

The Importance of Lowering the Voting Age

Voting should not be considered a privilege but rather a right. By not allowing teens to vote, we are blocking one's rights. Lowering the voting age will not only give America's people more rights but also benefit individual towns as well as Massachusetts as a whole. Lowering the voting age will provide higher voter turnout, create civic responsibility, help young adults feel a stronger connection with voting, and give representation to those who pay taxes.

Towns are in need of voters. People get excited to vote for president, senator, or governor but there is very little talk about town elections. In 2018, there was a 60.17% voter turnout for state elections. In Brookline, my town, only an average of 16% of adults vote in town elections. In many towns, the percentage is even lower. These low numbers show that the majority in these towns are not being represented. Towns need voters and teens are ready to vote. I conducted an anonymous survey of over 100 students under the age of 18 from a variety of towns across Massachusetts. 84% of the surveyed teens said they would be interested in voting. This higher percentage shows how eager teens are to have a voice in politics and how much they would increase voter turnout.

By lowering the voting age, teens will gain a sense of civic responsibility and build a voting habit. When we vote in town elections we vote for things such as our town meeting members, public school funding, and other specific town issues. With these smaller elections, the impact of our vote can be more easily seen; this teaches the importance of voting. It also helps teens build a voting habit. If teens start voting when they are younger, it will become a routine that continues into adult life.

Teens will build a deeper connection with voting if they start when they are younger. So many deep milestones are met in a person's hometown that carry meaning throughout their life. By allowing someone to cast their first vote in their hometown, voting will have stronger meaning to that person. It is much easier for voters and politicians to connect on a local level. Because of this, teens can feel a stronger connection with whom they are voting for. If we do not lower the voting age, many will have their first opportunity to vote in college. College is stressful enough and many students would not want to start voting then-- in a town they have no connection to.

Many teens have jobs and therefore pay taxes. The government will take a teen's money, but not allow them to vote. This is taxation without representation. By not allowing them to vote, the government is taking away their voice about how their money is used. This goes against fundamental American principles.

While some might say that teens are too immature to vote, the government does not see them as such. If the government sees 16 year olds as old enough to get married, to make their own medical decisions, and to drive a car, they should be seen as old enough to vote. Teens are trusted with the lives of themselves and others in these ways and should be trusted to do the same with voting.

Lowering the voting age will be beneficial for the state. It will generate higher voter turnout, create civic responsibility, and help young adults feel more connected with voting. Most importantly, it will advocate for the idea that America was founded upon: no taxation without representation.

