

Hi I'm Leslie Soden, and I'm happy to be here today, celebrating a woman's right to vote!!

Can you believe this country was founded on a principle that only WHITE MEN could vote???? That's absolutely absurd isn't it?? Women had to fight very hard for 60 years to gain the right to vote, 60 years! What an amazing and determined group of women they were.

Well here it is, almost 100 years later, and only 17% of the population votes.

- Is a 17% turnout what those ladies fought for 100 years ago? No!
- Did they fight for 60 long years for the right of APATHY? No!
- Would they call the last 100 years progress? I don't think so!

If those ladies were here today, I think they would probably be disgusted by the voter turn-out we have today.

Women make up half of the population, and we need those voices represented and voting at all levels of our government. But with only 17% of the population voting, that clearly is not happening.

Think of this:

- If EVERY woman voted, would we be facing budget cuts to education?
- If EVERY woman voted, would we be facing back to back wars?
- If EVERY woman voted, would we have health insurance policies that cover Viagra, and not birth control?

So why doesn't everyone vote? That's the million dollar question isn't it?

I think it's because when we think of voting, we think of politics, and many of us are repulsed by partisan politics.

When I turn on the TV, frankly I see politicians acting like a bunch of children: fighting, calling each other names, finger-pointing. And they're all too busy laying the blame at each other's feet, than actually getting any REAL work done.

It's downright embarrassing, isn't it?

So is it really a surprise that the average person doesn't want anything to do with politics? No, it's not. But unfortunately, POLITICS are what many people associate VOTING with.

But believe it or not, politics are actually very separate from our local government. Our local government is about every day issues, issues that affect all of us: streets, police, trash and parks.

For example, our local government answers questions like the following:

- Where should a new police station be built?
- Should our city have a recycling program?
- Should new subdivisions build sidewalks on both sides of the street, or just one side of the street?

Those aren't "political" issues. Those are all just LOCAL issues.

Well I've got news for all of you. You ALL have a say in our how city is run, with your vote! Everyone out there, from the waitress that served your meal, to the bus driver that drives your kids to school, well they all have an equal say in how our city is run, with their vote!!

So please get involved with local issues. Educate yourself! And then talk to your friends & family about local issues.

But above all, vote. Thank you.