

# The Passy Press

## Letter to the Editor

**From:** George Doubleday [geo@undisclosed.com](mailto:geo@undisclosed.com)  
**To:** TPP Nick Gardiner [enpg@thepassypress.com](mailto:enpg@thepassypress.com)  
**Date:** October 19, 2016 at 4:28:39 PM EDT  
**Subject:** RE: George Cadwalader's Essay on Compulsory Voting

Dear Sir,

George Cadwalader's thoughtful essay on compulsory voting raises two important issues for me: (1) How to increase citizen involvement in the selection of our representatives, and (2) what to do if the proffered candidates lack the integrity and judgment to be effective leaders.

One would hope that higher voter turnout in the primaries could have produced a better selection of Presidential candidates in this 2016 election, which is an embarrassment to many of us. I suspect I am not alone in lacking enthusiasm for either of the two major candidates and wondering how to express that discontent without submitting a blank ballot. This is a dilemma for those of us who view voting as an essential element of our democracy, but if neither candidate truly represents our views, neither should be rewarded with our vote. Until a viable third party emerges, a write-in ballot is a meaningless expression of frustration.

Australia has had a very effective compulsory voting system since 1924, consistently producing turnouts of 95%. One can hardly argue with this record of success. By contrast, US voter turnout has been hovering in the mid-50% range since 1972. Improving this record should be a national priority, but given the gridlock in Congress and the polarization of voters nationwide, a Constitutional Amendment seems highly improbable. The more likely solution is probably vote-by-mail, whereby every citizen is mailed a ballot, with clear instructions on how to complete the form and return it by mail. One can hardly argue that this is an imposition on an individual's time. A workable system of voter registration and maintaining a current address would have to be worked out, and the issue of homeless voters somehow solved, but advances in technology can probably overcome these obstacles over time.

In the meantime, let us hope that in four years there will be greater motivation to vote as well as improved voting procedures.

Sincerely,

George Doubleday

George Doubleday has had a career in the international travel business, first with *Pan American World Airways* in New York and Hong Kong, followed with his own adventure travel firm, *Geographic Expeditions* in San Francisco, specializing in hard-to-reach destinations. Prior to that he served in the Marine Corps as a fighter pilot.