

Title: Eclectic Election
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Essay:

With so much natural beauty and wonder surrounding the Hawaiian Islands, it's an enigma to many "Baby Busters" as to why the yearning youth of the islands choose to stay inside and watch pixels on a fabricated screen. However, the mystery is no more than a Scooby Doo narrative to the teens who are far more concerned with the state of our country than paradise around us. The heated debates and frustratingly close statistics that play out like a Shakespearean drama are all part of what teens in Hawaii are most passionate about: the 2016 presidential election.

"Make America Great Again", "Feel the Bern", and "Hillary for America" have become almost as ingrained in our lives as popular music and nursery rhymes. Teenagers hardly old enough to know what they want to do with their lives know that the results of this election and the repercussions of not voting could affect their future's tremendously. This election is more important to current millennials than past elections because America, and Hawaii to a large degree, are in an extremely moldable and variable state. The iceberg could tip either way depending on who takes charge of the country. Some people argue that teens have no right to vote because they have not been affected by the repercussions of the last elections. However, the recession at the end of the last decade, and economic slump that followed, had a direct and significant impact on many teens in Hawaii. Furthermore, the fight for gender, race, and sexual equality have never before affected teens in such a way. The decisions regarding same sex marriage and transgender rights in the recent past have been groundbreaking and created a huge precedent and foundation for further legislation. Teens are gaining more rights and privilege than any other generation in the past, and they want to preserve them. In short, every issue that the candidates must face and deal with should they become president are issues that teens must answer to and deal with; that's why we care.

In school, it has never been uncommon for students to discuss politics in Social Studies and History classes. These days, it's not uncommon for students to discuss them electively in their free time. The lunch room talk has moved away from "who's her boyfriend" to "what is her stance on foreign policy". I think that one reason teens are so much more involved in the democratic process this year in particular is that social media gives us the ability to discuss the

issues like never before. Not only do we talk about current events at school, but we can also talk about them at home and immediately voice our ideas to the rest of the world. This open dialogue is not only attractive to teens who want to have their voices heard, but also to those of us who want to learn more and see other people's point of view.

It's hard to not care about your future. Fixing the injustices in the past to improve the future is no new concept, but it is extremely new for teens to be joining in. Our generation cares because we want a fair and equal future. We don't want a world where a single mom struggles to support her child because the minimum wage is only eight dollars. We don't want a world where the top one percent of the country owns ninety-nine percent of the country's wealth. I think this interest in the election, and in politics more generally, marks a huge turning point in American and teen culture. We're showing that we care, and that we want to make a difference. More 18 and 19 year olds have voted in this election than any election ever before. The statistics show that there is no other current event that teens are more passionate about.

I'm proud to be part of a generation that cares about our future more than our past. Seeing my peers so educated and involved in this political revolution is amazing. I think overall it's less important who each individual votes for but more important that they are voting in the first place. Instead of being complacent and watching the "adults" continue to make decisions for us, teens in Hawaii are taking the future into their own hands; and we're not afraid to get them dirty.