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**MINORITY
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Next Week
Sept. 21, 2016

Opinion

What You Need to Know About Voting on November 8

Are you ready to vote? Are you registered? These may seem like simplistic questions, especially for those who are aware, but every year some folks are denied access to the polls, because they didn't register on time, or they moved and their address does not match the address the registrar of voters has, or SOMETHING. The Presidential election is likely to be a nail-biter, and there are local races that are also close. Your best bet is to make sure you know what the requirements for voting are in your state. Check out www.vote.com; the site lists the requirements for all 50 states. A few states allow voter registration on the day of an election, but most states require you to register between 11 and 30 days before the vote. Some states allow online registration, most allow registration by mail (with requirements about the date a registration is postmarked), and almost all allow in-person registration.

The terms and conditions of voting are still being negotiated in some states so it makes sense to stay on top of voting rules. A federal appeals court recently kicked discriminatory North Carolina voting terms to the curb, saying that that state discriminated

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against African Americans with "surgical precision." Efforts to reduce the number of days available for early voting, or to eliminate Sunday voting, disproportionately affect African American voters. North Carolina Republicans are deliberate and mindful in

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their attempt to sideline African American voters, since most African Americans are Democrats. They want to deliver their state to Donald Trump and they want to ensure that Senator Richard Burr and Governor Pat McCrory, both Republicans, are also re-elected.

North Carolina isn't the only state with electoral shenanigans. Texas, Kansas, Georgia and Alabama have also implemented restrictive measures that are being appealed by civil rights groups, the League of Women Voters, the NAACP

and others. Disputes revolve around things like absentee ballots, purges of inactive voters, and issues of whether ballots will count if they are cast in the wrong precincts. In our "Democracy," it seems that we do more to discourage voters than encourage them, and while the voting process could be seamless, plans to prevent as many as 50,000 Kansas voters from going to the polls, for example, make no sense in a "participatory democracy."

Some folks don't want it to be participatory, though. Re-

likely to be close, it is important that every voice be heard.

I'm still not clear why polling suggests that this vote is so close. Secretary Hillary Clinton, for all her imperfections, is a stunningly superior candidate to Donald Trump, who just recently praised Russia's Vladimir Putin as a "better leader" than President Obama. Now, that's just downright unpatriotic, not to mention short-sided, and tone-deaf.

Donald Trump goes to one Black church and gets all kind of mainstream media coverage. Hillary Clinton visits numerous Black churches, and the mainstream media is absent. Donald Trump blusters his way through an interview with Matt Lauer on national security, and is hardly challenged and, certainly, never interrupted.

We have stark choices in this election, but some of us won't be making choices because we won't be prepared to vote on November 8.

Now is the time to make sure you are prepared. Are you registered? Where will you vote? Will you be out of town or unable to get to the polls on November 8? Can you do early voting or vote via an absentee ballot? These aren't questions to ask on November 5.

The Moral Origins of Trump's Improbable Rise to Power

As if to compound the insult to American power represented by the world's vociferous rejection of the Bush doctrine, the U.S. found itself in 2008 facing the biggest economic disaster since the great recession. The collapse was so stark, so sudden, and so unavoidable that several of America's largest and most venerable financial institutions collapsed overnight. The recession in America led to a global recession, as liquidity dried up, debts got called in, and entire nations went bankrupt.

This blow to Americans' confidence would provide fertile ground for doubt, resentment and rebellion. It quickly became apparent that the economic status quo that existed before the Iraq War and the Great Recession was giving way to a 'new normal.' The country limped along in this new normal; American businesses experienced very slow economic growth amidst massive economic dislocation. The Federal Reserve used every trick at its disposal to ward off total catastrophe. It was successful in its aim, although the resulting 'Franken-economy' it created began to resemble a monster that moved and walked, but

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was somehow strangely also dead.

To wit: even though employment 'recovered,' labor force participation dropped to a thirty year low. People

“The pressing unanswered question of why Wall Street got bailed out while Main Street floundered was never successfully answered

came back to jobs that paid less, offered fewer benefits and demanded more of their labor. American workers were hailed by economists for their increasing productivity, although, to most workers, it just seemed like a pay cut. Never had industrial performance and the state of the labor market seemed less congruent; and this strained an unspoken assumption about the trickle-down benefits of capitalism.

The twin monsters of insulted national pride and injured economic prospects began to foment a visceral, growing resentment to the economic

and political establishment that first found expression in the Tea Party (on the political right) and the Occupy Wall Street movement (on the political left). Both movements were essentially defeated – the former was co-opted by the Republican Party, and the latter was crushed by the police (at the bidding of 'liberal' elected officials).

The pressing unanswered question of why Wall Street got bailed out while Main

Administration from putting its' own proposals forward. Over the past six years, the Congress has done practically nothing in the way of helping the American people out of the mess they are in. The lack of commitment to a national project for reconstruction seemed strange in a country that had just demanded such brave sacrifice from its warriors.

The political impasse stymied American progress, and extended the economic recession beyond its reasonable shelf life.

Street floundered was never successfully answered either by a Republican Congress or a Democratic White House. The midterm elections of 2010 promised to bring about major changes as a Tea Party insurgency came to power in Congress. However, the insurgency did not prove strong enough to enact its agenda – slashing government debt and spending on entitlements, and reducing regulatory burdens on small businesses. Not able to advance its' own agenda, The Republican Congress settled for a role as a spoiler caucus, mainly concerned with preventing the Obama

Amidst the doldrums of economic and political stagnation, Donald Trump's bold rhetoric, a stark departure from the normal fare, seemed to be a strong wind. It didn't really matter whether that wind was blowing America forwards or backwards – towards a safe harbor or further out to sea. At least, for the first time in six years, there seemed to be some movement. When one is stuck in the same place for what seems like an eternity, even going backwards can seem like making progress.

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