# Chapter 17: Section 3- Influences on Voters

## FIVE MAJOR FACTORS INFLUENCE VOTERS’ DECISIONS

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| **Personal Background**                     | • Includes upbringing, family, age, occupation, and income level  
• Education, religion, and racial or ethnic heritage are other background factors that might influence a voter’s decision.  
• Many voters are cross-pressured, which means that elements in their backgrounds might have conflicting influences on their final decisions. |
| **Loyalty to a Political Party**             | • Voters with the strongest allegiance to a party often vote a straight-party ticket—they select only candidates from that party.  
• Weak party voters are more likely to switch their votes to the rival party from time to time.  
• The number of independent voters, those who belong to no party, has increased in recent years. |
| **Campaign Issues**                         | • Television and higher levels of education help modern voters to be more informed.  
• Issues with the greatest influence include Social Security, health care, taxes, education, affirmative action, abortion, gun rights, and the environment. |
| **The Voter’s Image of Candidate**          | • The way voters perceive issues is just as important as the issues themselves.  
• The image of the candidates in the voters’ minds is closely related to public perception of the issues.  
• Most voters want a president who appears to be trustworthy and strong. |
**Propaganda**

- Propaganda is information that is used to influence opinion.
- Propaganda is not necessarily untrue, but it is used to support a predetermined objective.
  - **Labeling:** name-calling, identifying candidate with a term
  - **Spin:** interpreting from a particular point of view
  - **Card Stacking:** only one side of facts presented
  - **Transfer:** patriotic/positive symbols associated w/
  - **Plain Folks:** ID with the common people
  - **Testimonial:** celebrity endorsements
  - **Bandwagon:** do it b/c everyone else is doing it

**Profile of Regular Voters**
- People who vote regularly tend to have positive attitudes toward citizenship and government.
- The more educated people are, the more likely they are to vote.
- Middle-aged citizens have the highest voter turnout rates.
- Voter regularity also increases with income level.

**Profile of Nonvoters**
- The percentage of voters going to the polls has declined since 1960.
- Some don’t vote because they do not meet state voting requirements
  - Citizenship, residency, and registration
    - Once registered, a person remains eligible to vote unless he or she dies, moves, or fails to vote for a certain number of years.

**Increasing voter turnout**
- Shifting election day from Tuesday to Sunday
  - Allow more people to vote without having to take time off from work.
- Some political experts have recommended a national registration system under which voters would not have to register again when they move.
  - More people would be registered even in our highly mobile society.
- Making it easier to vote in recent years has not significantly raised voter turnout.