

The Voters

By Allie P.

The United States of America,
The great democratic nation,
is a melting pot of religions, cultures and social classes.
Though we are all different, the one thing we share is the equal right to vote.

The poor woman born into poverty;
From dusk to dawn she works.
She has barely enough money for food and rent.
She votes to higher wages and government money well spent.

The elder who has lived through many conflicts,
And is struggling to make ends meet.
He worries about his grandchildren's future.
He votes for an improved social security system.

The new 18 year old who is finding her way,
Has to get ready for work and school.
So she can pay off her bills when she's done.
She votes for lower tuition rates because her life has only just begun.

The immigrant who gave up his country and moved to the U.S.A;
He wants to worship his religion freely.
He hopes the people will treat him like an equal.
He votes for someone who wants to keep religious freedoms.

The middle class woman who lives a good life,
And doesn't want to pay more for the things she needs.
She wants the government to find ways to balance the budget.
She votes for lower income taxes and affordable medical care.

The great thing about a democracy, and having equal rights to vote,
Is no matter if you're rich or poor,
Male or female, black or white,
Your vote carries as much power as everyone else's.

Why every American citizen needs to vote

By Bridget W

In 2009, an article from the Los Angeles Times reported that anyone who dared to vote in Afghanistan's national elections was threatened by the Taliban that their inked finger would be cut off. There were at least two reported incidents that this threat was carried through. Yet, even with that threat hanging over their heads, less than half of the country turned up to vote.

You would think that in America, where we don't have to worry about threats against voters, the voting booths would be packed and every eligible American would vote. Unfortunately, that isn't the current situation. With a little over half of the eligible Americans showing up to vote in major elections, it seems that voters don't realize that voting is not just a right, or a privilege, it is a responsibility that should be taken seriously. They don't seem to comprehend that our government is built upon hearing their voice and that every vote counts. If voters understood how important their vote is to the local, state and national governments, and to the issues that affect their daily lives, perhaps voter turnout would be much higher.

Voting is not just a right given by the Constitution, neither is it only a privilege, it is a responsibility to all eligible citizens. This responsibility does not just involve showing up to vote, it comprises being an informed voter. Studies have proven that some voters select the first candidate on the ballot – no matter who that person is or whether they had heard of them. With all of the important decisions that our elected officials will be making while in office, you owe it to yourself to research and select the candidate that would resolve issues the way that you would want them handled.

Voters can be inspired to vote if they knew that every vote counts. In fact, sometimes elections are decided on a few votes. John F. Kennedy would have lost the Presidential election to Richard Nixon in 1960 if one person from each voting place had voted differently. There were at least seven elections for state legislature alone that were decided by a single vote. It occurs more often in local elections where there are fewer voters. If the American public knew that their vote could be pivotal in an election, then the voter turnout would surely increase.

Our democracy is constructed for the people to give power to the elected officials through their vote. Voting is the way for anyone in the country, despite your income or level of education, to affect the way that your town, state or country is run. Your vote gives feedback on the level of funding that the schools will get, on tuition rates, on tolls, on sales, property and

state income taxes and other things that affect your daily life. Our elected officials respond to those who vote. It is your chance to be heard on issues that are important to you.

As Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting." We take this quote to heart and vote responsibly: for the better future of our country.

Why Every American Citizen Needs to Vote

By William F.

Growing up, I have often heard the story of how my mother carried me in her arms while she voted in the historic 2000 Bush-Gore Presidential Election. The results of that election came very close in the end, so it was important that she voted. Because of these events, I have always known the significance of voting. When I am 18 years old, I will be ready to vote for the first time, in the 2016 Presidential election. Voting is also important because as American citizens, it is our hard-earned right to vote. Finally, it is a good idea to vote because it is a way to get your voice heard and express the fact that you care about your future. Therefore, I believe that every American citizen of voting age should vote.

The 2000 Presidential election proved that every vote does matter. As the election night went on, it became obvious that Florida was the state that would decide the outcome of the election. Towards the end, it looked as if George W. Bush, the Republican candidate, had won, but by a narrow margin of about 300 votes. Al Gore, the Democratic candidate, requested hand recounts in multiple counties, but the recounted totals were still in favor of Bush. Gore contested this, but the election results were eventually settled in favor of Bush when the US Supreme Court overturned a lower court's ruling. However, the election was incredibly close, proving that every vote does count.

Another important reason to vote is that it is a unique right as an American citizen. Our country was founded as a democracy, allowing the citizens the power to choose their leaders. Initially, though, only white property-owning males were allowed to vote. Through the years, more and more groups of people gained the right to vote. African American citizens were granted suffrage after the Civil War, and women became eligible to vote in 1920. Many people worked and struggled for years to gain the right to vote. We can show them our appreciation and respect by voting. Plus, in 1971, the voting age was lowered from 21 to 18, so even more people can vote. As an American citizen, it is your hard-earned right to vote.

By voting, citizens can express their ideas and be heard. As is commonly said, you can't complain about the current government situation if you didn't vote. The power should rest with the many, not the few, so the more people take action and vote, the better the chance that their voices will be heard. When a person votes, or even registers to vote, his or her age and other factors are recorded. For example, if a large number of young people vote in an election, politicians and the government know that the younger generation cares about the future of the country. There are many important issues currently at hand, such as health care and education, and the only way to truly ensure your voice is heard and show that you care about your future is to vote.

Although I am only in Eighth Grade and too young to vote, I am still aware of how important it is. Sometimes the situation becomes so desperate that every vote counts, as it did in 2000. In the 2012 presidential election, it has been speculated that the state of Virginia might have the same impact as

Florida did then. As an American citizen, it is your right to vote, since that right has been fought for over hundreds of years. By voting, you let the country know that you care about its future. All in all, voting is in everyone's best interest, so I believe that every American citizen should vote.