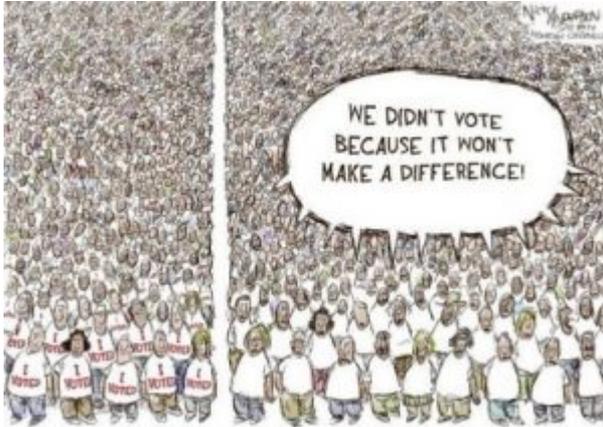


# Heck with this, I'm staying home



I don't think kind thoughts about people who don't vote. I'm sorry, I just can't help it.

I am very proud to be an American; proud to live in America and privileged to have all the freedoms guaranteed me by the Constitution.

While it is often described as a duty or even a privilege to vote, I choose to look at it as an honor and I find unconscionable the decision not to vote and unsupportable the different reasons given for not voting.

**I don't like any of the candidates.** Any? The election is about more than just who is running for president. There are plenty of congressmen, senators and local officials that you should offer your opinion on. There are usually referendums and issues that deserve considered thought.

**I don't like the presidential candidates and that's the only vote that matters.** If it matters, then you need to vote. Don't like the selection? Use your constitutional right to pencil in your preferred choice for the office.

**I'm making a statement by not voting.** Yes, you are...you're just not aware what that statement is. There's no way to differentiate your "statement" non-vote from the lazy non-vote or the uncaring non-vote or the never-got-around-to-it non-

vote.

You want to make a statement? Write in a different name and put your vote where your mouth is.

**It's too much of a pain/I don't have time.** This one's my favorite. The presidential election is once every four years. Every. Four. YEARS. Even my parents, who (used to) complain I didn't call them enough, got calls more than once every four years.

Talk about early warning. It's only the leader of the free world we're talking about. Put it on your schedule.

By the way, about those lines...those are your neighbors. Talk to them. They won't bite. They're just like you, looking for some way to pass the time while they're in line (I know, I chat with everyone around me in line).

**My vote won't count.** Get out of here with that. I live in Florida. Maybe you're too young. Maybe you have a short memory. Maybe you were watching cable reruns instead of election results.

George Bush beat Al Gore by 537 votes in Florida.

**537.**

Out of 5.8 *million* votes. And winning Florida gave Bush 25 electoral votes...and he only won the national election by 5 electoral votes.

Yeah, your vote counts.

106 million people didn't vote in the last presidential election. These people are still Americans despite their choice. Because we are a great country with the freedom even to not protect our freedoms by voting.

You have complaints that the government doesn't do anything? I

have complaints that nearly half of Americans don't do anything to change that.