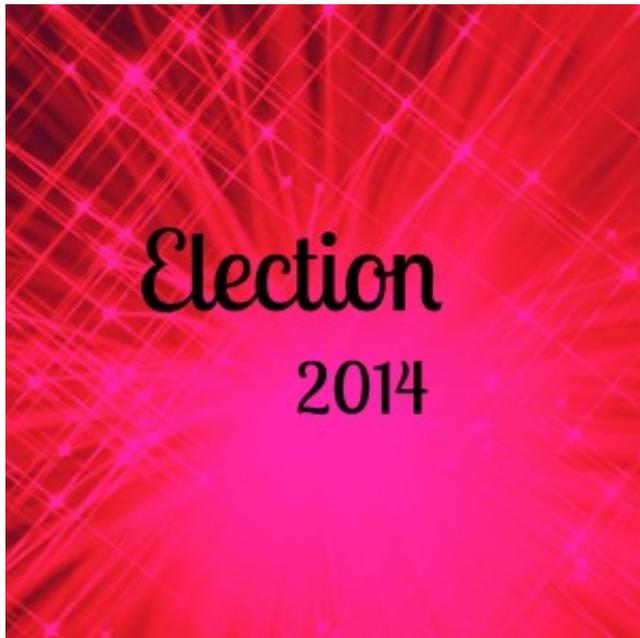


## Democracy - Lesson Learned



As we approach the 2014 election voters will decide who will be representing them in both the federal and state offices. As citizens, we have an important responsibility to learn about the candidates, as well as any state amendments or initiatives before we go to the ballot box.

Our founding fathers discussed at great length about the concept of democracy. They argued, discussed, and then argued some more. Their biggest concern, when discussing the benefits of a democratic government, was would people take the time, effort and really learn about the issues and candidates? They worried people are easily persuaded with misinformation and propaganda. Because of these arguments, our forefathers decided on a representative type of government. *We vote for someone who will represent us and in turn our "representative" will vote in our best interest.* The other type of governing, direct democracy, has it's challenges because every citizen would vote on every issue. Direct democracy is an overwhelming responsibility for citizens and would not work as intended if citizens did not hold up their obligations.

So what happens when we don't do our due diligence and learn about candidates and what they stand for? Minnesota elected Governor Jesse Ventura, a past professional wrestler, as governor from 1999-2003. He ran as an independent candidate and stunned the state with a victory. It was widely suspected that young people became energized by Governor Ventura and voted in very large numbers for him in the election. They liked him because he was "like everyone else" and had a "give 'em hell" attitude. He was unconventional and "told it like it is". Young people liked that. But where they failed is they did not understand how he stood on important issues to them.

What happened after the election was where the lesson was learned. About a hundred college

students went to the state capitol and protested high college tuition hikes. Thinking he would be on their side, because it was their vote that helped put him office, they were disappointed when he rejected their request for tuition assistance. Governor Ventura told them directly that if they were smart enough to go to college they are smart enough to figure out how to pay for it. They stood there in complete shock that he did not support them. But had they done their homework on Governor Ventura, they would not have been surprised. *Lesson learned - know what your candidate stands for before you vote.*

So before you go to the polls today, please, please do your due diligence and learn about **ALL** the candidates and their positions on important issues. Voters must be educated on the issues and candidates for our type of government to succeed. After doing your homework, **GO VOTE!**