

A man with dark, curly hair is looking slightly to his left. He is wearing a dark green leather jacket over a black shirt with a graphic. He is holding a silver microphone with both hands in front of his chest. He is also wearing blue jeans and a black belt. The background is a plain, light gray.

Mikey Microphone
presents

Expressive Voting

a pamphlet
on the easiest ways to get more out of our elections

EXPRESSIVE VOTING

A PAMPHLET ON THE EASIEST WAYS TO GET MORE OUT
OF OUR ELECTIONS

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PREFACE

The ideas in this book were primarily learned from four of the courses I took at Yale. The material I learned from was academic in nature and style, with a basis in experiments as well as historical and legal analysis. This piece is not written in an academic style - there are few citations of other works. My intention is to introduce ideas for further discussion, and although I understand the problems raised by omitting citations, my priority right now is rapid publication. If you wish to share information or citations that support, or cast doubt upon, these claims, I encourage you to join the discussion at mikeymicrophone.com/books, or on your own blogs and communities.

INTRODUCTION

Voting in elections is accompanied by strong emotions. My intention is to explore the potential for replacing some of the negative emotions with positive ones, while discussing what exactly it is that we can hope and expect to get out of this process.

Voting is an inspiring tradition and elections are a powerful institution. In the last two centuries, elections have enabled people around the world to communicate with, and exert power over, their leaders. They have produced safe, just societies.

Yet most of us can sense that something is wrong. Elections are more game-like than they should be, and many are frustrated into silence. The results we get from our governments could probably be better.

Not everyone can be a winner, and it's hard to craft a public institution that is universally appreciated. Still, there are better and worse ways to regulate voting. The persistence and success of our system notwithstanding, I propose that we reform it in the following ways.

We should use a method that can be effective in the presence of more than two strong candidates. We should count votes in a way that facilitates auditing and fraud detection. And we shouldn't prevent certain individuals from voting, when their vote would carry significant benefits, both to them and to the community at large.

This book is about the United States, and some sections are particular to the presidential election. These ideas, however, are widely applicable, and could bring tangible reform to many types of elections.

It's inspiring, and humbling, what our electoral institutions have achieved - and what they have prevented. Yet, I believe that they are being held back by strategic phenomena that were not intentionally imposed. The longevity of the policies impacting the US presidential election is good evidence that they work. Now we need to determine whether they can be improved.

EXPRESSIVE VOTING

My mom once asked me what the two-party system was designed to accomplish - but as I understand the story of the Founders, they didn't intend our nation to be one where political parties had power (or even existed!). There probably are certain advantages to focusing on two parties. But, seeing that nearly all nations with plurality elections have developed two-party systems (How Democratic is the American Constitution, Dahl), it's possible that there's nothing particular about America that makes a two-party system the right choice. Rather, it's just that this type of election only lets in two candidates at a time.

Two-party elections tend to be close, which makes them predictable in many ways, enabling powerful interests to intervene. Predictability in government has important benefits, but facilitation of manipulation is a huge strike against any public policy.

Another flaw of plurality elections is the spoiler effect. It skews the results and irks the process; and is an enormous distraction for candidates and voters that can leave them drained and highly politicized.

Since the spoiler effect has become such a prominent part of our system, we can bemoan that winners end up owing favors that they'd be more effective without. We can also question whether the process of detracting from opponents is relevant to the qualifications for leadership and policy planning.

The plurality election (or "one-vote" election) does have simplicity going for it. Simplicity is a good indicator of fairness/propriety: content being more relevant than strategy and circumstance. Fortunately, the system that can free us from the spoiler effect is arguably even simpler than a one-vote election: vote for as many candidates as you like. The one with the most votes wins.

This system, rarely practiced, is called approval voting in most political literature, but I like to call it "expressive voting", because it enables voters to express quite a lot of detail about how they think and feel. Being empowered to express the best of their wisdom motivates people to get out to the polls - and increased turnout is a very good thing. I'll talk a bit about turnout soon, so for now let me explain how this system facilitates expression.

The crucial benefit is that there can be an unlimited number of frontrunners. For example, there could be a dozen candidates who each have the support of 70-80% of voters. Since each has a real chance, you can pick the ones who fit with your best wisdom on the greatest number of high-priority issues. In an election with two front-runners, you may have to choose between a social policy you like and an economic policy you trust. When you do, the candidates don't know whether you judged them on their social or their economic stance. Little is expressed in the vote - and often, less is understood. Communication is not taking place.

