



### **Why Should You, As a Christian, Vote?**

By Mark Taylor, College/University Representative

We are so blessed to live in a country where we can vote in our local, state, and national elections. I remember my first opportunity to vote in a national election was in 1976, which was also the year we celebrated the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. I felt so responsible and took my votes very seriously.

#### **Impact of the Twenty-sixth Amendment**

It would not have been possible for me to vote in that election if it wasn't for the Twenty-sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Before that amendment was passed, the age for voting was at least 21 years. Hearings regarding this amendment began in 1968. Congress proposed the amendment in 1971 with the Senate passing it with a vote of 94-0 and the House of Representatives passing it with a vote of 401-19. Three-fourths of the states ratified it by July of 1971. President Richard Nixon signed it into law on July 5, 1971. Many of our college students would not be able to vote this November if the Twenty-sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution had not passed.

I hope that everyone who is eligible to vote will take the opportunity to do so. We are blessed with freedoms that many in other countries do not have. We are blessed to be able to vote for candidates and issues of our choice. It distresses me to read that in the 2016 presidential elections that only 59% of evangelical Christians voted<sup>1</sup> and that approximately 15 million Christians are not even registered to vote.<sup>2</sup>

## Why Should We Vote?

Recently, I read an article, “Three Reasons Why Every Christian Should Vote,” by Daniel Darling, originally published by The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission in November of 2016. Here are the three reasons:

1. “We should vote out of love for neighbor. . . . How can we seek the welfare of our cities, if we sheepishly abdicate the opportunity to choose the people who lead us? How can we love our neighbor if we ignore the policies and structures that affect him?”
2. “We should vote because God has given us a stewardship for which we will be held accountable. . . . This power to vote — this is a God-given divestment of authority to the voter.”
3. “We should vote because it can help us speak up for the vulnerable and help gospel advance.” Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:1-3 “to pray for a government that would protect the freedom of Christ followers so the gospel could advance.”<sup>3</sup>

Please take time to vote as you are led through much prayer and reflections from the Word of God. Do not just look at individual candidates. Look at their agenda and their party’s platform of beliefs. Voting is our opportunity to affirm our Christian values and religious freedoms.

I could share with you many quotes from founding fathers and leaders regarding the importance of voting and Christian involvement in the political arena. I will wrap up my reflections with a quote by Frederick Douglass, a godly man, great abolitionist leader, and orator. He quotes Proverbs 14:34, KJV.

*I have one great political idea . . . . That idea is an old one. It is widely and generally assented to, nevertheless, it is very generally trampled upon and disregarded. The best expression of it, I have found in the Bible. It is in substance, “Righteousness exalteth a nation; sin is a reproach to any people” [Proverbs 14:34]. This constitutes my politics – the negative and positive of my politics, and the whole of my politics . . . . I feel it my duty to do all in my power to infuse this idea into the public mind, that it may speedily be recognized and practiced upon by our people.*

(Frederick Douglass. *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, John Blassingame, editor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), Vol. 2, p. 397, from a speech delivered at Ithaca, New York, October 14, 1852.)

**Mark Taylor** is from Ferguson, Missouri. He has worked in education for 40 years. He is a professor of education and serves as the department chair of the Social and Behavioral Sciences/Teacher Education at St. Louis Community College in St. Louis, Missouri. You may contact Mark at [mltaylor@stlcc.edu](mailto:mltaylor@stlcc.edu).

Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Research Releases in Culture & Media, December 1, 2016. "National Christians: The Big Election Story in 2016." <https://www.barna.com/research/notional-christians-big-election-story-2016/>.

<sup>2</sup> [myfaithvotes.org](http://myfaithvotes.org).

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Darling, "Three Reasons Why Every Christian Should Vote," SEND Network, Published November 1, 2016. <https://www.namb.net/send-network/resource/three-reasons-why-every-christian-should-vote/>.