

UMass Dartmouth Students Discuss Importance of Voting



Do you feel your vote genuinely makes a difference?

When it comes to voting, I've found over the course of my life so far, that people tend to have a special relationship with voting. They think it's important enough to encourage people to do it and yet when it comes to voting themselves most people don't want to be bothered with it. One UMass Dartmouth student and business major Harrison DoAmaral best summed this feeling up when he said, "I don't care about voting because the decisions are going to be made by other people regardless of what I do."

Now I'll freely admit that Harrison has every right to feel disenfranchised, with national elections the electorate is much bigger and therefore individuals are more likely to feel their views are unimportant compared to the masses. This is especially true if you're a Republican or share conservative views and you live in a state like Massachusetts, which is a

staunchly Democrat state. Though when it comes to midterms and local elections, it's puzzling to me why people seem less likely to participate.



*Sums up how many
Americans feel today.*

In a statewide or local election, the electorate is smaller and so the individual should have more of a say or at least they should think that they do. You don't have to be a political scientist to come to that sort of conclusion anyway, but the logic of it is just one part of a bigger whole.

"I'm going to do it because I feel it's my civic duty," another UMass Dartmouth student, Kevin Palmer said upon being asked why he plans to vote in the upcoming election. And indeed the more people I asked this week about voting, the more I found who after saying that they'd vote claimed it was due to a civil duty.

When I voted for the first time I also did so both because I felt that it was my civic obligation to do so, but also because I was curious about the process itself. As I entered my elementary school's cafeteria/auditorium I felt very nervous, a sense of anxiousness that continued as I filled out the slip. Everything had to be perfect, or so I felt. And afterwards when I handed the sheet into the people responsible for collection, I felt so exhilarated. I don't know if it was because my anxiety over the ballot being filled out perfectly had disappeared, or whether it was the sense of accomplishment that comes with any "first", but I had truly enjoyed voting.

Another reason that people don't vote, which I hadn't really

considered involves knowledge. UMass Dartmouth student Andrew McCarthy pointed out in a brief interview that, "I don't know anything about the people who are running or the issues....I just don't have time to look into it either."

I have to admit that's a good reason not to vote. If you aren't well informed and don't have the opportunity to learn about the issues, it's somewhat admirable that someone like Andrew would rather not vote than make a misinformed vote. Although, I would still recommend people do whatever they can to inform themselves about the issues and candidates so that they can vote "correctly."



There are many reasons to vote in this election.

One thing that uninformed voters should consider is voting by party. Candidates of the same party typically hold similar stances on political issues, so looking at the stances that the various political parties have on the issues is potentially a better and quicker way of helping to decide who to vote for. You simply pick the party that aligns closest to your views and select all members of that party on the ballot. Information on the Massachusetts Democratic Party can be found [here](#) and information on the state Republican Party can be found [here](#).

And the reasons to vote in this election cycle are many. Firstly there are various local races, and a gubernatorial election that in recent weeks has become much more competitive with Republican candidate Charlie Baker edging out a small

lead in the polls. Then there are the various ballot initiatives, one of which would repeal automatic indexing on the gas tax and another that would expand the Bottle Bill. Whether or not you vote in this election, we will all have to live with its effects for the foreseeable future, and for me at least having some say in that is enough reason to go to the polls on November 4th.