Although you may find yourself aligned with a candidate on multiple issues, a one-vote election ultimately only affords you the opportunity to express one view. Even if just two things are important to you, a one-vote election with two candidates will often force you to pick just one of those issues with your one vote. In a competitive field of dozens, though, you could select candidates with whom you agree on multiple fronts - foreign policy, tax policy, trade, defense, labor, marriage, health care and more. The candidates might even be able to ascertain the collective feelings of their supporters. A candidate who ran on public education reform and global safe sex programs, for example, could see that while 45% of voters supported him, his colleagues who also emphasized subsidy reform were closer to 60%. Look at how much is expressed, and how clearly!

Because candidates could move up without bringing others down, feedback from how voters felt about issues and behavior would be far more palpable than in a zero sum scenario. Candidates would be more open and take more chances because they would be more able to identify which were missteps (in their own campaigns and in others). Further, they might be inclined to say nice things in support of their fellow candidates, to impress the followers thereof, rather than burning them with takedowns. Getting the true opinions of candidates, who deal with each other behind the scenes, would be an valuable source of nuance for voters to contemplate.

Ultimately, though, it doesn't matter what candidates think of each other. What matters is what voters think of them - and a one-vote system does a relatively poor job at communicating that information to anyone, despite the tremendous efforts that many dedicate to discovering it. Expressive voting may well do a better job - but it is unfamiliar and must be tested and practiced before it can serve us on the largest scale.

Right now, the most important step we can take is to find opportunities to try it out. This might mean the vote for what your book club reads next, or the selection of a venue for your next fund-raiser. It might be the choice of which applicant wins a scholarship, or the selection of board members to lead a university. When you implement expressive voting, tell people you are doing so, and pay attention to the quality and tenor of the debate and deliberation, as well as the long-term performance of the winners, both in office and in their eventual re-election campaigns. Share your feelings and goals, and encourage and remind others to use expressive voting for their decisions. Remember that winning suffrage for women and people of color was not quick or easy, but having seen the results, few would have it any other way. Fortunately, our task might not be an uphill battle, since so many of our peers have already begun the search for solutions. Still, patience and perseverance are vital.

ELECTION AUDITING

The technology used in elections has not eliminated fraud. Elections around the world have been rigged. It may have even happened here in the US. Whether it did or not, many believe it might have - and have no way of knowing the truth. In some other cases, it's more apparent what happened, but almost as impossible to prove.

Privacy is important in the voting booth. Without it, voters could be punished, or bribed, for their choices. The push for verifiable results has focused on the production of a paper trail that, in many respects, mirrors the existing pipeline of vote aggregation and counting. Although the paper trail concept is subject to the many of the same shortcomings as mechanical and digital systems, as well as others (starting with flammability), it is often seen as the best option.

In my view, there is a better option, and it has the advantage of not relying whatsoever on good behavior or cooperation. A mathematical, technology-backed audit trail allows voters to check whether their vote was counted correctly. If even a tiny fraction of one percent did so, it would be possible to detect irregularities. Correcting fraud is another issue entirely - but merely detecting it would be real progress.

How does this system reveal your vote to you without revealing it to anyone else? The answer lies in a revolutionary mathematical process that allows experts to compare two encrypted lists of codes and know whether any codes from one list were changed before creating the next list - without being able to know which code became which.

Essentially, the list as a whole has properties that mathematicians can use to verify whether one list was generated from another. That way, the list of vote codes can be published and everyone can make sure their vote is on it, and the data about who they are and who they voted for is protected by several layers of anonymity.

This algorithm was discovered by Andy Neff, who happens to be the older brother of my high school physics teacher. Andy brought the idea to a company called VoteHere, and published some of his code under an open source license to invite scrutiny. That company was acquired by the Dategrity Corporation, which presumably still sells products that facilitate end-to-end auditing (as it is called). I suspect that it would be possible to implement such an audit whether or not Dategrity was ultimately involved. I have no relationship with, or knowledge about, this corporation other than that they acquired VoteHere.

Most elections are run fairly and decided correctly, and it's important to have faith in the possibility of doing the right thing when no one's watching. It's also important to be able to accept a loss and quickly move on to cooperation with the new government. Am I being indulgent when I propose that we use auditing and not trust election officials?

