

Midterm elections Community Comment: November 6, 2014 Mike Goldsby

To me, voting is a right, a responsibility and even a pleasure. Our stable government and my small community make it very easy for me to vote. I stop by the Ferndale Fairgrounds on my way to work. I see familiar and friendly faces. I am usually in and out in less than 10 minutes. And I spend the day sporting my sticker on my lapel; I voted.

Most common comment I hear from people I meet is that they voted by mail and wish they had a sticker. Perhaps absentee ballots should have a sticker. I turned 18 before 18 year olds had the right to vote and I have voted in every election but one since then. I see the struggles of people around the world, people who do not have a vote or people who risk their lives to vote. We have it made compared to them.

Voting is made easy for most of us and that makes it hard to understand why we have low voter turnout. Humboldt had about 40% voter turnout this time, but that could grow with absentee ballots

A big part of low voter turnout is young voters. Nationwide, only 13 per cent of the total votes cast came from young voters, ages 18 through 29. This is down from the 20 percent when Obama was re-elected. I think we older voters vote because we are supposed to. And we know voting is an important prerequisite to complaining about who and what got voted in. But young people may need to see the relevance of voting, why it matters to them. It is clear that, in some local situations, a very few votes really matter.

Nationwide, Republicans made significant gains in this election. With seven new Republican Senate Seats, they now control both the House and the Senate. Will Congress get more done? Or will we just get to gridlock quicker and more efficiently?

Republicans can now really deliver on blocking appointments, shutting down the government and the hard work of dismantling the Affordable Care Act.