

The Voting Age Should Be Eighteen

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ONE of the most widely debated subjects in America today is whether or not the voting age should be lowered to eighteen. President Eisenhower stated in his State of the Union address of 1954 that he thought it was necessary to lower the suffrage age to eighteen. I agree wholeheartedly with the President on this subject. It is my conviction that if a person is old enough to lay down his life for his country, he should have the privilege of voting for the person who he thinks will do the best job in office.

The eighteen-year-old has many other responsibilities; why not that of voting? The law enables the age group of eighteen to twenty-one to marry and raise a family. Therefore, why should this group not be able to elect the officials who pass the laws that their children will have to obey? The eighteen-year-old has the privilege of driving his automobile on American highways. He pays taxes which are spent for roads, street repairs, and super-highways. Why should he not have the right to vote for the federal, state, and local governments which control the spending of this money? This is taxation without representation, which is against our American principles.

Opponents of this point of view say that the eighteen-year-old does not have the education to prepare him for voting. However, the fact is that this age group has a far better educational program than did the person of equal age one hundred sixty-seven years ago when the Constitution was written.

Today, the teenager has the advantage of watching the political parties present their views on television. He has the opportunity to read the facts in newspapers and magazines, just as the older individual does.

Moreover, the younger vote would balance the political power of older voters. Statistics show us that in 1857, 4.1 per cent of the American population eligible for voting was sixty years of age or older; and it is predicted that in 1960, 13 per cent of the population, or more, will be over sixty. It is necessary that we have more younger voters so that the power of government will be distributed between the young and the old. If this balance occurs, the opinions of both will be heard, so that a greater number of people will be served by the government.

In summary, it is my opinion that the eighteen-year-old should have the power to vote because he has the same responsibilities, the same education, and the same obligation to the government as the person who is now of voting age.