I think not for two reasons. Implementing a good security system is valuable not only because it helps catch wrongdoers, but because it lessens the temptation to do wrong in the first place. People often display a tendency to rationalize everything they do (Blind Spots); and the more consideration is given to an act, the more it may feel inevitable, or typical. If I'm thinking of doing it, a lot of other people definitely are too - so morally, it doesn't matter if I'm the one who ends up acting or one of them is. Or, perhaps I need to act so as to prevent them from doing something more immoral. Taking away these hypothetical scenarios will help us all make steps towards being more personally responsible for our decisions - in the public realm and everywhere.

Secondly, there really is a crisis of integrity in our elections (in the US and elsewhere). The technology implemented in the last decade was simply not researched or designed very well. It was all done in a complete rush. Would we trust our military or our economy to technologies built in a year and sold for a few hundred bucks (approximately \$3500)? No - yet this is sort of what we are doing when we let the choice of our leaders go awry - or leave it in the hands of some unknown hacker.

ELECTORAL COLLEGE

If the nationwide popular vote decided the presidential election, it's quite possible that many more of us would vote. Perhaps it would take several years before turnout materially increased. But I find it implausible to suggest that turnout would go down if the popular vote mattered. I find that most of my peers also share this perspective.

Admittedly, maximizing turnout is not the goal of the election. I don't believe a goal is codified anywhere, but ostensibly it is to choose a fit executive, who will protect and expand the abilities of citizens (to pursue accomplishments that don't inordinately hurt others). We know from our history, and from many military conflicts, that an executive is really only fit if he or she intends to defend and serve all citizens impartially. This may be why many Americans can see logic in the workings of the Electoral College, which has the potential to push influence into far-flung corners of the nation.

Yet as we know, the Electoral College makes some voters more than ten times as influential as others; and causes candidates to overwhelmingly focus on a few states. As populations and distributions change, this scenario might too. Yet contrast this possibility with the potential for states to pursue policies that push their populations and demographic distributions into a configuration they think will maximize their EC prominence. Scary.

I, personally, find very dubious the notion that the president should represent states - in any way. States are already represented in Congress, and by their own governments. The executive branch ought to be a check on states by representing the American citizenry as a whole - a body that is without any other official voice or defense (besides the Federal Judiciary). States should have, in my opinion, no role in selecting the president.

But I don't put too much stock in these abstract arguments (though I thoroughly believe them). The clearest and strongest reason to disempower the Electoral College is to increase voter turnout. More participation would lead to better results in elections both national and local.

Why? Because voting leads to increased civic action (which is, more or less, another word for volunteering). Volunteering not only makes us happier and healthier, but also more employable and effective at work.

After helping a candidate get elected, a volunteer is liable to help him or her accomplish goals in office, and to do so without thought of personal compensation. Far though it may be from the minds of many hardworking, hard-pressed Americans, working in this selfless mode is the path to success - a path that awaits any of us diligent enough to choose it. Imagine how hard Barack Obama worked to get where he is. He never could have accomplished this much if his motivation had been about what he was getting in return. And yet he did get something great for his hard work - and perhaps his future will hold something even greater.

What he got was personal development - and despite the many obstacles that have been in his path during his first term, there is no doubt that he is a very special person, in both mind and heart. His personal accomplishments, and his personality, are so impressive that he was able to win without the traditional levels of experience and backing - a feat that struck into many places the desire to exert pressure on him in anticipation of his ability to wield power.

If we let ourselves believe that our voices matter, we'll be less depressed and take better care of our lives. We'll be less antagonistic towards the government, the police, and each other.

And, while a single vote may never make a difference, a single blogger or volunteer can influence thousands of votes. Or even millions - in this day and age, why not?

This debate usually stops when the logistics of amending the Constitution are considered, since 37 states would have to ratify any change. I also believe that this part of the Constitution will probably not change anytime soon - but as I learned from my professor Akhil Reed Amar, no amendment is necessary, because it is eminently possible to circumvent the Electoral College. State legislatures (with either the cooperation of their governor, or the override of a veto) are free to assign their state's electors to the winner of the nationwide popular vote (the Constitution contains no stipulations on how electors are selected - states are completely free to decide). If even one or two states did so, it would create a prize big enough to decide the election in many cases - and failing that, it would still be big enough to engage the participation of voters in states that are otherwise defunct in the electoral calculus. By generating a scenario where the popular vote winner would always win in the Electoral College, the College would effectively be circumvented.

Eight states and the District of Columbia have enacted legislation pursuant to the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, which has also attained various stages of passage in many other states. This compact enforces the result of the popular vote - but does not take effect until 270 electoral votes (the minimum needed for a victory) are implicated. Therefore, this particular plan requires the cooperation of many more states (probably 10 or so).

