

Editorial

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What will it take to get voters engaged?

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The fact that New York state is at rock bottom for voter turnout, as a recent D&C headline stated, is so discouraging to those of us who think this state is in a crisis that can't be solved without citizens pressuring elected leaders to fix it.

A George Mason University study found that only 32.1 percent of eligible voters turned out to the polls on Election Day. That compares to the high states of Minnesota at 55.4 percent, Maine at 54.5 percent, and Alaska at 53.2 percent. The national average was 37.3 percent. That's bad, bad, bad.

While I'm proud to say my home state of Iowa was at 50.3 percent, surely Iowa doesn't have more severe challenges than New York, those motivating more citizens.

Voter turnout among young people always is lower than for older people. I'm sure there are several factors: Young adults don't realize fully the impact government has on quality of life, the fact that civics isn't taught in schools anymore, and parents apparently aren't teaching their kids what it means to be a good citizen.

To get back to the topic of New York — [Sandy Parker, CEO of Rochester Business Alliance, visited the Editorial Board on Thursday to talk about the group's New York State Economic Survival Guide, which is meant to push state lawmakers to enact reforms.](#)

[Her group and Unshackle Upstate, closely watched the races, endorsed certain candidates they believed were aligned with their priorities and were hoping to see some significant "flips" on election night. She thinks two things happened: one voters wanted the Senate to go Republican again, and two, some challengers were just too weak to unseat incumbents.](#)

["All we can do is keep the fire under their feet," Parker said, referencing to her group's effort in working with lawmakers.](#)

Amen to that.