

Negative Vote can improve all democracies

Executive Summary

Negative Vote can improve ALL democracies, enhance human right and the prospect for world peace.

Here is a 3-minute video that explains the concept.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MYpE0lv4eo>

Negative Vote is a vote against a candidate and is counted as minus one. Having this option should be a fundamental right.

New Ballot

| | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> For | <input type="checkbox"/> For |
| 1 | 2 |
|  |  |
| XXX | OOO |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> Against | <input type="checkbox"/> Against |

Research has shown having this choice will increase voter participation which in itself would be an important improvement for any democracy. More important, increased participation can alter the result of any close contest. Therefore, not having this option means the “wrong” persons may be elected in close contests around the world.

Because each voter still has only one vote, loyal partisans will vote FOR the candidates they support. Negative Votes will most likely be cast by the middle electorate and they will vote AGAINST the extremist candidates thus diminish their influence. Extreme rhetoric will be reduced and societies will become more harmonious internally and less likely to war against neighbors.

The problem statement

“Is Democracy Dead?” That’s the headline of a New York Times article on Dec. 14, 2014 written by Tony Blair.

Blair worried about the rising influence of far right parties in many European countries(Problem1a). He also stated:

“...So politicians have been moving away from the center ground — where the public tends to congregate — to the detriment of policy-making.” (Problem 1b)

Blair offered no solutions. Nor has anyone else.

An International IDEA study of worldwide voter turnout, 1945-2001 shows a notable decline since the mid-1980s¹(Problem 2). The authors offered no solutions. A solution adopted by some countries to increase voter participation is compulsory voting with financial penalties. These measures are criticized as violations of human rights or the right of free speech.²

A less obvious problem with modern democracy but of no less importance is the issue of whether the “right” persons are being elected(Problem 3). We shall demonstrate with simple math illustration that the “wrong” persons may be elected in close contests under current systems. No one has offered any solution.

To be able to say NO is a fundamental engine for human progress in every field. Yet, when we vote we are only allowed to say YES (Problem 4). Few people in the world realize there is such a fundamental human rights problem(Problem 5: lack of awareness there is a problem).

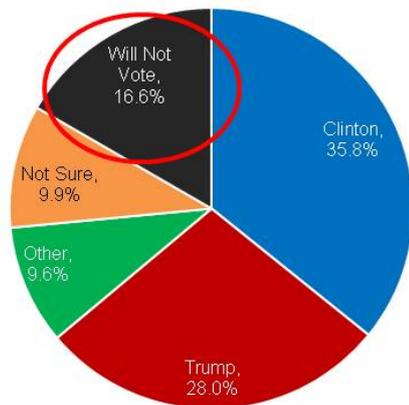
¹ Voter Turnout Rates from a Comparative Perspective, By Rafael López Pintor, Maria Gratschew and Kate Sullivan, International IDEA publication.
www.idea.int/publications/vt/upload/Voter%20turnout.pdf

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compulsory_voting#cite_note-10

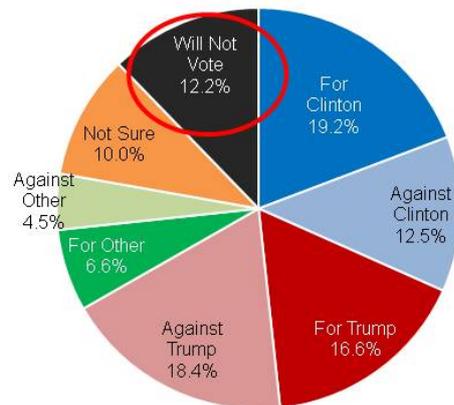
The solution

Having the Negative Vote option on the ballot will increase voter participation. Research surveys conducted by Gallup and RAND Corporation, proposed and funded by Negative Vote Association (“NVA”), have proved this³. A 4.4% increase in participation in the U.S. would mean 9.6 million more voters going to the polls. A 5.4% increase in participation in Taiwan would mean over 1 million additional voters voting.

