

opinion

Lawmaker seeks high voter turnout

by John F. Barton

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Although the 1984 presidential and congressional elections are a year away, a lawmaker wants Congress to act now to bolster voter turnout, which has declined in every presidential election since 1960.

Rep. Mario Biaggi, D-N.Y., who would like a record high voter turnout for the 1984 elections instead of a record low, wants his colleagues to act now on several major election reforms he has proposed.

Biaggi believes more Americans would vote if the United States followed the example of some European nations and hold presidential and congressional elections on Sunday.

To offset the impact of early election night projections by the media, Biaggi wants all polling places across the country to open and close at the same time — 12 p.m. to 9 p.m. EST — during presidential elections, starting with the 1984 election.

The former New York City policeman also has introduced legislation that would spend \$22.5 million over a three-year period for "programs to instruct teachers, students, and communities about voting and its importance."

Biaggi told colleagues in a recent floor speech that he introduced the election reforms because he is "deeply concerned about our nation's dismal voter turnout rate."

"Simply put, our current election process is failing us miserably," Biaggi said. "Due to an increasing lack of voter participation, our democratic society is growing weaker while well-organized extremist and special interest groups are growing in power and influence."

"We must act promptly and respons-

ibly to counteract this serious threat to our democratic system," he said.

Biaggi said voter turnout in the United States has declined in every presidential election since 1960, when it was 62.8 percent, through the 1980 election in which only 53.9 percent of the registered voters participated.

"The 1980 voter turnout was the lowest for a presidential election in 32 years," Biaggi said. Ten states and the District of Columbia all had voter turnout rates under 50 percent in 1980.

The situation is far worse in non-presidential election years. Only 40.3 percent of registered voters did so in the 1982 elections.

The Census Bureau did a survey 10 years revealing that nearly half of all registered non-voters did not exercise their franchise because of difficulty in getting time off from work, no available transportation, or they were discouraged by long lines at the voting booths.

Meanwhile, Biaggi said, "very little, if anything, has been done to overcome these voting obstacles."

Biaggi noted that in those European countries where national elections are held on Sundays, voter turnout is as much as 30 percent higher than in the United States.

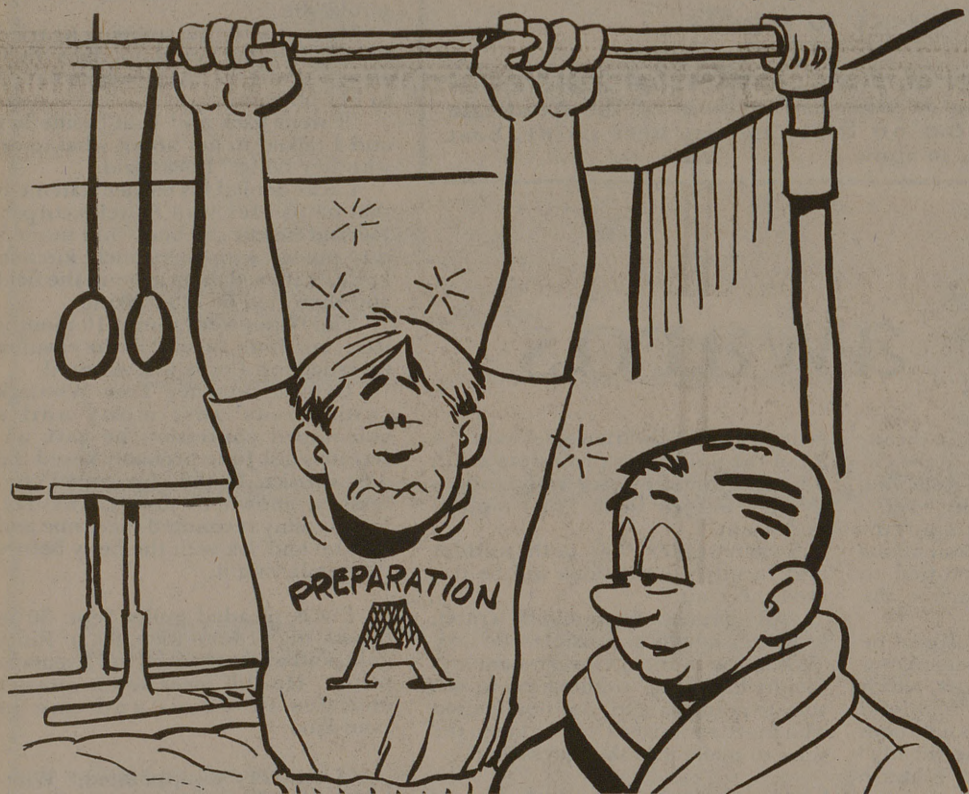
He said Sweden, Austria, West Germany, France and Italy held their most recent elections on Sunday and voter turnout was nearly 90 percent.

Biaggi also said early election night projections by the media have caused voter turnout to drop.

He said a study released in October 1981 by the University of Michigan and partially funded by ABC news concluded that voter turnout dropped between 6 percent and 11 percent because of early election result projections.

Slouch

by Jim Earle



"I should have told you. It's bad news to try to chew tobacco while you're working out in the gym."



A DEAD SOLDIER BY ANY OTHER NAME...

Getting his image pressed Baker makes best dressed

by Dick West

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Soon after Senate Republican Leader Howard Baker was designated one of America's best-dressed politicians, the list of the nation's "most influential women" was published.

Baker wasn't on it. Which probably was a good thing. If being accused of dressing well could incite the Tennessee senator to paroxysms of diffidence, imagine what being called influential might have done.

After reading that the Tailors' Council of America had rated him just behind President Reagan in the government threads department, Baker took the Senate floor to confess he was, deep down, a slob.

