"THAT WE HAVE THE VOTE MEANS NOTHING. THAT WE USE IT IN THE RIGHT WAY MEANS EVERYTHING."

- LOU HENRY HOOVER

REPRESENTATION

Your vote counts. Do you believe that?

Perhaps you feel like your vote won't make a difference. You, and a growing number of people, feel that way about this upcoming election for a reason. The president and vice president are not elected directly by the people because when it comes to presidential elections, only electoral votes count.

On the United States Electoral College's website, even they admit, "There is no Constitutional provision or Federal law that requires Electors to vote according to the results of the popular vote in their states." Nothing assures you that your vote matters, at least nationwide.

But your vote definitely counts. Ironically, the majority only tune into politics every four years to debate who will be the next president.

actual definition: "A government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections," as stated in the Merriam-Webster dictionary. Do you believe the government represents you?

Take a long, hard look at Columbus. You'll see the signs everywhere saying, "Thaw the Freeze," and "Keep the Freeze." I know it's hard to pay attention to civil politicians, but their names are plastered all over yards: Nathan Deal, Greg Duke, Jim Barksdale, etc. What about voting yes or no to Georgia schools staying local with the Georgia Authorization of the State Government to Intervene in Failing Local Schools, Amendment 1? That's quite the mouthful, and every word affects you. If you are not voting

Politics branch off into every direction, but citizens are at its roots. Start there. To change a country, you must first change the towns, the cities, the states. Change the people. Don't tell me, "People don't change." You are not the same person you were a year ago, months ago, or even a few days ago. The same is true for the United States of America. Change happens every day. Make sure it's the change you want to see in the world with your vote.

Here's the twist: if you don't understand what you're voting for, don't vote

"But Ashton, you just spent five paragraphs telling me the importance of voting!" If you refuse to immerse yourself in policies and politics, I cannot condone you deciding the fate of those laws and regulations. Your vote counts, yes, but is it an informed decision? Check your sources. Check again. You have the whole internet at your disposal. Don't waste that on kitten videos. (Okay, waste some time on that. They're adorable). We are the most educated generation in history. Make an educated vote.

Local elections take place every year and, every year, you are essential to deciding the outcome. If voter turnout didn't matter why does your absence have impact? Here we have millennials (yes, millennials) as the largest population eligible to vote. You get to decide how tax money is spent, how political campaigns are funded, whether marijuana is legalized, and so much more. Don that sticker saying, "I'm a Georgia Voter." Your voice counts: be vocal and vote local.

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Wingnuts and asses have painted social media in red, white and blue. Even websites like Facebook asked, "Are you registered to vote?" If only everyone were that passionate about the single area where one individual makes all the difference: local politics.

If almost half of eligible voters aren't voting, do we still have a democracy? What about when voting is compulsory? Whichever way you define democracy, let's credit its

locally, is Columbus—is Georgia, representing you?

I'm not shaming you for choosing not to vote, because that is your right, your freedom, your choice. That being said, when you don't vote, what are you choosing? Misrepresentation. In order for the government to be a reflection of the people, everyone eligible needs to vote. If you are discontent with modern America, change it.

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