Without **Negative Vote** Option

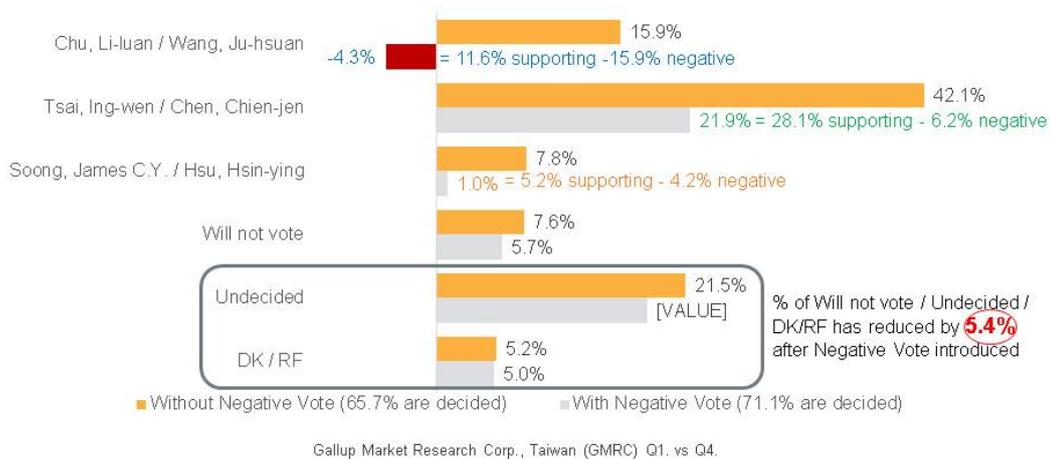


Negative Vote Results



³ https://www.negativevote.org/news/pid_1/66.html?lang=en

Supporting Rates for 2016 Presidential Election – With and Without Negative Vote



Here is an illustration of how Negative Vote might impact a two-person race:

Under current system:

A 34

B 33

A wins and claims majority mandate. What if there are 5 other voters who chose not to vote because they dislike both candidates? Having the Negative Vote option will bring them out.

A +34 -4 (net 30)

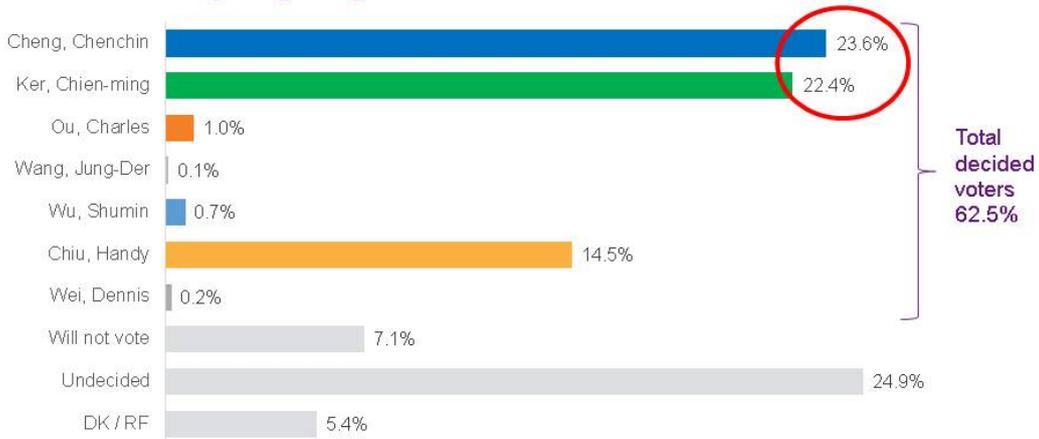
B +33 -1 (net 32)

B wins! More voters participated (more democratic) and clearer messages are delivered. More important, A's winning the election with fewer participation means the "wrong" person is elected. Similar simple math illustrations can be demonstrated with 3 or more candidates.

The Gallup survey for Hsin-Chu City (where there was a close contest) showed the winner could be altered if Negative Vote were available⁴.

