

Why Do We Vote On Tuesday?

The answer may surprise you.

In 1845, before Florida, California, and Texas were states or slavery had been abolished, Congress needed to pick a time for Americans to vote. We were an agrarian society. We traveled by horse and buggy. Farmers needed a day to get to the county seat, a day to vote, and a day to get back, without interfering with the three days of worship. So that left Tuesday and Wednesday, but Wednesday was market day. So, Tuesday it was. In 1875 Congress extended the Tuesday date for national House elections and in 1914 for federal Senate elections.

Today, we are an urban society, and we all know how hard it is to commute to our jobs, take care of the children, and get our work done, let alone stand on lines to vote. Indeed, Census data over the last decade clearly indicates that the inconvenience of voting is the primary reason Americans are not participating in our elections.

If we can move Columbus Day, Presidents' Day, and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Holiday for the convenience of shoppers, why not make Election Day more convenient for the sake of voters? First and foremost, it is time to end the deafening silence of good people on this vitally important issue. So we ask: Why Tuesday?

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