type of thing. *(Jay Leno)***

**The ballot is stronger than the bullet. *(The Wit & Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln, edited by Alex Ayres, p. 190)***

**How many presidential candidates lost the popular vote but obtained the highest office in the U.S.? Five: John Quincy Adams, Rutherford B. Hayes, Benjamin Harrison, George W. Bush, and Donald J. Trump. Five candidates won the popular vote but lost the presidency: Andrew Jackson to Adams (1824), Samuel Tilden to Hayes (1876), Grover Cleveland to Harrison (1888), Al Gore to Bush (2000), and Hillary Clinton to Trump (2016). *(Amy Pastan, in The Smithsonian Book of Presidential Trivia, p. 61)***

**You know it's an election year when Congressmen start writing to you, instead of the other way around. *(Don Maclean, United Feature Syndicate)***

**The effort to oust California Gov. Gavin Newsom ended in resounding failure this week, after the Democrat prevailed in a landslide. As The Week went to press, with some 70 percent of ballots counted, an insurmountable 64 percent of voters had said “no” to removing the governor from office. The $276 million recall vote was ordered after only 4 percent of the state’s population signed a petition. *(The Week magazine, September 24, 2021)***

**Finishing second in the Olympics gets you silver. Finishing second in politics gets you oblivion. *(Richard Nixon)***

**An Early Fall: A new poll showed that if the presidential election were held today, most people would be confused because it's usually held in November. *(The American Legion magazine)***

**At what age did Prince Charles first get to vote? Trick query. As a member of the House of Lords, he is not permitted to vote. Likewise, his mother, the queen, and his father, Prince Philip. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Vote for the man who promises least; he’ll be the least disappointing. *(Bernard Baruch, businessman)***

**A recount is when the chairman can't believe his ayes. *(Orben's Comedy Fillers)***

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**It takes a great country to stand a thing like an election hitting it every four years. *(Will Rogers)***

**We always want the best man to win an election. Unfortunately, he never runs. *(Will Rogers)***

**I guess truth can hurt you worse in an election than about anything that can happen to you. *(Will Rogers)***

**The trouble with practical jokes is that very often they get elected. *(Will Rogers)***

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**A notice in the Adams County, Wisconsin, Times and Friendship Reporter reads: “I want to thank all you good people who took the time to vote for me on the school board. My wife was pleased with the outcome and wants to thank all of you who didn't vote for me." (Helen Walslager, in Reader’s Digest)**

**Any politician who starts shouting election-year demagoguery about the rich and the poor should be asked, “What about the other 90 percent of the people?” *(Thomas Sowell, Creators Syndicate)***

**From 1960 to 1990, roughly half of the 100 sitting senators represented states that voted for the other party for president. Today, there are only six such senators. *(FiveThirtyEight.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 8, 2021)***

**How sports affects politics: Politicians have good reason to root for their local sports teams. A Stanford University study has found that when the local team wins, it boosts the mood of voters so much that incumbents benefit on Election Day. The study looked at federal and state elections between 1964 and 2008, along with the records of 62 college football teams. Researchers found that game victories in the two weeks before elections increased the incumbents’ share of voters in the counties where the schools were located by about 1.5 percent – enough to make a difference in close races. Victories put voters in a better mood generally, researcher Neil Malhotra tells the Associated Press, and that translates into more support for sitting politicians. “Events that government had nothing to do with but that affect voters’ sense of well-being can affect the decisions they make on Election Day,” Malhotra says. *(The Week magazine, July 23, 2010)***

There are worse things than losing an election. The worst thing is to lose one's convictions and not tell the people the truth. *(Adlai Stevenson)*

**A new American Psychological Association survey finds that 52 percent of Americans say they're suffering from high stress levels because of the presidential election. *(Yahoo.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 28, 2016)***

**Almost everybody votes in Australia, where it’s illegal not to vote. But half a dozen European nations get out 80 percent of the vote, even though voting isn’t mandatory. How do they do it? Their election days are on Sundays. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**At the Thanksgiving dinner, one says to the other: “And let us give thanks that the election is over and hope that politics goes back to just being a nuisance.” (Wiley, in Non Sequitur comic strip)**

**The boy says at supper to his Mom and Dad: “This year I'm thankful that I'm still too young to vote.” (Ed Stein, in Denver Square comic strip)**