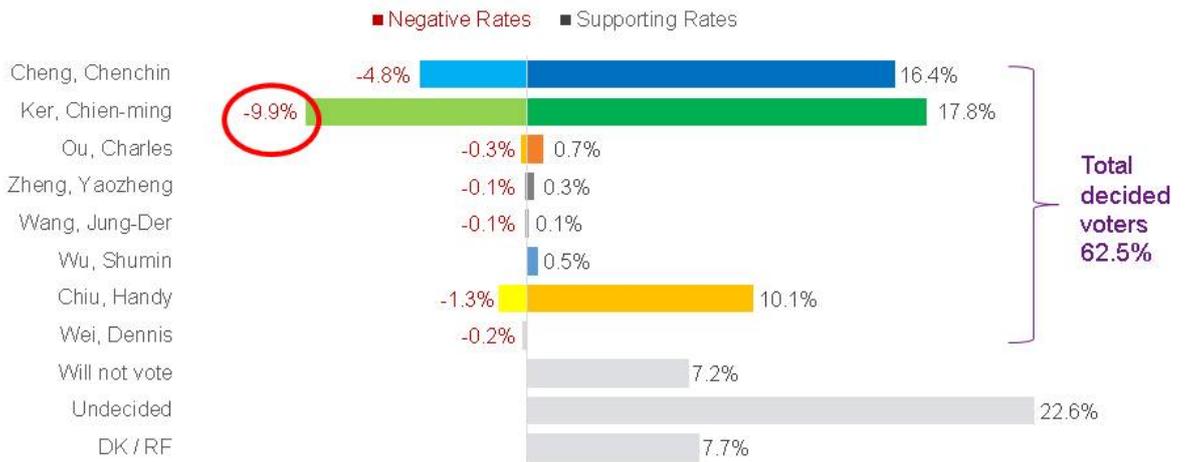
⁴ https://www.negativevote.org/news/pid_1/61.html?lang=en

Supporting Rates of 2016 Legislator Election in Hsinchu City – Before Prompting Negative Vote



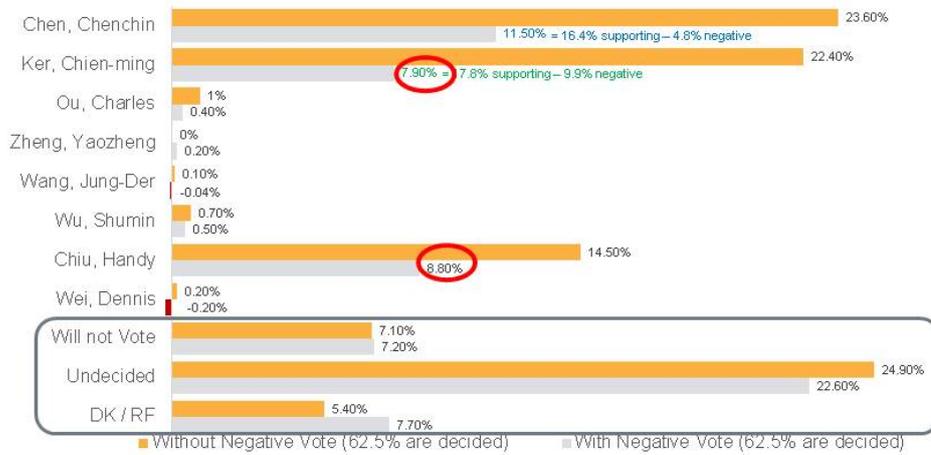
Gallup Market Research Corp., Taiwan (GMRC) Q1.

Supporting Rates of 2016 Legislator Election in Hsinchu City – Prompted and Assuming Negative Vote Is Adopted



Gallup Market Research Corp., Taiwan (GMRC) Q3.

Supporting Rates of 2016 Legislator Election in Hsinchu City – With and Without Negative Vote



Gallup Market Research Corp., Taiwan (GMRC) Q1. vs Q3.

Hsin Chu City Legislative Seat Election Result

Total voters: 324,395

Effective Votes: 219,311 67.6% (Gallup poll 62.5%, +6.1%)

| | | Final | What if? | |
|-------|--------|-------|----------|-------|
| Ker | 90,642 | 27.9% | -9.9% | 18.0% |
| Cheng | 79,951 | 24.6% | -4.8% | 19.8% |
| Chiu | 36,309 | 11.2% | -1.3% | 9.9% |

Since each voter still has only one vote, no candidate would encourage loyal supporters cast negative votes. The middle-electorate are more likely to cast Negative Votes and they will vote against the extremist candidates. Extreme rhetoric will be reduced and societies will become more harmonious internally and less likely to war against neighbors.

Dissent is a cornerstone of democracy. Some philosophers and scientists may even argue that to say NO is a prime moving force for human advancement in all

endeavors. Yet that option is not available when we vote (except for Armenia when there is only one candidate).