He also professed puzzlement over how such lists are compiled. I must say I have at times experienced a modicum of bafflement myself.

The year after John Kennedy was elected president, as I recall, his wife was

ranked in the top 10 among female fashion plates.

Now anybody who reads People magazine regularly surely would agree that Jackie O. is a sharp dresser. On any given day, she probably is more smartly turned out than Howard Baker.

But until the time of her husband's elevation to the White House, the then Mrs. K had never made the best-dressed list.

I was curious then, as now, to know what garments she might have added to her wardrobe to catch the eye of the apparel industry.

I never found out. And I suspect Baker is doomed to frustration if he pursues the question of why he came in second in the government category on the tailors' best-dressed list.

The bestowers of such honors work in mysterious ways their lists to compile. My advice is to let slovenly clothes-horse lie. However, two factors stand out:

1. The drafters of "best" lists go in big for categories — government, entertainment, education, business, arts, media, sports and so on.
2. Name recognition is a prime requisite, whether the honor is associated

with clothing, influence or some other form of achievement.

Since the Republicans regard control of the Senate in the 1984 election as a top priority, Baker's name has become such a household word he is frequently mentioned as a potential presidential candidate.

What he lacks in toggeriness, however, makes up in celebrity. The emphasis with sense of unwelcome age of a spouse.

Members of my own household constantly deploring my tendency to wear striped shirts with plaid neckties.

Now I happen to be one of those aesthetes who can see that striped plaid goes well together. To me, the combination is every bit as snazzy as a rumpled look.

However, there is no doubt about it: a stant carping eventually takes its toll. Baker can be accused of having dressed dark only so many times before he begins to have doubts about one's selection.

Baker described himself as a slob, his showing on the tailors' list, I blame him. We tattered-dressed bit of recognition, too.

Letters: Senate should not make senior finals mandatory

Editor:
 Hey, graduating seniors, how would you like to take final exams?

A few weeks ago there was an article in The Battalion concerning one of our Faculty Senate's latest projects.

At present, professors have the option to exempt graduating students from taking final exams. The Faculty Senate would like to see all finals mandatory!

They feel that since other Universities do not have an optional final policy, that we should "Be Like Other Universities." Texas A&M did not become the great University it is by being like the others.

We have our traditions, with certain academic policies being part of those. Traditions are meant to be upheld, not tampered with.

What about the Corps? Those who are commissioned are busy enough without having to contend with finals.

Other students are also getting their jobs and lives in order. That is certainly a task in itself.

There is another argument the Faculty Senate is using. They say that since the seniors don't have to attend class for the last three weeks at the end of the semester, they miss out on a great deal of information. After all, what is three weeks compared to four or five years?

This University is not the "Harvard of the South," it is Texas A&M. We are a unique institution and we are proud. Let's keep it that way. Ags.

Scott Murray '85
(Editor's note: This letter was accompanied by 38 signatures.)

Houston, and the distance from Houston to Washington D.C.

After a little analysis it should be frighteningly evident that El Salvador is closer to Houston than Houston is to Washington.

The point I'm trying to make is that it is time to put an end to Communist expansion in this hemisphere. The U.S. has been pushed, prodded, threatened and humiliated from Vietnam to Iran, from Iran to Lebanon, from Lebanon to Central America.

This has to stop. NOW! The President realizes this.

President Reagan drew a line in Grenada. The people there rejoice! Grenada's neighbors rejoice! The only people that aren't happy (besides, of course, those who lost loved ones in fighting) are the Soviet Union, Cuba and a percentage of Congress and the free world.

For Russia and Cuba to object to the liberation of Grenada is absurd, just look at Afghanistan and Angola. For any member of our Congress or the free world to object is sad at best.

Now is the time to draw the line. Not Honduras, not Mexico. Central America is not Vietnam, it is our back door.

Our Congress and our people absolutely have to awaken from the Vietnam nightmare and open our eyes to the very real danger that creeps steadily towards us.

If we don't wake up sometime in the very near future we may very well be asking ourselves if the Texas border is a good place for the line to be drawn.

David R. Scarborough '84

End Soviet expansion Interviews try patience

Editor:
 I wish every member of Congress and every citizen of the United States would take just a moment to look at a map of the western hemisphere.

Then I wish the same people would measure the distance from El Salvador to

Editor:
 Perhaps it's better that I forget the name of the recently-graduated C.S. major who designed the new interview system for the Placement Center. Should the name come to me, I would hunt her

down and ask what heinous crime could have perpetrated that should leave us with such a system.

Returning from summer vacation, I stride over to Rudder Tower to attend the early interviews. I went to the orientation meeting where they explained the new system and wasn't phased by the person doing the explaining, answer many of our questions.

I read their literature, handed copies of my typed resume, and day got my pass number. Now ready to interview!

The first two interviewers examined my bid card (even filled in #2 pencil) and judiciously slid them their correct slots before the day.

Both schedules came out and neither. And both had open slots standing in two hour-long lines, aged to get signed up and asked hadn't appeared on the schedule.

She took down all the vital statistics said "You'll hear from us."

Several weeks went by and I had three more schedules, none of which got on and all of which appeared open slots.

Back to those lines again only to find I had been classified on "the college" as a junior (I am a graduate student) to worry, I was assured all is well.

The problem is, I'm out there in interviews, the last of the recruitment. I realize they're deluged up the 10th floor with students, but what about us?

I'm not going to be here for them to get the bugs worked out last year I got on the schedules.

Douglas V. ...

The Battalion

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Letters Policy

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed and show the address and telephone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials also are welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843, or phone (409) 843-2611.

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