

# Why Does Voting Matter?

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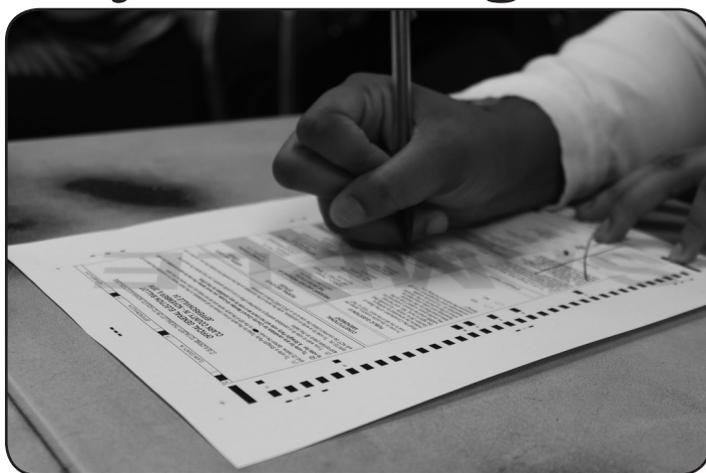


photo by Harrison Paul

Politics, delegates, campaign, president. Debates, candidates, liberty, elections. Being able to vote is a luxury, a freedom. So seize the opportunity and vote in the 2016 presidential election.

Here are 20 reasons why you should step up to the ballot and vote . . .

- Voting matters because you can voice your opinions, and you have the ability to act on those opinions.
- It's a responsibility of a citizen of the United States who is 18 years or older.
- You have a right other people do not have. Parts of the world can't even imagine being able to choose; take pride in voting.
- Your vote always counts...remember that.
- Don't let yourself regret not voting.
- You live in democracy, be thankful that it's not the opposite.
- Voting was a hard-earned right. Give respect to the people who fought for it.
- If you are old enough and simply choose not to, then you must be happy with either candidate, which means you cannot complain.
- On the other hand, if you do vote, you can complain all you want.
- Your vote may just be one mere vote, but so is everybody else's.

- There is no expertise in voting; vote for whom you agree with most.
- It's only two choices: two people with opposing and diverse opinions -- pick your cup of tea.
- There are many locations around here that you can vote, but make sure you research where your location is.
- You can vote in minutes during your free time on Election Day.
- Be a part of the other millions voting.
- Voting gives power to the people and states.
- If you do not know enough about the candidates, turn the TV onto the news, or listen to a debate for a few minutes. Or pull out your phone and read an article or two revolving around the election. Educate yourself.
- Just think: if voting didn't change anything, consider the things we wouldn't have today.
- Don't waste this opportunity.
- If you don't care to vote, vote anyway.

## Mission Statement:

*"The Jeffersonville High School newspaper, the Hyphen, is an open student forum for the exchange of ideas and opinions. The Hyphen will strive to publish fair, balanced and accurate news for the interest and importance to the student body."*

2016-17 Hyphen Staff

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## Staff Editorial

In a couple of days, the next president of the United States of America will be decided by voters all around the country. After votes are tallied, Americans will either have the oldest president elected, or the first woman president in history.

But not everyone in the United States has the right to say who they want to be their president.

The voting process is open for any U.S. citizen 18 years or older -- no one under that age can have an official say in who they want to run the country. We get it: you can't have younger children voting for the president because they wouldn't be educated yet on what makes a great candidate.

However high school is when you take your mandatory government class, and become more aware of politics in the United States.

Because of this, The Hyphen thinks that changing the voting age limit to 16 would be the best way to improve the quality of the voting system in the United States.

In 2012, it was stated by The Bipartisan Policy Center that 57.5-percent of eligible voters did actually vote for the next president. That's a decline from 2008, where 61.6-percent people voted for Barack Obama to take office.

There's an issue with getting people to vote nowadays, but if the age limit was lowered, there would be a greater turnout at the polls. It's understandable that some people, regardless of age, just don't care who wins the election, but there are teenagers that are extremely passionate about the presidential candidates.

However their age doesn't allow them to vote for who they believe should be in the Oval Office.

Some people might think that at the age of 16, teenagers wouldn't be smart enough to take the election seriously because every vote does count. However, according to The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. § 1971(c)) it states that "any person who has not been adjudged an incompetent and who has completed the sixth grade in ... any state or territory ... where instruction is carried on predominantly in the English language, possesses sufficient literacy, comprehension, and intelligence to vote in any election."

So, according to this Act, if a sixth-grader (whose age is around 11 or 12 years) is smart enough to vote, why can't the age limit decrease to at least 16? At the age of 16, most teenagers are beginning their first jobs. With those jobs, they are receiving a paycheck, as well as paying taxes just like every other adult. Most teenagers are getting their license to drive at that age. You can be charged with a crime and receive the same punishment as someone who is 18 or above, despite being two years younger.

Despite only being 16, you are receiving the same rights and consequences as a "legal adult". So why can't you vote as well?