

# Youth hold stake in election

College students voted in huge numbers in 2008, but today political analysts are predicting the voting numbers among college-age citizens to be way down.

While this election lacks the flashy appeal of a presidential election, it still determines important positions, especially in Pennsylvania, where a new governor and senator will be elected.

These offices are more likely to make an impact on our lives anyway. Sena-

tors and representatives are the lawmakers who make changes.

As students it's easy to feel removed from politics, but many candidates have discussed college affordability, including Penn State because of its status as a state-related university.

Every student has a stake in this election.

The election affect Penn State students because a new governor will be elected for the first time in eight years, which

could have an impact on the appropriations the state grants the university and therefore, impact tuition.

This election also allows voters their first chance to provide feedback to the government about what has happened since 2008.

It's not too late to take the time to research the candidates and make an informed vote today.

The analysts think college students won't vote this election.

Prove them wrong.



## Collegian

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# Politicians need to reach across aisle

By Michael Oplinger

It looked like any other campaign yard sign. It was blue and white and seemed to endorse one political candidate for the upcoming election.

Except the sign I passed nearly every day in the summer, read "Re-elect No One."

The sign represents the anti-incumbent sentiment that seemed to be sweeping the country leading up to today's election.

People from both parties expressed dissatisfaction with the way things were going in Washington. Democrats may have felt that Obama and the Democratic majority had not done enough to enact the "change" that was promised. Conservatives may not have approved of a united government that had the ability to pass almost any legislation.

Whatever the reason, the urge to kick incumbent representatives out of office seemed to prevail, regardless of party.

It was most evident in the primaries where Congressmen chose not to run for reelection or were defeated. We saw it here in Pennsylvania when Arlen Specter, the incumbent Senator for both the Democratic and Republican parties, was defeated in the primary by challenger Joe Sestak.

Polls suggest Congressional change is needed. Last week, Rasmussen released a study that found 12 percent of the country thinks Congress is doing a good or excellent job while 61 percent rate its performance as poor.

In a different poll, Rasmussen found that 62 percent of voters think the country would be better off if incumbents were defeated in today's election.

But would simply changing the faces in Washington lead to a change in the way government is run?

Would just having new representatives ease the frustration much of America experiences with the legislative system?

New doesn't always mean improved.

But it often seems that way. The new candidate with a fresh perspective seems like a much better choice than the old codger who has been in Congress for years.

The new representative hasn't been tainted by the political game of Washington. The new guy goes to Washington as an idealist, hoping to change the way things work.

But how long would it take before the system gobbles up the new representative, turning him into another puppet for the party mission?

The new candidate would face the daunting task of ignoring corporate interests and the influences of powerful lobbying groups.

I understand it can be hard to ignore these organizations, which have a lot of money to throw around — money that can help during a reelection campaign.

But reelection shouldn't be the main focus. Congressmen are elected to represent their constituents' best interests. Many politicians of both parties seem to lose sight of that when they reach D.C.

Being elected signifies a finite term of public service, not a new career. Term limits for Congressmen are technically unconstitutional. Only an

amendment passed by Congress could establish term limits, and how many Congressmen are going to ensure they only serve a certain amount of time?

No one would vote to eliminate their own job, but politicians should recognize that we expect them to serve us for a certain amount of time and then move on to another endeavor.

Lawmakers must stop voting simply by the letter next to their name and vote based on the potential implications for the area they represent.

If reelection weren't a main priority, many more politicians may be willing to cross party lines and compromise — which is not a dirty word despite the prevailing attitude in today's political sphere.

Maybe I'm being an idealist for believing that there are candidates strong enough to withstand the influences of parties and lobbyists. Maybe those politicians only exist in fiction, like Jimmy Stewart's character in "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington."

But I chose to believe in the goodness of people, and that certain people are able to overcome powerful financial temptations to work for the good of the population.

There have to be representatives out there who are doing their jobs and there have to be candidates who truly want to work for the betterment of their constituents.

So when considering voting out an incumbent today, make sure the new choice is actually improved, not just new.

Michael Oplinger is a senior majoring in media studies and political science and is The Daily Collegian's Tuesday columnist. His e-mail is mjo5071@psu.edu.