Presumably this waiting clause is in place to prevent a scenario where, for example, Massachusetts decided the election by giving its 10 Electoral votes to a popular vote winner whom Massachusetts voters did not support. Leaving aside the question of whether this is a statistically plausible scenario, I wonder what would be bad about this outcome. After all, isn't the whole point of the Interstate Compact that the result of a popular vote might be different from the result of an Electoral College vote? And, the exact same thing could happen to Massachusetts even if 20 or 40 states were all giving their electors to the popular vote winner. It's not possible for the popular vote winner to lose an election as the result of states dedicating their electors to him or her (although outcomes in other states could be affected by the fact of their votes mattering).

Putting faith, and binding power, in the popular vote is asserting that voices across the country matter. But, perhaps more important than whether voices matter is the question of whether we care enough about choosing a good and impartial president to use a system that will do so.

ENFRANCHISEMENT

Candidates nearly always want to serve more than one term. Their actions in office reflect their prerogative to help the groups of people whose votes they want.

Big groups that vote habitually are the most tempting. Some of the demographics that regularly muster the highest turnout are the elderly, college graduates, and the suburban upper middle class. Most people with high incomes vote.

Underprivileged communities, by contrast, exhibit weak turnout, and have little impact on campaigns. Candidates may want to help them, but suspect they will lose if they do. After they're gone, their work can be undone in a few months. Alternately, opportunities to take steps for change could span decades.

This is the situation that leaves the poor out in the cold. Many politicians believe that allocating help to the poor would also make life better for the other classes. Still, weak voting tendencies make it difficult to speak up about this (there may be a popular perception that allocation issues are more zero-sum than they actually are).

This lacking dialogue feeds back into lacking turnout. Even more problematic is the alienation that the underclasses feel. Getting problems addressed by a government designed by (and for) people who live a different life, and speak a different dialect, is challenging and tiring. Sometimes, it's simpler and more effective to embrace the

dysfunction of the black market, and live between the lines. Having pride in the way you live is important - but sometimes it requires you to turn a blind eye on your weaknesses.

Living under the rule of another culture can be humiliating. There are bound to be misunderstandings and slights that cut deep - this has been evident throughout history. Perhaps with the right type of enlightenment, an underclass could thrive and prosper on its own. But in the modern, Western world, it's typical for most impoverished cultures - black, white, and Latino - to deal with and disguise their defeat by self-defeating. Underperformance in school, the job market, and the justice system can all be seen as resistance to assimilation.

The ultimate expression of this alienation is the lifelong ban from voting that states give to those convicted of felonies. Felons are also banned from many job applications and other programs and opportunities. Acquiring a conviction is a free pass to not put any effort into such endeavors.

My point is that sternly telling youngsters to shape up will have mixed results - some will see the potential of living within the system, while others choose to hone their resolve and self-sufficiency by coolly resisting instruction. And, as any politician will tell you, resisting the directives of a standing power is indeed a practical and widely applicable skill - a good thing to practice.

I'm taking some broad strokes at a complex situation. Truly, the questions of how to govern multiple cultures simultaneously, and when it's best for each culture to govern itself, are puzzling and emotionally provocative. They interact sharply with questions of religion, biology, morality, psychology, and reality. Without claiming that my analyses in the preceding paragraphs are absolutely correct or useful, I simply want to point out that I believe we have a lot, pragmatically speaking, to gain by encouraging wider political participation in an unabashedly positive manner.

One way to take some air out of puffed up chests is to cultivate and display appreciation for the functional, positive aspects of a culture. It's hard to rebel against someone who has complimented you. The brain's tendency towards cognitive consonance makes it suspect that people who like you are smart (nearly everyone considers themselves above average).

Tough love does play an unmistakable role in growth, but there must remain a baseline of positivity. Telling people their vote is wanted, and then showing them it will count for something, is a cheap way to convey massive positivity, and long-term commitment. The reforms in the first three chapters can be leveraged to demonstrate that a vote counts for something. By ending the ban on voting by convicted felons, we can convey that all votes are wanted.

Restoring the franchise to convicts is not just a strategy, it's a philosophy. One way to interpret the ban would be to say that people who choose not to value life and liberty aren't helpful to our nuanced collective decision making process. But I think another

way to interpret this dynamic is that somewhere along the way (or, likely, many times along the way), the system failed to work for these people, and their input is likely to be illustrative of how the system might be fixed. Often, your students become your teachers when you realize how different their experience is from what you expected. There is no excuse for violence or careless living, but nonetheless, there is often more to a story than meets the eye. People can get into desperate, constrained situations even when their intentions are selfless, noble, and realistic.

