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Should the Legal Voting Age be Lowered to 16?

When the US constitution was initially ratified, no age of voting was decided upon. However, at the time, any 21-year-old white Christian male that owned property was an eligible voter. These conditions of voting more or less remained the same until the African slaves and given the right to vote in the 18th amendment and the 19th amendment giving women the right to do the same. However, it was during the Vietnam war that any significant changes were made to the voting age for federal elections. Their argument made sense really. In their opinion, if 18-year-olds could go to war and fight for their country, they could also have a say in the matter of the state and decide who their next representative should be (Fish).

At present, following the Parkland shootings, the active gun violence across the country and police brutality is making headlines across the nation. At this time, teenagers across the company are campaigning against these atrocities that are affecting them and their peers. These teen activists, in an effort to take matters into their own hands, are imploring that the congress to reduce the present voting age to 16 years (Gershon). While a number of segments in society are in favor of this campaign, called “Vote16”, there are other segments in society are against the notion of 16-year-olds casting the votes. In their opinion, these individuals are just too young to comprehend the gravity of the responsibility accompanied with a vote. This segment of society states that while 16-year-olds do have the ability to solve difficult problems and are more informed about the current issues when compared to more adults, they still not cognitively developed enough to make an informed decision. According to research, it has been observed that teenagers, especially 16 and 17-year-olds tend to be emotionally driven. They are impulsive at best and this impulsivity can cause them to make irrational decisions (Icenogle et al.).

In conclusion, while it is true that that 16-years-olds are part of the society, and they need to have their voices heard, there is a very small percentage of 16 and 17-year-olds that are politically aware to make an informed and conscious deduction regarding the future of their country. Despite the evidence and the arguments in favor of the idea, the voting age should not be reduced to 16, especially in the case of federal elections.

Works Cited

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