**The main trouble with holding elections is that you don’t know in advance how they’re going to turn out. *(Lord MacLehose, former Hong Kong governor)***

**In 2016, Donald Trump got just 46.1 percent of the national vote -- less than Al Gore, John Kerry, and Mitt Romney got in defeat. *(The Week magazine, February 26, 2021)***

**Voter suppression can backfire: Republican officials occasionally suffer "an outbreak of alarming honesty" about why they want to make it harder to vote, said Paul Waldman. Arizona state Rep. John Kavanagh last week defended restrictive voting laws by saying, "We don't mind putting security measures in that won't let everybody vote -- but everybody shouldn't be voting." Kavanagh explained that "the quality of votes" matters, and it's no loss if "uninformed" people don't cast ballots. How do you measure "the quality" of votes? If President Biden won your state in 2020, "you clearly have a quality control problem." That's why Arizona and Georgia "are leading the way on new voter-suppression measures." Democrats are panicking, but they "have a powerful weapon in their arsenal: backlash." When Republicans overly tried to discourage people of color from getting to the polls last year, those voters turned out in record numbers. Current Republican efforts to curtail mail-in voting, remove ballot drop boxes, and restrict early voting are "so blatantly partisan and so indefensible" that they may backfire. When you threaten people's right to vote, you make it more precious -- and motivate them to exercise it. *(The Week magazine, March 26, 2021)***

**Who was the only president to have been elected by unanimous electoral votes? George Washington. No one can top Washington’s record. In his first election, he got all sixty-nine electoral votes from the ten states that cast them. Then the Father of Our Country, who still enjoyed preeminent status as a hero of the Revolutionary War, did it again in 1792, winning all 132 electoral votes and all fifteen states. Washington had an advantage over his successors in that there was not yet a two-party system in America, so he faced little opposition. *(Amy Pastan, in The Smithsonian Book of Presidential Trivia, p. 69)***

**When all defeats are fraudulent: Republicans now believe there are two possible outcomes in any election, said Dana Milbank. “A. The Republican wins. B. The Democrat stole the election.” Consider what happened in last week’s Virginia and New Jersey gubernatorial races. In New Jersey, Democrat Phil Murphy defeated Republican Jack Ciattarelli by a margin of 50.8 percent to 48.5 percent – nearly the same margin that Republican Glenn Youngkin defeated Democrat Terry McAuliffe in Virginia. McAuliffe “conceded defeat the morning after the election” and wished Youngkin well. Ciattarelli, meanwhile, refused to concede, urged “people to come forward with allegations of fraud,” and said the election wasn’t over “until every legal vote is counted” – implying there were many illegal votes. After Donald Trump’s “Big Lie” that he won the 2020 election, it has become GOP orthodoxy that any election not won by Republicans must have been stolen by the Democrats. The Republican National Committee has deployed an “election integrity team” of 20 lawyers to New Jersey to hunt for fraud, and Republicans were “planning to do the same in Virginia if Youngkin lost.” These “reckless, irresponsible GOP leaders” are no longer just campaigning against Democrats. They’re “campaigning against democracy.” *(The Week magazine, November 19, 2021)***

**I know nothing grander, better exercise, better digestion, more positive proof of the past, the triumphant result of faith in human kind, than a well-contested American national election. *(Walt Whitman, American poet)***

**On February 15, 1921, six months after the ratification of the 19th amendment granting women the right to vote, a statue commemorating suffragists Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton was unveiled in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. The very next day the statue was moved to the Capitol Crypt, which amounted to an underground broom closet. Not until May 14, 1997, was the statue finally put back on display in the Rotunda, memorializing women's fight for equal rights and honoring the sculptor, Adelaide Johnson. (*The Daily Chronicle)***

**Largely lost amid the "general astonishment" over Donald Trump's election victory is one rather pertinent fact, said Andrew Trees in USA Today -- the president-elect won fewer votes than his opponent. While Trump secured the all-important 270 Electoral College votes, he currently trails Hillary Clinton by more than 1 million votes overall, or 0.8 percent -- and with millions of ballots still to be counted on the deep blue West Coast, that gap is expected to widen to about 2 million votes. In 2000, Al Gore got only 560,000 more votes than George W. Bush. "For the second time in 16 years, and the fourth time in U.S. history," our system has "foiled the popular will." *(The Week magazine, November 25, 2016)***

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