

## **Why It Is Important to Vote and What Voting Means to Me** *Essay by Briar Cary, September 2020*

The passing of the 19th amendment 100 years ago was a huge leap towards voter equality, but first I must address that even after the 19th amendment was passed there were still millions of people unable to vote in the United States. Until the 1965 Voting Rights Act, there were many barriers that women of color had to navigate before they could freely exercise their right to vote. So although the passing of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment was a huge achievement for many, it would be inconsiderate of me to celebrate the successes of the women who gained the right to vote while ignoring the fact that many women still had to face intense hardships.

In terms of my personal relationship to voting, I am very excited for the upcoming election. I channel my excitement by making sure to do extensive research on the candidates before I make my choice. This is because, to me, voting is the action of wielding the power that education supplies. What I mean by this, is that a person's education, life experiences, and relationships help to teach them where their interests and morals lie. Through this learning, a person forms their own distinctive perspective that allows them to make informed decisions on what they think will be best for themselves and the people that they care about. So, once they are educated, they can wield their knowledge by voting in the way that they decide is the most beneficial.

As history shows, the people fighting for voting equality certainly thought that voting was important enough to protest for, and I completely agree. The United States is home to a diverse collective of people that hold a wide range of social, political, and economic statuses. Despite these differences, all votes are held at equal value. I cherish this fact because this provides the unique opportunity for everyone's voices to be heard equally. The reason that I believe that it is important to vote is because every person in this country has lived a unique life that has led them to gain their own personal perspective on what will help our country progress in the best direction.

Everyone's voices deserve to be heard so that we can work to amend the challenges that each part of our diverse population faces. With votes that speak for a variety of voices, the U.S. can be led closer to becoming a safer and more accommodating environment for everyone to live in.

In consideration of the history of the United States, voting equality has not been a reality for very long. Our predecessors had to put endless effort and passion into securing voting equality because they saw the major impact that voting can have on the quality of life for residents of our country. Therefore, I urge everyone to vote in order to ensure that your innate power does not go to waste.