

## Readers React

Letters to the editor and readers' opinions.

# Readers React Paying voters doesn't address the root cause of low turnout

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**T**o the editor: Representative democracy is always at risk, but low voter turnout is a symptom, not a cause. ("Vote, and win \$25,000: It's a losing idea," editorial, April 21)

Cynicism certainly is a cause, perpetuated by humorists such as Jon Stewart and opinion entertainers such as Rush Limbaugh. It doesn't help when the governor pursues a rail project that he knows nobody would vote for in its present form.

The truth, however, is that local elections are where voters really can make a difference, and the average Joe and Jill really can have influence if they get even minimally involved. Anyone who has ever gotten a stop sign erected or a pothole filled after a call or three to a City Council office can attest to this. Certainly, those seeking local office pound the pavement sufficiently to actually meet many of their potential constituents.

Yet people are, evidently, too lazy to bother to vote — they can program their DVRs remotely so as never to miss a "Game of Thrones" episode, but filling out a mail-in form or stopping by their polling place on election day is just too hard.

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Fundamentally, turnout is low because people have gotten used to abdicating personal responsibility. That will be the cause of democracy's demise, not the lack of turnout itself.

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