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Synthesis Essay

Next Generation: The Impact Through the Power of the Youth

The age of maturity has continuously been debated throughout our society. What is the age at which we can call children adults? How can we determine the average age that children's voices are to be interpreted as "influential" and matter in the society? This has been an ongoing debate that meets the law when discussing age of maturity. With the age of voting, drinking, driving, and making other life-changing decisions in question, people are constantly ramifying our laws and debating whether or not the children are mature enough to make influential decisions. This is extremely important because of the necessity to mature our youth in today's generation. Kids are exposed to more nowadays, and if we do not mature them, they will be unexperienced in situations that they are going to face whether we like it or not. The implications with maturing our children early on is that we are scared of taking away their sacred childhood. Without exposing them to adult situations too early on, they will be able to experience what a normal child could. The best possible outcome for our situation as a society is to allow our children to have as much as a childhood experience that they can, while also educating them about the future and maturing them to the point that they can have a voice of their own. Young adults should have as much power as they desire to influence and create political change because they are the future and should pave the pathway that they desire.

Because young adults provide a particular insight to the world that many adults are unable to view on their own, their voice should matter as much as any other adult in the United

States. Adults tend to have similar weighing options when compared to teenagers. They do not take into consideration the same things that teenagers would. For example, adults after the Parkland shooting were extremely concerned about sending their kids to school knowing that there could be active shooters waiting to attack their children at any moment. This is an extremely important thought, but young adults tend to have a more straightforward thought considering they were the actual ones who experienced the terror of the shooting. The teenagers are thinking about the anxiety that is now induced inside of them when sitting in their classroom, the academic experience without their fellow classmates, and the difference in their high school experience overall after the trauma that they have experienced. Not to say that no adults have taken into consideration at all, as I am sure they have. But, many adults tend to focus on their child and the safety of their physical being alone. The children who are the ones attending the school and who have to live with the trauma are able to provide an insight that adults are unable to because of their emotional attachment. Children think about the school, the environment, and potential future, while parents are concerned first and foremost with their child. Source A discusses the platform that children have because of their age when it says, "Twitter had been their biggest platform, but they were pumping out clever, shareable content that could be customized to Twitter, Instagram, or Snapchat, and they were prepping a YouTube launch. That's where our generation lives," (Cullen). These young adults are most accustomed to the websites that other young adults are using and can therefore portray their message a lot easier to the new generations. Without these platforms, their message would not get across to other young adults as easily. Adults cannot connect as easily with children as other children can. Because of their ability to connect with others their age, they provide an easy accessible platform. Also, source G talks about the potential input that children can provide as, "Engage all people under 18

as allies in the development and sustainability of new programs and policies – this includes giving feedback on current projects or developing new social programs.” They explicitly say that children can give new feedback on their end of the stick in order to portray their feelings and their potential wants. This supports children playing an important role in societal decisions and political change because it directly says that the young adults should be partnered with political figures in order to promote the change that they need and not be viewed as “uneducated”. How can you tell me that someone who sat on the ground sobbing, watching their own teacher being killed in front of their very own eyes be “uneducated” on the need for gun control in their society? These young adults have a whole new insight and have all of these creative thoughts about possible change and for adults to simply deem them as “too young” to know about the reality of the issues is incredibly stupid. I would not normally call any adult’s actions stupid out of basic respect, but the disrespect that some adults are giving to these survivors is simply appalling. They label them as a child and throw away all of their potential solutions. Most of these young adults are fifteen years old and older, so their thoughts are just as important as any adult’s. Source D shows the factual numbers of the “March for Our Lives” movement compared to other marches. This march approximately had 800,000 attendees, which is the most people attending a march with an exception to “The Million Man March” (although the approximation of people in attendance of that march was anywhere from 400,000 to one million so the actual number is extremely inaccurate). This march exceeded the “Inaugural Women’s March” and “The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom” by hundreds of thousands. The March for Our Lives has one thing different than all of these marches though; it was created, planned, and executed through children of the United States, and it just so happens to be one of the greatest attended marches ever. That is definitely not a coincidence in my book. Adults have to

sympathize and empathize with children because they once were a child. Many have children. They see and deal with children every day. They want to protect America's children. When children are willing to spend their days in the boiling sun walking for hours to promote social change, who are we to stop them? Who are we to deem them as "uneducated"? They have proved they are able to put their thoughts into action and because of this living proof, we have seen that young adults are clearly able to provide us with an insight that we otherwise would have not seen with just a pool of adults.