Withholding the franchise from those who have the greatest need to have an impact on their government is also what I think is happening to the young (who might offer a very pure and productive perspective). It's permitted to vote for those 18 and up - yet many don't solidify the habit until their late thirties, if then. Rather than establishing a habit of voting, we establish a habit of not voting - for practically two decades.

In fact it's quite possible that despite a chorus of praise for voting, we may have devised a very efficient process of discouraging young people from taking part. We teach in the early teens about how well voting has done for us, how good it is to vote, and how much Americans have sacrificed for the privilege of voting; then at the peak of enthusiasm we tell them they aren't worthy and won't be for several years. It takes a lot of maturity to retain positivity through that dilemma. It's great that we teach maturity to teenagers - but if we are staking almost twenty years of their civic lives on it, that may be a trade we should reconsider.

I also think there's a hollowness to calls for youth voting that results from the irrelevance of votes in most states and most elections. In the same way that P. Diddy unconvincingly stated that young and urban communities should either "vote or die", many calls to action are dramatic and incendiary, using shocks and implied threats to discourage questions of why votes really matter. These advocates may be doing the best they can in a somewhat broken system - but the young can sense their disingenuity, which affects their proclivity to develop eager attitudes about voting. It would, after all, be perfectly feasible to teach kids that although their vote won't make a difference in the outcome, it will make a difference in their own lives and communities.

Lowering the voting age, perhaps to 16 or 14, would have a lot of consequences for our nation - legally, ethically, logistically and culturally. But I think at the least it's worth admitting that these (aforementioned) adverse consequences may be relatively direct results of our rules and policies, rather than just expecting the age restriction to work out as intended with good behavior. Bear in mind that a chief function of the government is planning for the distant future; perhaps the young will bring more personal investment to this discussion. Our policy is also lacking the influence of those who lack cars - a bias that has steered our real estate development in an unsustainable direction that has proven financially devastating. The voting age has been lowered before, which hasn't caused anyone any problems. When's the last time someone proposed raising the voting age back to 21, or raising it at all?

Since the repeal of the Jim Crow laws and the amendments that granted voting rights to all segments of the citizen population, Americans have been very comfortable with the notion that there is no test to pass to earn the vote (apart from tests related to naturalization of immigrants). To the extent that is practical, voting is the province of every citizen. This makes it awkward, ironic, and troubling to enforce age restrictions. However, it is challenging to think of an alternative that would provide for both the physical and emotional safety of developing children, while exposing a legally unambiguous indication of who is enfranchised. We have a lot to gain from the uncompromised insights and narratives of our youthful populations; but a lot to lose if we let them become targeted by concerted attempts to influence their impressionable minds. Let me close with one more argument in favor of lowering the voting age.

If the voting age were 16, most Americans would have three opportunities to vote in local elections, and one to vote in a national election, before graduation from secondary school. This is a time when it would be easy to convince them to vote, particularly as most schools are utilized as polling places, and election day is always a school day. Doing something five times forms a habit, and if we could get teens more than half way there before liberating them, as it were, a lot would cast their fifth vote before 21.

LOGISTICS

Welcoming a larger number of candidates into the process would have many consequences for the quality of the debate. More ideas could be considered, less energy would be focused on undermining people at the right moments, and the influence of the biggest donors (who can currently cover all bases by funding just two options) might diminish.

I believe that the logistics of informing voters would develop organically within our current information ecosystem. There are thousands of books, thousands of bands, thousands of TV programs - and a certain few rise to prominence via word of mouth, critical acclaim, and marketing. I think the same will be true for candidates - except it may be even easier to repetitively and progressively iterate over the process. Indicating support for a person can be done more quickly than watching a show, reading a book, or even listening to a song. In the couple of seconds that it takes to like something on Facebook, or send a text message, you could add a candidate to your ballot, and optionally, let friends see how serious you are about their capability. And, as you spend more time learning about a candidate, your opinion about him or her often becomes more clear and meaningful. Expressing some of these thoughts, feelings and decisions would generate powerful reminders and clues for finding all the very best and supporting their messages.

Yet the logistics of actually voting are potentially more of a problem. How long would it take to sort through a thousand names while marking the ones you like? How could we even fit so many names on a paper ballot? And how could voters possibly remember their picks without writing them all down on lists which could be stolen and abused?