“Democracy is all about choice. This choice can be better expressed by giving the voters an opportunity to verbalize themselves unreservedly and by imposing least restrictions on their ability to make such a choice.” --Quotation from Indian Supreme Court. (Although the Court was ruling on "None-of-the-Above", a different idea, the principle expressed is just as valid here.)

We believe having the option to vote NO should be a fundamental right.

Risk Assessment

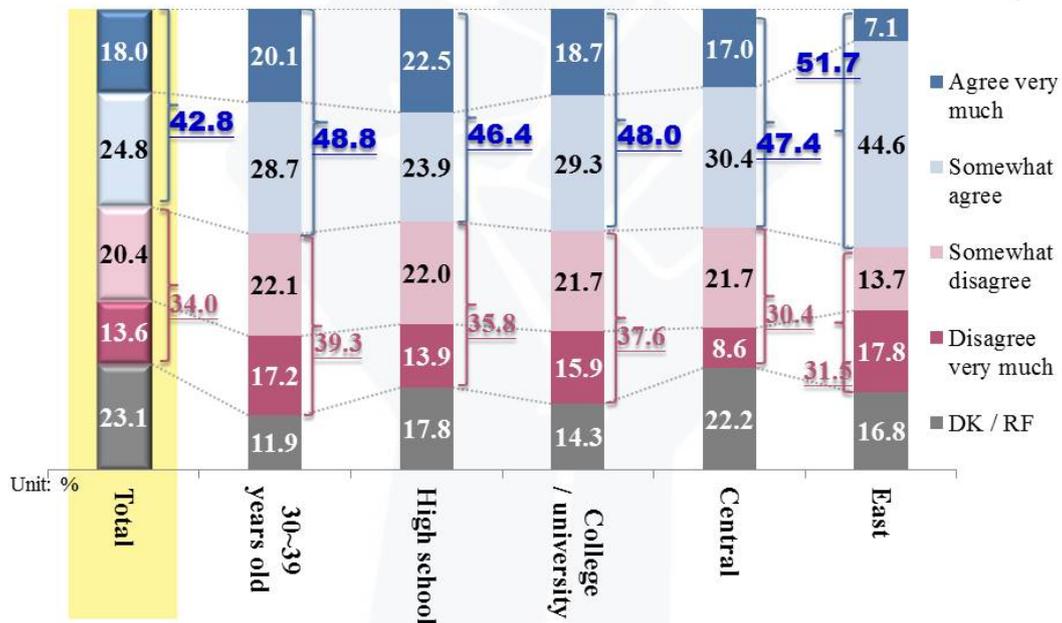
Negative Vote is a relatively new concept. Most people have not heard of it before. A few election scholars who have heard of it, dismissed it too quickly without taking into consideration of the impact of increased voter participation.⁵

Vested interest, those who are in power, do not like the idea that people may vote against them. It was therefore no surprise to us that when we first proposed the idea in Taiwan that there was not a single legislator voicing support while plenty voiced opposition. However, we are greatly encouraged that the general public likes the idea. Our national survey in Taiwan showed even though few have heard our detailed explanation of its merits, 43% agree that election laws should be changed to allow voters this option with 34% against. This is consistent with our belief people will see it as a basic right.

⁵ Brams, S.J. (1977): When is it advantageous to cast a negative vote? In: *Mathematical Economics and Game Theory: Essays in Honor of Oscar Morgenstern* (R. Henn, O. Moeschlin, eds.). Springer, Berlin, pp. 564–572.

Agreement with “Amending the Law for Negative Vote”

Q7.

