

Voting is the greatest right of all Americans. Our forefathers and mothers fought to ensure that each and every one of us has a vote, a voice, and the power to shape the future of our nation. Voting is a right and a great responsibility.

Unfortunately, in recent decades, voter turnout has dropped significantly. Although we all have the right to vote, more and more Americans have decided not to exercise it. In most recent elections, the percentage of registered voters who actually cast a ballot hovers around a dismal 50 percent. This disturbing trend must not continue this election.

We stand at a critical moment in our history. Our economy is in trouble, we are embroiled in a two-front war, millions of Americans are without health insurance, and the cost of groceries and gasoline is far too high. Come Election Day, each of us bears a tremendous responsibility to cast our vote and decide how to address these pressing issues.

Much hangs in the balance of this upcoming election. The next President of the United States will take the reins of our faltering economy and command of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He will appoint Supreme Court Justices and represent the United States to the rest of the world. The next President and the next Congress will decide the priorities of our nation – whether we will invest in foreign wars or in education, health care, infrastructure, and alternative sources of energy. Together they will work to meet the needs of families across our country. State and local officials will make decisions for our communities. They will manage the cities and towns we live in and the public schools we send our children to.

In these final days leading up to the election, pay attention to the candidates who are running to represent you at the local level, in Congress, and in the Oval Office. They have different priorities and different ideas about the direction of our country. And that is the beauty of our democratic system; the people have the power to decide.

It is as Thomas Jefferson said, “should things go wrong at any time; the people will set them to rights by the peaceable exercise of their elective rights.” I believe that on this Election Day, Thomas Jefferson’s words will ring true. If all of us use our voices, our power, and exercise our right to cast a ballot this Election Day, we will come through the turmoil we face at home and abroad as a stronger, better nation.