The young adults who were in attendance of the Parkland shooting have experienced things that no random person is able to simulate, and therefore should allow them to have the voice that they choose to have in societal and political change. I touched on this in my previous paragraph, but nobody can put themselves in the victim's shoes in this scenario. Sure, everyone has experienced losing a dollar or spilling their drink on the ground, but the trauma that comes along with watching your own classmates and teachers die right before you is quite simply put, incomparable (unless of course that drink was the only drink left on planet Earth and we mysteriously ran out of every liquid ever) (kidding, please do not consider me to be an insensitive idiot). Back to my point though, that because they are the ones who actually felt the terror and trauma that comes along with a shooting, they should be the ones to call for change in this genre. If you wouldn't allow a man to tell you what it feels like to be pregnant, why would you allow someone who hasn't experienced a school shooting to tell you the feeling that runs through your body in the moment? Source B directly talks about how people in the civil rights movement took their pain to provoke change by saying, "Fiercely independent, the group maintained organized efforts on countless fronts of change, enduring physical violence and state repression along the way." This group they refer to is a student group formed in a college to stop

the violence in racial acts. This is also a group of children who experienced major trauma and are foregoing change after being pushed by the violence that they have endured. Young adults should be able to promote political change because they have been the target group of many societal issues in our past. This quote proves that children were once again a target because of the segregation in schools that occurred and then the violence that followed. It is simply logical to say that because a target group experienced trauma, they should be allowed to promote change in their area of issues. Experience comes with no age, as many are able to remember any type of traumatic situation that they endure. You do not have to have a college degree to state, "I was sitting on the ground watching my friends being killed," and with that comes the terror that follows. You do not need to be highly educated to understand that the man that killed these children had mental issues and should not have owned a gun. The reason that people think children should not be involved in politics is because they claim they are not mature. Sometimes in life, we do not have an option to mature. We see things and experience things that force us to grow up and find an understanding of the real world and this is one of those situations. As soon as the shooter pulled the trigger on children in a school, those children grew up in that second. Because of their personal experience, they are more than qualified to have the power to promote change in society.

Children are the future of America; they should determine their future and their destiny accordingly. If you want something, you go get it, as we've always been told, so the fact of the matter is that children are trying to change society for the future generations of children. They are the ones who have to live on this Earth a lot longer than the adults have left, which means they have to make the ramifications necessary to create an environment in the United States that they want to live in when they are older. Not to mention that many of them will also have

children one day, and if they are able to change laws and gun rights now, then maybe their children won't have to experience the same suffering that they did. Source F talks about the feeling one person in a minority group feels when being compared to the children in Parkland saying, "For us it's forever, it has been forever." They were asked about the experience of seeing people being killed by guns and they described their loss as hope as "it is forever". Hearing a young adult thinking there is no chance to gain gun control throughout our country is extremely sad. Knowing that they are the one that has to live a life of seeing people in their minority group being killed continuously over their life span is depressing and reading the tone of this person's voice in this article, you can tell the depression that overwhelms them when talking about the matter. If children today could potentially solve the future's issues by proposing their possible solutions for the long run, why would we deny them that right? If they could change gun laws now, many people's lives in the future could be saved by preventative measures. But without trying, we will certainly never really know. Source G also mentions the benefit of children being politically active in these situations by saying, "Give youth and young people a greater stake in society- this increases the likelihood that they will be civically active as adults." If we were to take away their political voices now, the chance of them supporting the fight for political change later in life is lessened greatly. We cannot betray their wishes of being active now, because if we deny those rights, then as adults they will want nothing to do with our government and politics. Speaking hypothetically, if we denied them the right to change now and then they do not participate in change as adults, where would we stand in our government? We are run by the people, for the people and we need citizen participation to help keep this motto alive. Source A speaks about why the vision that young adults had for the "March for Our Lives" movement as, "We created March for Our Lives and we want to see it demolished," (Cullen). They further

explain this detail that Parkland student, Jackie, said. They described it for the reasoning that they wanted to create this movement to help their generation and further generations take preventative measures. They want to see it demolished in the sense that there should never be a need for one of these kinds of movements ever again. They created this movement for gun control and they did this for the students of their generation, and to prevent students from any other generation having to face these issues again. They are providing for the future generations of America, so clearly these kids know exactly what they are doing. Source A also discusses what the children of Parkland want for the future by saying, "I'd love to see a lot of the youth activists, whether it's Peace Warriors, BRAVE, any of those different groups, I'd love to see some of us in office by that time," (Cullen). The children themselves know what is going on. They have to pave the way for their future or they risk the factor of other children experiencing a school shooting. Trevon said this quote in the book and he hopes that the people involved in these movements will continue with their influence over gun control. Because they know what the future should entail for the next generations, they are clearly educated enough to be able to create change. For these reasons, young adults should most definitely be allowed to take part in having power in political change.

The power that children have naturally can be emphasized through political movements and should be used intentionally. Children pull emotions through adults because of the empathy that adults have for children. They are the future and adults' number one goal is to protect the children of America. Instead of trying to degrade the power that young adults can have, older citizens should be trying to emphasize the power that they naturally have in just being kids. We should accentuate their voices and further use them to create change politically and in our society. I have been effective in proving that young adults should have the power that they

choose to have in our politic situation by showing the logic of it. Children were the ones who experienced the traumatic experiences and should be able to cause reform to their issue. They also have a new insight that adults are unable to provide and they are the future of America so they should be able to determine their fate. Because children have such a unique creativity palette, we, as a country, should allow them to have the voice that they desire to pursue.