



Businesses for Democracy: Why the Vote Matters

Business relies on a predictable social system that maintains the rule of law and functions with sufficient justice to earn consistent compliance from the governed. Such a system depends on voting, a cornerstone characteristic of a functioning, representative government. Yet in the United States, voter turnout lags most developed countries, with [only 56% of voter-age Americans turning out in the 2016 election](#). Companies can ensure a well-functioning economy that is resilient and sustainable over time by supporting voting as a right and responsibility of all citizen-stakeholders. To meet this goal, ASBC is working to increase voter registration and turnout for the 2020 elections.

Voting strengthens accountability in public policy and primacy of rule of law

For everyday operations and long-range plans, business needs fair, just public policies. Contractual agreements, B2B partnerships, employment-related functions, resource allocations, competitive product and service parameters and more require compliance with laws derived from representative government and equally applied. Increased voter turnout increases constituents' awareness of laws that govern them. It helps them hold government accountable and creates buy-in. This representative process provides a stable, equitable arena in which free enterprise can prosper.

Voting strengthens legitimacy of American public and private institutions

Increased voting, reflecting the will of the people, underwrites institutional legitimacy. Public and private institutions comprising the foundations of our economy must be perceived as legitimate. Only then can they earn compliance from consumers and business entities and be trusted to mediate conflicts that would otherwise disrupt business and society itself. The more constituents involved in the political process, the more representative, transparent and legitimate our institutions can be.

Voting strengthens an inclusive and equitable economy

Currently in the United States, 0.1% of the population controls 80% of the wealth. Inequality at this extreme level corrodes public trust and weakens productivity in our consumer-dependent economy. Wealth allocation and accumulation is heavily influenced by government policy, yet during the current economic crisis, [lower-income households provided more consumer spending than middle- and high-income households](#) as a percentage of year-over-year spending. This spending was crucially beneficial to the economy in a period when high-income earners dropped their spending by as much as 15%. For decades, U.S. legislation has prioritized [the economic interests of the wealthy over the majority of Americans](#). Across geographic regions and partisan views, this imbalance has led to widespread downward mobility and resultant disconnection with the democratic process. Narrowed economic opportunities and resultant political disaffection threaten the orderly society business needs.

Voting strengthens a high-road economy for all workers

[Recent labor-practice challenges](#) show that workplace treatment factors heavily in workers' commitment. Along with providing [high-road workplace](#) essentials, businesses strengthen their labor force's positive engagement by facilitating voter registration and time off to vote. ASBC supports businesses whose workplace cultures foster political participation and worker sovereignty. Helping employees vote their needs and aspirations helps create the engaged labor force we need.

Long-term stability in a political system requires that citizens have meaningful access to that system. Voting lets citizens improve their access and their futures. Increased voter registration and turn-out leverages political representation into more equitable economic participation. In our consumer-driven economy, that means opportunities not only for consumers but for the high-road, sustainable, innovative businesses they increasingly seek out. ASBC urges all responsible business leaders to engage in the public policy arena, help level the playing field for values-based companies and build an economy that works for all. It starts with your vote – and theirs – in 2020.