



## Thinking outside the ballot ‘box’ gets us nowhere

By Jim Waters

Voter turnout in the Nov. 2 elections looks like a midterm rerun.

Can any liberty-loving Kentucky resident feel good about only half of the eligible voters in the commonwealth getting off their duffs to visit the ballot box? Les Fugate, deputy secretary of state, said only about 1.4 million of the approximately 3.3 million voters showed up at Kentucky polls.

If you sit among the [51.1 percent of Kentuckians that didn't vote](#), shame on you.

Shame, shame.

Those who don't bother to vote certainly can't blame the election process. Kentucky Secretary of State Trey Grayson and his team run one of the smoothest in the country. They make it as easy and convenient as possible for citizens, whose votes will get tallied accurately and in a timely manner.

And don't send me e-mails that cop out with "I didn't like either candidate." Not when we see proud Iraqis, who under threat of extreme danger or death, have now cast votes in two national elections since Saddam Hussein fell.

Who can forget the photograph of the elderly Iraqi woman proudly displaying — for the entire world to see — her [ink-stained finger](#) attesting to her vote? For her and millions of others, the future possibilities outweighed the risk of voting.

Bombs and mortars killed 27 voters and injured more than 40 by noon in Baghdad alone on Election Day in Iraq this year. A Los Angeles Times story on the nationwide election in March stated: "Iraqis dodge explosions to cast their votes."

I voted at Plano Elementary School in Warren County before 7 a.m. The only bombs going off there were set by voters blowing up the stranglehold big-government types have on Congress. I didn't fear that I might leave the house and never return.

Would I still have voted if that possibility existed?

I might have if I lived under the iron fist of a repressive regime for decades. I might have for the chance to not only live in freedom but to participate in it.

Since 1982, only once did at least 70 percent of Kentuckians go to the polls — and that was in the presidential election of 1992, when Bill Clinton beat George H. Bush.

If history is any indication, next year's election turnout — determining Kentucky's next governor, auditor, attorney general, secretary of state, treasurer and agriculture commissioner — will be the most abysmal of the three-year election cycle.

Voter turnout in the 2007 election was less than 40 percent. Is it possible that a bigger turnout could have resulted in the election of a governor and attorney general who would have pushed back against the federal assault on Kentucky's sovereignty and its citizens' freedoms?

We'll never know.

One thing I do know: Our nation's founders believed that voters, as John Adams once said, "have an important constitutional power."

Adams also stated that the seriousness of voting demands that "every subject . . . be in some degree a statesman: and to examine and judge for himself the tendencies of political principles and measures."

Thomas Jefferson said voting was a way to turn around a ship off course.

"Should things go wrong at any time, the people will set them to rights by the peaceable exercise of their elective rights," Jefferson said.

In more modern vernacular, Fugate adds: "If we ignore the easiest way for most citizens to be directly involved with their government, the underpinnings of our government are threatened and thus, the liberties and freedoms we have fought to protect are in peril. "

Terrorists know that. But do most Kentuckians?

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