



Assignment

Determine a Central Idea from Informational Text

Topic: Lowering the Voting Age

Your Assignment:

Read the passage. Then answer the question.

Your Vote May Count Sooner Than You Think!

By Olivia Ann

Democracy in the United States of America is a system of government that is based on regular people having in a say in what happens in their lives by electing people to Congress to represent them. In this model of government, every citizen of legal age can vote.

Currently, the federal voting age is 18 years old. That means that in order to vote in elections such as those for The President, a person must be registered to vote and be 18 years old. Some states allow younger people to vote in state elections.

Recently, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, a Democrat from Massachusetts, proposed lowering the voting age to 16 years old. Although it did not get many votes, the idea is appealing to many people.

Some people argue that 16 and 17 year olds should be able to vote because nearly 2 million of them are part of the American work force, and they pay taxes. It is argued since they have jobs and must give a portion of what they earn to the government that they should have the right to have a say in how their money is used.

Others argue that the youth in the United States are taking ownership of their futures by being civically involved at younger ages. For example, there are many youth activists that

fight for gun control. David Hogg, a former Marjory Stoneman Douglas student, was only 17 years old when he became involved in fighting for gun control after tragedy struck his school during his senior year. Teenagers are getting involved and want their opinions taken seriously when it comes to issues that will directly affect their futures.

Additionally, some argue that “16” is a magic age in the United States. In many states, it is the age of being able to get a driver’s license, work hour limitations are lifted, and those employed will have to pay taxes. If 16 and 17 year olds can do all of those things, what is the objection to allowing them to cast a vote?

Research has shown that a person’s brain is not fully developed until approximately the age of 25. Scientists have also determined that teenagers’ brains do not think the same way as older adults’. For some, the maturity level of 16 and 17 year olds makes them question the idea of allowing this population to vote in federal elections.

The voting age was lowered in the past. In 1970, Senator Ted Kennedy, also a Democrat from Massachusetts, was successful in getting the age changed from 21 to 18. He argued that it was wrong that you could be drafted to serve in the Vietnam War but you weren’t considered old enough or mature enough to cast a vote. He argued that if you are old enough to fight in a war, you should be considered old enough to vote.

Ted Kennedy’s argument was compelling. The age was changed. It’s been 49 years since that occurred. For now lowering it again is just an idea that does not have significant momentum. Since there were not enough votes in March 2019 to move the legislation forward, for now the voting age remains 18.

Answer this question:

Stem Starters:

You may want to consider starting your response using one of these stems. You do not have to do so, but they are here to help you if you need them.

The author’s central idea is...

The central idea is...

Your Response:
