the only one. Ballot proposals show up every election and each one is unique, with its own challenges and implications. With only 52 percent of the population voting, that means only half the population is even voicing their opinion toward the law that is going to govern 100 percent of the population.

There are many reasons citizens may choose not to vote. One could be that a person could not get time off work to go vote. Losing an entire day, or maybe even a half day of wages may be very difficult a sacrifice. Businesses don't normally give employees the day off on Election Day, as they do on Christmas or New Year's Day. Distance could also be a factor. Some districts are very narrow but long and have a small number of precincts. This could make getting to a voting station somewhat difficult. Factor in that not every voter has a personal mode of transportation or lives within walking distance from the voting station, and the act of voting becomes even more burdensome. Some people may not believe that they are adequately aware of what is going on currently to be comfortable voicing their opinion. They may not have the time to research each candidate or issue in enough depth to have a solid grasp how to vote. Still more citizens may feel completely disenfranchised by the entire process, that it doesn't matter whether they vote or not and life will continue, for better or worse. Maybe some think that not voting is an active way to protest how the government is functioning. They don't agree with current policies, so they will not participate in it. Apathy could also be a reason. Some people may just not care.

Ignorance can be another reason individuals may choose to avoid voting. If one has no idea of the significance and impact of an election, they would be less likely to vote. Each election, however, does have an impact on every individual's life; pharmacy is no different. Elected officials are in charge of setting and enforcing the policies that govern every aspect of social and professional life. Currently, there are bills in Michigan that address audits of pharmacies by Pharmacy Benefits Managers and insurance companies. This topic has significant impact on the pharmacy profession. These officials that have been elected need to examine the bills and decide if they are important enough to be given attention and a vote. If these officials know nothing more of pharmacy other than filling prescriptions, they would not realize the importance and impact pharmacists play in society and therefore would not be able to give the bills proper attention. This is only one current issue that elected officials are addressing. Initiatives may also appear on ballots. These can include a vote to change the law or vote to change funding. This can manifest in a request from a municipality to increase funding for a new community center, for instance. Some people may not realize that this increase may come from a property tax increase. Taxation is a very controversial topic, and it would seem most people would like to have a vote in deciding whether to have their taxes increased. Initiatives that change laws could be the proposal regarding stem cells from the 2008 election. Michiganders voted to allow stem cells to be used for research. Any able voter who abstained from

the vote decided that they did not want their opinion heard on this issue. Each ballot every year has different components that can affect society and professions in different ways. To abstain from voting is in essence deciding that one has no opinion in some of the most important parts of their life.

I have studied political science for five years and am near completion of my undergraduate degree. My first year of college was an election year. Incumbent President George W. Bush was facing challenger John Kerry, along with a list of forgettable third party candidates. My father went through the trouble of procuring me an absentee ballot form since I was away at school and would not be back in my home town for the election. I also did not change my voting district to where my university was located. The absentee ballot form sat on my desk in my dorm room untouched until the end of the semester. I had failed to vote. Did I have an elaborate reason why I didn't vote? No, I did not. Did I even manage to concoct a somewhat reasonable excuse for not voting? Nope, not that either. I just didn't care. There I was, a student at a public university that receives state money to operate by the elected offices I opted out of voicing my opinion on. I just couldn't muster the motivation to fill out a simple form to receive an even simpler form to participate in one of the actions that makes the United States of America one of the greatest nations on earth. Was I greatly affected by the results of the election? Not really, as far as I could tell. However, it wasn't until I became more aware of the political process that I began to understand exactly what not voting does.

Absentee ballots also bring about a counter to many excuses for not voting. Election Day is very hectic, and sometimes the means of transportation is unavailable. However, absentee ballots have become more accessible than ever. It is a great way to allow your voice to be heard from the comfort of your own home. Each time I have voted, it has been through an absentee ballot. The process is very simple. All one needs to do is go to their local form of government, which for me was my city clerk, and ask for an absentee ballot. They are available well before the election is to be held. Take your ballot home and fill it out. As long as you can provide a reasonable explanation for not being able to travel to your designated polling station, such as being out of town or disabled, your vote will be counted as equally as if you had voted in person on Election Day. Democracy is now more accessible than ever.

My second year in college, I had a professor who became one of the main reasons I chose to study political science. He was very cynical and sarcastic, not afraid to tell students when they were blatantly wrong, but at the same time encouraging them to rise to their potential. Each class period, he devoted the first ten minutes to discussion on any current politics or news happenings as brought up by students, unless a certain topic really amused him. During one of these sessions, the topic of voting was brought up, and he stated that he encouraged everyone to not vote. The class was stunned. A political science professor, someone who is supposed to sing praise to political involvement and action, is