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### Why people do not vote.

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**Halton Hills:** Mr. O'Leary, in his Nov. 9th column, gave us 10 very good reasons to vote. To be fair, maybe we should consider why so many people do not vote.

When we elect a person to conduct the government's business we expect him/her to represent the majority of the voters. Democracy is defined as "rule by majority," is it not? And we do live in a democracy, do we not? Does democracy now mean "rule by majority of elected officials," or "rule by majority of the people"? The answers are very different and quite obvious.

A person seeking election may start out with noble intentions. He will undoubtedly state his intentions during campaign and people will vote based on his promises. When he gets elected he may find that the promises on which he was elected do not fit in with the predetermined agendas of his colleagues, and he will possibly be ridiculed, humiliated or ostracized unless he conforms. The voters are then left, not with a representative, but with a dictator who does as he pleases.

In these days of easy communication it would be no problem for an elected person to poll his constituents on serious and controversial issues and top act on the wishes of the majority. It seems that politicians have no problem communicating to us what they consider to be good things that they have done and what they plan to do in the future. They show very little interest however in finding out what we want them to do.

As an example, consider the instance when Halton Hills Council was planning to include the Legion in the smoking ban. Two elected individuals claimed to oppose the idea. It was circulated around town that one of them said (paraphrasing) he would not tell a veteran to put out a cigarette and he made a show of putting out ashtrays on the tables at the Legion as a show of intention. But when the vote came up, the decisions to include the Legion in the ban was unanimous.

Did those two individuals lie outright, did they change their minds on their own or were they pressured/coerced? Whatever the reason, many saw it as a breach of trust.

These flip-flops occur too often to not convince voters of insincerity.

Then consider the silly, immature and unprofessional behaviours of elected persons at all levels of Government. The recent banning of a citizen from all public properties is a prime example of silliness.

If the citizen in question uttered threats or engaged in harassment, why were charges not laid? If he was disruptive to business why was he not simply barred from where business was conducted? If he was just uttering insults the politicians should just suck it up. It goes with the territory. As a taxpayer, surely he cannot rightly have his right to attend every public place taken away just because some feelings were hurt!

We see boorish, childish behaviours in our elected politicians on a regular basis. We see too plainly and are forced to live with the results of political bungling and meddling that has taken place over the past several decades. We hear politicians defending their decisions and declaring successes even when it is clear that those decisions have created more problems than they solved.

Wouldn't it be refreshing to hear, just once, a body of politicians admit that they had acted too hastily, perhaps they had been wrong; to see them reconsider, even rescind or modify a past decision?

Wouldn't it be refreshing to see a body of politicians tell a noisy group with outrageous ideas to get a life, and stop trying to overthrow the civilized and time-tested mores of the silent majority?

Politics appears to have sank to such a level of general decadency that many people now believe that no person of good character and good conscience would even consider making politics a career.

If one is inclined to think as above, what would be the incentive to vote? A vote would only be a symbolic acceptance of the status quo.

Thank you for allowing me to play 'devil's advocate.'

With permission; Eileen Hutchenson,  
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