

**Statement
For
*The Importance of Voting***

As November 8th draws nearer, the talk of politics, character, morals, the candidates, and the election in general comes to a culmination. This Election Day may seem like any other day out of the year for those who decide to turn their heads away from the often messy and turbulent world of politics and dismiss the importance of their vote. However, the average American might not realize that the ballot they choose to cast, or not cast, has a history and an impact that exceeds general expectations. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is often quoted as saying, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

America is credited as being a great melting pot of influences, individuals, ideas, and customs. It is in this regard that it only seems fitting that the United States be governed by a representative democracy, one in which elected representatives are chosen by the citizens to be stewards of the people and decision makers for what best serves the population. Representatives have to be accountable to those who initiate their power, but this cannot be done without the approval of the people.

When it comes to casting your ballot on November 8th, you as an individual must remember that you represent a unique set of influences and experiences, which dictate your needs and desires. No one can better express the unique needs and vision you embody than yourself. Your decision on the ballot is a representation of what you value and what you hope to see accomplished. It is only rational to assume that a college student wants to voice his or her opinion and choice of candidate when it comes to issues such as student loan rates, education standards, and admission policies. Even more so, college students offer a unique opinion because the next four years of their lives might include taking a job, purchasing a house, starting their own business, starting a family, or reinvesting in further education. Can an individual really take the chance of leaving such crucial decisions to the certain few who take the initiative to vote? I am inclined to believe that those who fought and sacrificed to protect a person’s right to vote would answer with a resounding “no.”

In 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led a march across the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma, Alabama for voting rights, and those who marched paid the price of being beaten by state troopers. Until just the other day, women receiving the right to vote was a more recent event than the Chicago Cubs winning the World Series. Yet in 2012, only 57.5% of the people who were of the age to vote casted a ballot for the presidential race, and only 71.92% of those who are actually registered to vote actually did. It goes almost without saying that the rigors endured by these countless individuals and minorities should not go without recognition, and the freedoms they made more accessible should never be taken lightly.

The reason that voting is considered a civic duty is that it better represents the true public identity of America and it reaffirms who “We the People” are. Americans are entrusted with this great responsibility because we fought for it, and it is necessary to uphold the freedoms that define us as a nation. Without it, we lose the governing voice instated by the voters. So, this Election Day, I wish to remind you that the winds of change will never cease to blow, but we, the voters, are those who direct where it goes.