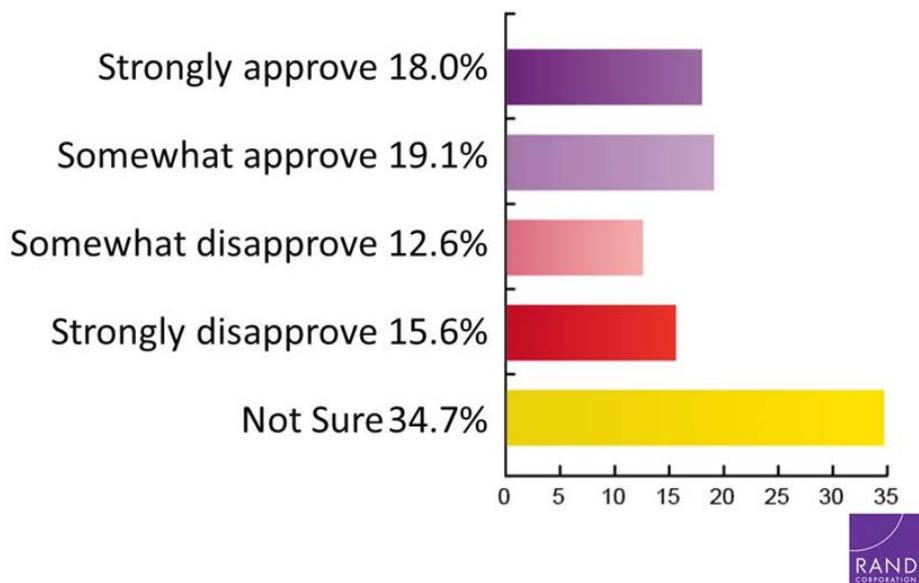


Gallup Market Research Corp., Taiwan (GMRC)

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The RAND survey also showed a significantly higher approval than disapproval.

Negative Vote Approval



Our main strategy is therefore seeking the change via plebiscite rather than lobbying legislators.

Negative Vote Association

Negative Vote idea was independently conceived by Sam Chang in 2011. His research showed others have had the same idea so he did nothing for two years. In 2013, he decided to form a Facebook group to promote the concept and hoped others would like it and transmit the idea over the internet. Not much happened after one year so he decided to form a formal NGO and convinced more than 30 of his friends to join as co-founders, including one who wrote an unpublished article in 2004. Among the founders are the head of the largest law firm in Taiwan, former Chairman of the current ruling party, former Chairperson of the Consumer Foundation, former Chairman of the Veterans' Administration. Other notable supporters include a former Premier, former President of Taiwan University, former Chairman of the Central Election Commission, former National Security Advisor, Vice-Chairman of the opposition party, etc.

Negative Vote Association ("NVA") was formally established in March 2015 to promote the concept of negative vote. Its initial focus and efforts are targeted at amending the election laws in Taiwan to adopt the Negative Vote option. Secondary efforts have begun recently in California.

NVA is governed by a board of 9 directors and 3 supervisors, all are volunteers. Day to day operations are carried out by two deputy secretary generals under the direction of the President Mr. Sam Chang. At the present time, all staff are volunteers.

Bibliography

The concept of Negative Vote is sometimes referred to as: Disapproval Voting, CAV(Combined approval voting), Bipolar Voting, or Formal Recognition of the Negative Preferences

Following are various papers that specifically deal with the Negative Vote concept.

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https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=IqRXAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&hl=zh_TW&pg=GBS.PA1

2. Boehm, G.A.W. (1976): One fervent vote against Wintergreen. Mimeograph.
3. Brams, S.J. (1977): When is it advantageous to cast a negative vote? In: Mathematical Economics and Game Theory: Essays in Honor of Oscar Morgenstern (R. Henn, O. Moeschlin, eds.). Springer, Berlin, pp. 564–572.
4. Felsenthal, D.S. (1989): On combining approval with disapproval voting. Behavioral Science 34, 56–70.
5. Daniel Ferguson & Theodore Lowi (2001): Reforming American Electoral Politics: Let's Take "No" for an Answer, 34 PS: Pol. Sci. & Pol. 277, 277
6. George C. Leef (October 29, 2004) A Modest Proposal – Let's Allow Negative Voting
<http://fff.org/explore-freedom/article/modest-proposal-lets-negative-voting/>
7. Michael Kang(2010): Voting as veto, Michigan Law Review, Vol. 108, No. 7
8. Jos´e Carlos R. Alcantud and Annick Laruelle: To approve or not to approve: this is not the only question
Universidad de Salamanca, Spain, University of the Basque Country
(October 2012)
https://mpira.uni-muenchen.de/41885/1/MPRA_paper_41885.pdf

Internet discussion forums

[http://www.researchgate.net/post/Has anyone ever tried Negative Votes](http://www.researchgate.net/post/Has_anyone_ever_tried_Negative_Votes)
<http://opengov.ideascale.com/a/dtd/Ability-to-vote--No--against-a-candidate./2912-4049>
<https://frozengarlic.wordpress.com/2015/03/05/negative-voting/#comment-6296>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/NegativeVote/>

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https://www.negativevote.org/news/pid_1.html?lang=en

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/NegativeVote/>

Date of submission: Oct. 4, 2016