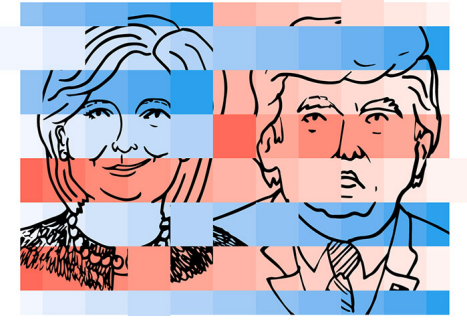


## If you don't vote, you have no right to complain

Written by By Bernie Dotson  
Friday, 04 November 2016 05:25

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If you haven't participated in early voting, then registered voters in McKinley and Cibola counties should make plans to vote in next Tuesday's general election.

All registered voters everywhere have a civic obligation to weigh in on the process of choosing their elected representatives. The low voter turnouts that have been the norm in, particularly, McKinley County—for example, about 30 percent in the June 2016 primary — are unacceptable and suggest a deep well of apathy in the community that stands to poison the effort at making McKinley and Cibola counties better places for taxpayers.

Recently, we saw a practically full gathering of Republicans at Sammy C's Rock N' Sports Pub & Grille at a stump by incumbent Steve Pearce who serves the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District of the U.S. House of Representatives. Such stumping efforts are good at educating the populace about who is running and for what office.

The right to vote is extended to every American citizen, a right that was bought and paid for and secured with the blood, sweat, and tears of countless brave Americans. Not voting is an affront to the many who have sacrificed their lives. By not voting, individuals make themselves invisible to the various civic boards that decide how much tax rates go up and on where public services should be directed.

Some non-voters complain that they don't care for the candidates who are running, or in other words, they don't agree with the choices they have to make. Heck, the late comedian Richard Pryor once compared voting for a specific candidate to a choice between "maggots and dog mess!" The tough-choice argument is probably truer this year than in past years, with each

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candidate possessing a good share of baggage.

Not only are we voting for a new president, but candidates from McKinley, Cibola, and San Juan counties are on the ballot for state representative and a district judge, as well as other posts. Sharon Clahchischillie of Kirtland is an incumbent Navajo who is the sixth Native American female to serve the New Mexico Legislature.

Neither Donald Trump nor Hillary Clinton can address issues as finitely as the candidates on McKinley's, Cibola's or San Juan's ballots. So it behooves local voters to pay attention to the candidates and their respective positions.

People who claim to be too busy to vote or say their vote doesn't count are only fooling themselves. And simply put, people who don't participate in the electoral process are letting others choose their leaders. Yes, voting does make a difference.

Democracy is not a spectator sport and no one is on the sidelines. Everybody is in the game.

***By Bernie Dotson***