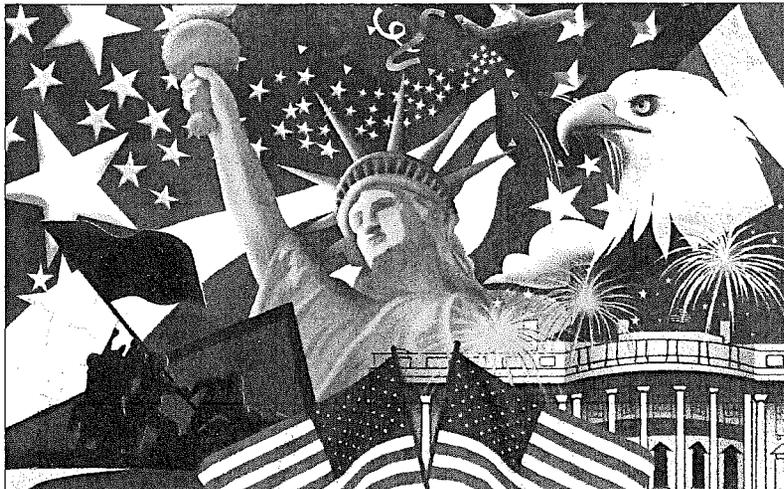


EVERY THOUGHT

By Claire D.

Every thought counts for something,
An opinion like a wave.
It all makes a difference in some small way.
The urgent freedom,
To be your own person,
Your duty as a citizen,
A right to be claimed
The wanting need,
To cherish one's rights,
Draws people to booths,
On a brisk Tuesday night.
The votes pour in,
People gather around,
Not one sound is uttered,
All breath withheld.
The new President is announced,
And every thought counted.



Why All American Citizens Should Vote

I just turned eighteen!
But a weird thing I have seen.
My friends think they can change this world's note,
Just by casting one stupid little vote,
It's not like it affects me,
Or that my vote can change anything...

Then I saw a little thing floating around my head,
It was a genie, and he said,
"I guess there is very little that you know,
Making there more I will have to show.
The new president will change your life,
You are eighteen now and you will have to sacrifice.
The new president could raise your taxes,
Or maybe he would give you free passes.
Your vote helps decide which one,
So hurry up and go get it done!"

But everyone votes so what's the big deal
It's no more special than petting a seal!

"Oh how so wrong you are,
Your knowledge on this does not run far!"
Said the genie floating to the map on the wall.
"The people here don't get to vote at all!
The kings and queens decide what's best,
Even when it's not in the subjects' best interest.
Speaking up could mean your end,
And debates would never begin,
Because the same family is always at large,
No one else could be in charge.
So be glad you can help pick who,
Will run our country four years though.
And...Hey wait,
This is such a disgrace,"

Sorry, I'm packing my tote,
After this I'm going to vote.

-Grace W.

A Vote for No Anchovies

An Essay about Why People Should Vote

By Katherine S

I sit, staring blankly at my computer, trying to form a good essay for why people should vote. I sit, and think, and stare blankly. This cycle goes on for a while, with the occasional getting up to get a glass of water. I think about the first presidential election, or Susan B. Anthony and women fighting for the opportunity to vote. But then, I stop my cycle, and get an idea. I think 'Now voting does not have to be as complicated as I am making it. Large vocabulary and a dull essay that I could write anytime don't necessarily define it in a good way.' And then, I notice that I vote all the time. It is in a very basic way, but it is still voting. Almost every night, my Mom asks "Katherine, what would you like for dinner?" or when I'm at an Italian Restaurant, my Step-Dad might ask "What do you want on a pizza?" Now, saying if you want pepperoni or if I don't want fish isn't really any different from the presidential election. All it really comes down to is having an opinion, and saying it. That's all that voting is, saying what you want or don't want. And if you don't vote or say what you want, you may end up with someone for President that you don't want or anchovies on your pizza. And nobody wants anchovies on their pizza.

So then, from my Pizza Voting Philosophy, I think of another idea. I think about myself, older, to when it comes time to vote. I imagine talking to my friends, about voting. And then, I think about if one of my friends doesn't want to vote, how would I convince them? So, I think about this idea, for a while, and I notice that it is harder to explain than you would think. Well, there is always the ideal "Well, I mean, umm, you have to.", but really, you don't. There are people who don't vote, and it isn't required. It is a personal choice, but in my opinion, I would vote. So, I think about this more, and I develop strong ideas, and form an argument. Then I have somewhat of a team, or side for this "debate" that has formed. The sides are simply, You Should Vote, and You Shouldn't Vote. I have reasons for both, but mainly why you should. So, with my two opposing sides ready, I go back to my image of me and my friends. Then, I use my ideas to imagine this argument and make it real. This is completely realistic, and could happen, so here it is, why you should vote.

Now the first thing that I imagined the Non-Voting side to propose is, "Well, one vote doesn't really matter." Oh, now that is definitely not true. I think back, to an article that I read in a History Book. It was about Henry Shoemaker, in 1842. Henry Shoemaker was a farm worker in Indiana who had personally promised that he would vote for one of the candidates for state representative, who was Madison Marsh, a Democrat. Shoemaker then remembered that he had forgotten to vote, so he quickly got on his horse and rode to the polling place. He then cast his vote, and found out that Madison Marsh won...by one vote. Now, at this time, state legislators elected U.S. senators, so in January of 1843 Marsh had been convinced to change his vote, electing Edward Hannegan (also a Democrat) to U.S. senate...by one vote. Then in 1846, the U.S. Senate was debating if they should or should not declare war with Mexico. Senator Hannegan was absent for the vote, and when he returned, cast his vote in favor of war. If Henry Shoemaker hadn't cast that one vote, there wouldn't have been a war with Mexico, which led to California becoming a part of the U.S. Shoemaker had no idea what he was causing with that one vote, and this proves that you should not assume that one vote won't make a difference.

My next point is that so many people fought for the opportunity and chance to vote, so you should appreciate that. Think about the Women's Suffrage Movement, there were so many women who fought for that right, and why should they have done all of that work for nothing? For all that history has shown, all the protests, all the movements, those should not have been done only for the future generations not to appreciate that or even use what they have set forth. Women, or Slaves, would have done anything for that right that you have, and it is not fair that you don't use it. As Elizabeth Cady Stanton said "The prolonged slavery of women is the darkest page in human history." I would just say to think about all the struggles and people who would have loved that right that you have the privilege to have.

Now, I think about other countries. These people do not have the privilege to vote, or many of the rights that we have. They don't even have a Democracy, or freedoms that are taken for granted where we live. In Saudi Arabia, women can't vote, or even drive. Also, in 23 countries around the world that have compulsory voting, including ten countries that enforce voting. This means you are required to vote, and if you don't, you could go to jail or be punished. Our life is so easy compared to others around the world. We take the privilege of voting for granted, and should think about the lives of others around the world.

This is in the opinion of many people, but some disagree. Many people believe that it is our duty to vote, and to be a good citizen you must vote. There is also the idea that if you don't vote, you can't complain. In other words, if you get anchovies on your pizza, but you did not say that you didn't want them, you cannot complain. These may be beliefs or opinions, and changes from person to person, but they do make sense. And they are good reasons.

So, we just need to learn to appreciate our rights and freedoms in this country. We take that for granted, but so many people worked so hard to make that, and so many people would give anything to be able to vote or have what you have. To not use that amazing privilege is not fair for those people, and you should think about that before deciding not to vote. Well, now we can see that one vote truly does count, that we should appreciate the right to vote, and that so many people worked for you to have that right. So, all American citizens need to vote, just so they don't end up with anchovies on their pizza.