

Editorial: Worst voter turnout in 72 years

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The abysmally low turnout in last week's midterm elections – the lowest in more than seven decades – was bad for Democrats, but it was even worse for democracy. In 43 states, less than half the eligible population bothered to vote, and no state broke 60 percent.

In the three largest states – California, Texas and New York – less than a third of the eligible population voted. New York's turnout was a shameful 28.8 percent, the fourth-lowest in the country, despite three statewide races (including the governor) and 27 House races.

Over all, the national turnout was 36.3 percent; only the 1942 federal election had a lower participation rate at 33.9 percent. The reasons are apathy, anger and frustration at the relentlessly negative tone of the campaigns.

Republicans ran a single-theme campaign of pure opposition to President Obama, and Democrats were too afraid of the backlash to put forward plans to revive the economy or to point out significant achievements of the last six years. Neither party gave voters an affirmative reason to show up at the polls.

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