

VISUAL 3.1

THE COSTS OF VOTING

1. *Dollar costs.* No dollar costs may be imposed by fees or taxation.

Amendment 24 to the U.S. Constitution rules out dollar costs:

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

2. *Other costs.* While the Constitution prohibits monetary charges, this does not mean that voting is entirely without costs. Voters will incur *opportunity costs*. The opportunity cost of voting is what a voter gives up in choosing to vote. Here are some of the possible opportunity costs:

- Time taken to register.
- Time to find a voting location, or to vote via absentee ballot.
- Time taken to vote, which may also mean lost wages for voters who miss work; or babysitting or transportation costs.
- Time needed to investigate candidates and issues.

VISUAL 3.2

TOP TEN REASONS REGISTERED VOTERS GAVE FOR NOT VOTING IN 2004

	<u>All</u>	<u>18-24</u>
10. Transportation Problems	2.1%	1.9%
9. Inconvenient Polling Place	3.0%	2.5%
8. Forgot	3.4%	6.1%
7. Registration Problems	6.8%	8.2%
6. Don't Know or Refused to Answer	8.5%	15.2%
5. Out of Town	9.0%	12.8%
4. Didn't Like the Candidates	9.9%	6.4%
3. Not Interested	10.7%	10.0%
2. Illness or Disability	15.4%	2.8%
1. Too Busy	19.9%	23.2%

In 2004, citizens aged 18 to 24 made up 12.6% of the voting-age population, but only 9.3% of voters.

Source: Census Bureau, *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2004*, publication P20-556.

VISUAL 3.3

WHY DO PEOPLE VOTE?

- When the election is likely to be close and a person's vote may change the election result:
 - People may vote to support a particular politician.
 - People may vote to remove incumbents (“Throw the rascals out”).
- When the election is not likely to be close and a person's vote is not likely to change the election result:
 - People may believe it is their civic duty to vote.
 - People may vote to voice their opinions regardless of the likely outcome.
 - People may vote in order to feel that they are a part of winning team.

VISUAL 3.4

WHO VOTES MORE?

Of all citizens, who voted most, percentage-wise, in the 2004 presidential election?

Men	or	Women		
White	or	Black	or	Asian
Naturalized Citizen	or	Native Born		
Married	or	Never Married		
Separated	or	Divorced		
Low Income	or	High Income		
Employed	or	Unemployed		
High School Degree	or	Bachelor's Degree		
Minnesotan	or	Floridian	or	Hawaiian
Veteran	or	Nonveteran		
Renter	or	Homeowner		
Young	or	Old		

Source: Census Bureau, *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2004*, publication P20-556.

VISUAL 3.5

REPORTING VOTING, 1980-2004

Year	Voters as a Percent of the U.S. Citizen Voting-Age Population
1980	64.0
1984	64.9
1988	62.2
1992	67.7
1996	58.4
2000	59.5
2004	63.8

Source: Census Bureau, www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting.html, Historical Time Series Table A-1.