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Women's suffrage activists such as Nora Hurston have paved the way for all citizens to be able to vote, so it is not only our responsibility to vote, but our duty. To cast just any vote is demeaning to their hard work. Instead, we need to cast an informed one. The dictionary defines informed as having or showing knowledge of a particular subject or situation; therefore, an informed voter is a person who votes based on extensive prior knowledge. Watching the news is not always the best way to stay informed; it can be biased toward the organizations with which it is affiliated. I know that it is imperative for me to not only listen to the news, but to research about the news that has been delivered. I will make sure to get my information from credible sources, not just Facebook posts. I also need to stay in the loop on every candidate to make sure that I am not being blinded by empty promises. Instead, I will look at their track record. In order to do that, I need to not take propaganda—whether through radio, the internet, or news—at face value, and to look at what candidates have done, said, or supported years prior to their campaigns, since most of the time campaign promises are not followed through. The base of becoming an informed voter is to spend time on personal research. To ensure that others make more informed decisions, I will encourage them to conduct some research themselves, share my research with them, and point them to sites such as “Vote Smart” that will give them credible information about individual candidates. The main reason that so many people do not vote, or don’t take voting seriously, is because they feel like their vote would not count. The best way to change their view is to first educate them on how our democracy works and the importance of understanding what candidates have done, said, or how they have voted. Suffragists such as Nora Hurston, Susan B. Anthony, and Sojourner Truth have fought hard for us all to get the right to vote, so when we do not vote or vote for anyone just because we have to, it is a great disrespect to their hard work. We need to stay informed by doing personal research and keeping up with all current events.

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Chesterfield County

As a teenage girl in America, the idea of contributing to the selection of public officials based upon my ideals and morals is incredible. I am blessed that many individuals such as Nora Houston worked to provide females with the precious right of voting. Currently, women in several countries around the world are unable to vote, so the voting privileges provided for females in the United States is a gift that should not be taken lightly. When I come of age to vote, I want to be certain that my ballot goes to a person whom I believe can lead our country into an era of prosperity and peace. In order to make an informed decision about who I should vote for, I will conduct research on candidates to see how their influence will impact our society. Additionally, I will strive to select a leader who believes in equality and sees the importance of giving value to every human soul. Although I wish to find a candidate whose views align with my vision for our great nation, I also want to see a public figure who can unite all kinds of people to work toward morals such as compassion and caring. Ultimately, my choices will be made with careful thought as to how the person I am voting for will change the country for the better. Sometimes voting may not seem as personal to individuals because they have not met the candidate or they do not follow political issues. However, voting needs to be representative of the people as a whole, so votes should be made with careful consideration. When I am able to vote, I will encourage people to pay attention to televised debates. Additionally, I will teach my peers about how to contact those running for office, and I will attempt to help the people around me see the impact of one single vote. By working to make the votes of myself and others count, I will be celebrating the rights fought for by the members of the Woman Suffrage Movement. As a female in an evolving society, I can strive to contribute to the growing freedoms being provided to citizens of America. Furthermore, I can use my knowledge to help others make informed choices. After all, with every vote comes another call to the government about the wishes of the American people.

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Voting is nothing short of a basic human right. However, our country has not always upheld that ideal. While the ability to make decisions for elected officials used to be restricted to land-owning white men, this is not the case anymore. First, women like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton pioneered the suffragette movement, which gave women like them the right to vote. Afterwards, African Americans, such as Martin Luther King, fought to allow African Americans and, in turn, all U.S. citizens, a fair chance to vote. Unfortunately, however, many have misused this right. Either due to misinformation or just pure laziness, many prospective voters end up throwing away this right by making poor decisions or just not voting. When I can first vote, in November of 2022, I will ensure that my hard-fought constitutional right will not go to waste. Politicians often make false promises. Some swear to bring back all jobs, while others pledge to lower America's debt while lowering taxes as well. While it is obvious that this is all sensationalist talk, it is incredibly difficult to avoid. Either consciously or subconsciously, these erroneous "guarantees" often seep into a voter's mind and influence the vote on Election Day. Thus, to avoid falling prey to over-exaggerated assurances, I will read about what action the politician has made so far. If he or she is a senator, congressman, or state legislator, I will look up voting records and legislation introduced, along with committee membership. If he or she is a governor or mayor, I will look at bills introduced or executive orders made, as well as cabinet appointments and other gubernatorial duties. If he or she is a political outsider, I will carefully weigh his or her qualifications. While I, myself, will make an informed vote when I am able to, I am aware that others may not. Thus, it is my civic duty to ensure that my peers are knowledgeable about specific stands on issues and, as stated above, action made when in previous office. Whenever I hear comments that have no basis in evidence, I will ensure that whoever makes the comment understands that the claim is unreasonable, and I will correct them. In my high school career, I plan on creating a website to cover numerous elections across the country with unbiased reporting. Our predecessors have fought tirelessly so that we can make decisions for our elected officials. We have to use this right!

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Suffragists like Houston believed that all voters should be informed about issues. When you are of voting age, how will you make sure that you can cast an informed vote? How can you ensure that others make informed decisions? I'm excited about voting when I am 18 years old. I can't wait until I enter my voting booth and pull the lever for my favorite candidate and laws for the first time. I am grateful for everything the suffragists fought for so women could vote. The women in my life—my mom, my two grandmothers, my great-grandmother, and my aunts—always tell me about women's rights, and how proud I should be for women "standing up" for what is right. I am lucky that I am bicultural; my mother is American and my father is French, two great countries known for their strong democracies. Both my grandmothers have marched in demonstrations and believe in the right to a good education and the right to vote, just like Nora Houston, the famous Virginia suffragette who fought for laws to improve conditions for working women and children, and for our right to vote. However, a right to education is very important to voting. Going to the polls without knowing what is important to your candidate, your family, and your community is like making a cake without knowing the ingredients. This is called informed voting. An informed voter is an educated citizen, someone who is knowledgeable about important world, national, and local issues. I believe I am already on the path to becoming an informed voter. I attend school regularly and work hard to learn new things. I listen to the teachers and ask questions all the time. While the news is sometimes complicated, I try to watch a little with my parents and ask them questions. Knowing three languages and having the experience of living in France helps me understand two different points of view of the news and makes me more open to all types of experiences. When I get older, I would like to work with children who do not have the same opportunities as me and tell them about what's happening in the world. I would like to give them a voice in the world of voting too.