There may never be more than a handful of front-runners. But, just as an album or a book could find commercial success months after its release, a candidate could make a late charge, or slowly but steadily build a good name that could serve him or her well in the next cycle. For this reason, I think that we can get the best results if we provide tools that streamline the expression of support.

To me, the obvious way to do this is with a web app that is compatible with mobile phones. Using something like that, voters could maintain running lists of whom to support, adding and dropping names as desired. The app could also provide tools for suggesting candidates to others, or finding ones who agree with given views and priorities.

In politics, you find groups of people who agree with each other. The promise that I see in expressive voting is related to the theory that these groups should not have to compete with each other, or even differentiate themselves from each other. Instead they can support each other, and explain their beliefs by reference to the others. Eventually, traits will surface that enable some to pull ahead; and there is no need to artificially accelerate this process.

One basic tool that would make it easier for voters to gather up exhaustive lists that accurately expressed their feelings about whom to support would be to let them actually create lists that could be summarily adopted by typing a keyword into a web page or a text - or by clicking a link. This would widely delegate the information-gathering process, and enable an issue-oriented approach. While some voters still vetted candidates on their character, connections and experience, others could opt to simply support everyone who supported X, Y, and Z but opposed A, B, and C - thereby encouraging others to consider realigning their stances. Personally I feel that the strongest, most just society will result from electing the smartest people - not from virtually delegating decisions to the voters. The opportunity to express opinions via the vote, however, would be one that shed much light on what is happening in American lives today. Such an information source will be invaluable even to the brightest candidates.

Expressive voting works best with votes that are all or nothing - there is no ranking or weighting. To support someone, you have to be comfortable with them winning; so it's very important to be picky. Yet as I have explained, there are very large benefits if we can help voters seriously consider a large number of choices, and narrow down their options over time. I suspect that the best way to do this would be to allow votes to be expressed as a value within a range, and the voter could choose the minimum value that was necessary to earn their ultimate support.

For example, candidates could be rated on a scale from 0-500. I could choose to support everyone whom I had rated higher than 380. Then, as election day drew near, if the guys I had at 390 were ahead of my true favorites, I could raise my baseline to 425, and try to rally around some truly inspiring candidates. Later, if those failed to take

the lead, but one I had rated 418 was in second place, I could lower my bar to 410 to try to help him or her overtake the leader. With realtime polling of currently projected results, voters could gauge the emotions generated by potential outcomes to arrive at the proper level of support for each candidate, and the proper baseline of vote commission for each race.

Now, perhaps this practice of rating on a scale and adjusting the baseline would introduce strategic phenomena that distracted us from the content and character of campaigns - or merely took up too much time and effort. After all, one of the main reasons I feel so comfortable with expressive voting is that the "approval voting" literature has concluded that it is a system free from strategy (meaning there is no reason to hide or deny your true beliefs and preferences - which is a trait not shared by other voting schemes). My proposal, while highly capable, might complicate things - especially if realtime polling were allowed. Still, I have high hopes for such a system to facilitate the efficient, honest expression of a huge amount of information - and a fair and rigorous competition between thousands of hopefuls. This is why I have implemented this system and made it freely available for anyone to use at expressivevoting.com.

CONCLUSION

Now that you are familiar with my findings and suspicions about our voting system, I hope we have raised as many questions as we answered. In politics, the right answer is often derived from some ultimate concept that is unknowable - like whether God exists, or whether there will ever be another world war. Although we can't know these answers, we can work to improve our best guesses, and collaborate on an answer to use for the time being.

This is a frustrating but fruitful process, and I think the case for democracy is evident. It may be a divisive system in some ways - but allowing free expression also seems to be one of the best ways to stabilize a society and pacify those touched by it.

I have worked alone on this treatment - but I believe that we must work together if it is to ever mean something. As I have said, much experience with expressive voting is needed before we can responsibly entrust it with our future. This means that we each have an extensive ability to impact the path of expressive voting. It is suitable for any shared decision, and easy to explain with a minimum of jargon. Please, take the time to consider and advocate its implementation in all elections and votes.

Beyond that, there is of course much more that you can contribute to the process of improving our liberty, safety, economy and health and fulfillment. Participating in the political process, flawed as it may be, is good. I hope that you will feel excited to share this book with your peers, and I hope that my efforts to make it easily available have been sufficient. If you would like to help refine this message, or perhaps translate it to a different language or medium, you should contact me via mikeymicrophone.com or expressivevoting.com, or simply get down to it.

Thank you for reading, and good luck bringing the best of your wisdom to every one of your decisions.