

Democracy Day

Official Voting Holiday

Making election day an official holiday called Democracy Day would have a profound effect on the voting process as it would enfranchise a great many people who would finally have time to study their choices and have much more time to vote. And, of particular importance and interest to election officials who are always lacking skilled volunteers for polling stations, well trained professionals would be able to spend election day working at the polls thus making the election process smoother and more participatory.

The primary objection, and in most cases, the only objection, has been the cost of a holiday. However, given the very low rate of participation in the electoral process, where officeholders are often elected with much less than 20% of the voting eligible populace voting for them, it can be easily argued that democracy is presently so harmed that we are paying a much greater financial and societal price already. Many people don't believe that our system is functioning properly and do things such as avoid paying taxes, move to another country and so on. Lack of citizen participation is also allowing politicians to get into office that are not favored by the majority and who sometimes corrupt the system and waste money. Lack of participation already causes massive financial loss and leads a further erosion of confidence in our society.

Anything that would increase voter participation while making the elections function better could be of great financial and social benefit. People would begin to believe in the system again. Democracy Day would be a significant step in healing the political problems in this nation.

In lieu of a full holiday, Democracy Day could be a school "holiday" for students, where the schools could be used as polling station, the teachers would serve as polling workers, and students would be encouraged to volunteer for election duties. It could even be made part of the educational process where student participation would be part of the mandatory curriculum, thus educating them as citizens and introducing future voters to election process. Election officials would benefit greatly as they would have an abundance of polling places, skilled and available workers and volunteers, and certitude in regards to how the elections will be conducted. And, democracy would benefit, as elections would be conducted more smoothly, have much greater citizen involvement, and each new generation of voters would come of age with direct experience and a greater understanding of the democratic process.

To this end, it is requested that the legislature, pass legislation this year creating the voting holiday, Democracy Day.