Aaron Miller: We Need Youth to Care [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/aaron-miller/we-nee...](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/aaron-miller/we-nee)

 **PLEASE READ THE ARTICLE AND WRITE A PARAGRAPH BASED ON THE QUESTIONS AT THE END.**

**We Need Youth to Care**

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*Aaron is a member of the Junior State of America (JSA), a student-run political awareness organization for high school students.*

American youth, the demographic most important to America's future, are often excluded from political processes and omitted from election ballots in just about every way. It is my mission as a Junior Statesman and a high school student to break this substandard negative trend, which tarnishes American democracy, by encouraging youth to become more politically active.

America's voting age requirement is 18. As a result, teenagers often feel disenfranchised by the political system, turning away from political involvement and civic engagement. Unable to participate in the political system, shut out from the democratic process, teenagers today are just opting out, neglecting current events until they're older and can "actually make a difference," which results in the voice of young Americans being neglected.

Only 46 percent of citizens below the age of 30 voted in the last presidential election, according to the Census Bureau. Early engagement in politics and involvement in current events for young Americans would promote greater participation in elections once these young Americans do turn 18, as they'd have stronger political opinion and better understand the importance of voting -- ensuring that we have increased voter turnout and representation.

Democracy can only fulfill its entire purpose when each citizen assumes an equal role in setting the priorities of government. Therefore, although the youth cannot vote, they must attain equal representation through participation in other aspects of the political process.

Young constituents can be politically active by reaching out to their representatives and expressing their assessments of the government's agenda, a course of action whose influence far transcends a single vote.

As the 2012 presidential election approaches, now is the best time for students to do so. America is at a pivotal point in its history, withdrawing from a severe economic downturn, facing contentious social issues and more. This presents an ideal opportunity for young constituents to become involved in the political sphere and influence the government's current agenda, which will heavily impact the future of American society.

Young citizens must begin to fulfill their duties as Americans by deciphering and advocating on behalf of their own political stances. When the American youth does break its substandard rate of involvement in the political process, it will not only gain better representation for its own demographic, but also advance the nation as a whole.

1. Some of you are eligible to vote this year, and the rest of You will be eligible to vote in the next presidential election after this year’s. Has that increased your awareness or interest in politics? Why or why not?
2. Do you think teens should have a voice in the democratic process? Why or why not, and if so, how?
3. What issues are most important to you in this year’s election? Why?
4. What issues do you see as being important to you four years from now?
5. Which presidential candidate – Obama or Romney – do you think is best suited to take care of the issues that most interest you in this election? Why?

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