## Gift should honor PSU vets

I never knew Lt. Michael Murphy. How could I? He had not been born when I graduated from Penn State in 1968. I served in the United States Air Force for eight years in the 1960s, and as you might assume, I am biased about matters concerning veterans.

I find it hard to imagine a more fitting senior class gift for current Penn State students to consider. It is surely the "right thing to do." A lasting memorial for Lt. Murphy, as well as all Penn State veterans. He was an honor student, Penn State alum, Navy Seal, war hero and Medal of Honor recipient. Though I never knew Michael Murphy, I would like to believe we would have been friends.

Robert States  
Class of 1968

## Surprising to see polite fans

This weekend I had three friends from Michigan visit and attend the game with me. They proudly wore their Michigan blue and maize (seriously, what is that?) and were ready to defend their honor to angry beer-wielding Penn Staters.

However, they were met by friendly students and alumni asking them how they were enjoying Happy Valley, and having a nice time playing cornhole at a tailgate. To quote these Michigan boys, "Why are people being so nice to us? You guys hate us, right?" So to the disappointment of my testosterone-driven Michigan friends, we, as a school, were extremely welcoming and respectful. So thanks, Penn State, for showing my friends a good time... but come on, according to my clock, it's 9:23 p.m. and Michigan still sucks!

Elyse Burgher  
senior-human development and family studies

## Student behavior upsetting

I am a 1984 graduate of Penn State. My family and I have been coming to games for six years now. I have to say how upset I was to hear the terrible remarks of some Penn State students riding the CATA bus around the university. Yes, it was a late game, but at 2 p.m. behavior of some was horrendous. Using the F bomb when they saw kids on the bus is inexcusable. To make sexual remarks, and they were gross, was even worse. My 10-year-old daughter was scared.

Shame on you, and you know who you are. There were people trying to get on the bus from Michigan and I was so embarrassed with the words these students were slinging at them — a very poor representation of our wonderful university. Two of the students almost got into an altercation with some of the adults on the bus. You the students represent Penn State at all times. In my opinion, if you can't behave on a game weekend, stay home.

LynnAnn Sklack  
Class of 1984

## Senior section should fill fast

As proud as I was of the football team's effort on Saturday night against Michigan, I was even more disappointed by the tardiness of the junior and senior student sections. The two sections remained only partially full until the middle of the second quarter. I know that the team's performance hasn't been what we had all hoped for this year, but you still have to do your part and show up for the game on time.

It's not like it was a noon kickoff against Youngstown State University. This was a primetime match-up against one of our biggest rivals. Maybe these two classes have been spoiled by the team's success that they have enjoyed as students. The student section did a great job of getting loud during key parts of the game. It's a shame that a few hundred lazy juniors and seniors decided to take their time coming in from their tailgates.

Jim Young  
Class of 2008

## Strangers made for fun game

I just wanted to write to the two girls in front of me, the guy who almost made me live up to my promise to leave the game if we ever tried a fake punt (which we did), the guy who thought his hat got stolen by someone in our row but eventually found it and took it off anyway, and the other girls we tossed up after touchdowns. Sorry for throwing you up 10 times when we had only had seven points.

It was fun meeting you all even though I never got any names. Thank you for making this weekend's game one of the most fun I've ever went to in my four years at Penn State.

Ryan Price  
senior-accounting

## Rally wasn't biased by party

Having attended Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert's "Rally To Restore Sanity And/or Fear" in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, I believe that the message of the rally should be shared with all Americans. According to the media, on one side of the political fence are socialist hippies; on the other are racist religious freaks.

Everyone in-between is ignored because rationally minded people simply don't make good TV. Stewart reminded us that Americans are the people we see and work with everyday, and most of them are not extremists, but people who just want to get something done.

Yet, when it comes to politics, we're told by the media that we can't accomplish anything because we're supposedly polarizing ideological forces. The rally wasn't a plug to vote Democrat; it was a plea to turn off the TV and have faith in the reason of our fellow citizens rather than belief in the skewed vision of America that is fed to us. We all have the right to love and to criticize our country.

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