

What's News Noelle?

How you can make a difference without voting



Photo by Jemah Klein

Noelle Harff, Associate Editor

According to Forbes magazine, the US presidency is the most powerful position in the world. If you are really reaching for the stars, put that job on your goal-setting section of Naviance, or better yet, get educated on who you want for president in 2020.

Currently, eligible voters under the age of 29 show up to the polls with a voter turn out of only 46.6%, according to the US Census 2016. The top responses on why young people don't vote is because they were "not interested", "too busy", or just "didn't like the candidates", according to Youth Changing the World.

Too busy to vote? Not interested in who controls how much you pay in taxes, who your doctor is, and who defines the culture of an entire population?

Young people aren't civically engaged when they are 16 and the numbers show that they aren't into their late twenties either. I know this is a high school newspaper and many of the readers are under voting age, but as a U.S. citizen, you have a responsibility to use your voice.

"Not voting is just not American," said Deborah Lynch, AP US History teacher. In America, "we have the luxury of ignorance, our system is so strong.

We have had good leaders that have brought stability." Still, America suffers from polarization and a fear of constructive conversation. It is common to hear complaints and see the government in gridlock. No one is surprised to hear about racial bias in the judicial system or big business buying legislation. Unfortunately, as a country we let this corruption be the status quo through the lack of engagement.

“If we want this to be a democracy, we have to take responsibility over it.
—Emily Muellenberg

If you made it this far in a political column that you didn't have to read, thank you. You are a part of the solution, and you can start during the upcoming election, even if you can't yet vote. "Pick an issue or candidate and join a group that works for the things you believe in,"

said Emily Muellenberg, AP Government teacher. "You can help with public information campaigns, post on Instagram, and campaign without voting. You may not be able to vote, but if you knock on five doors and three people vote, that's more than just you voting. You triple your impact."

Your voice is necessary in the world's most influential election. Use it: talk about what you don't like, talk about what you do. Talk to your parents and representatives. Talk in person and talk a lot. Political discourse is important; democracy functions off of disagreement, as long as people continue to talk toward solutions. Even if you can't vote, you have a responsibility to use your voice. "It is a privilege to be an American citizen, and with privilege comes responsibility," said Lynch.

Living in a nation where voice is given a platform is powerful, but only if we as citizens utilize that power. "If we want this to be a democracy, we have to take responsibility over it," said Muellenberg. That means civil engagement on all fronts. So, whether you're for Biden, Bernie, or want another year on the Trump train, use your voice and get educated in this election.

LEADERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL RACE, AS OF SEPT. 27

JOE BIDEN



26%

Polling average

ELIZABETH WARREN



20%

Polling average

BERNIE SANDERS



16%

Polling average

Infographic by Madeline Klayer
Photos courtesy of Wikimedia Commons
Source: New York Times