

"In the past, . . . those who pulled the strings to manipulate political organizations did not want to contend with an informed age group in which 'rebellion against the status quo would have been far more than a mere possibility.'

"The inclination . . . has been to

offer you everything—our cooperation, our blessings, the right to advise and to be advised, the right to make decisions if they are not contrary to ours, the right to fight, the right to die on battlefields of our elders' choosing—everything except the right to vote."¹⁰

D. *In many respects persons of 18 are legally considered to be of age and are held responsible for their actions.*

". . . The minimum age for employment under our civil service laws is 18 years of age.

"Under our Penal Code the federal courts at the discretion of the Attorney General may and do commit 18 year olds to a federal prison. Under the Penal Code of our various states the same is true and 18 year olds are committed to state penitentiaries. I am not in conflict with either of the above laws; they are fair and just.

However, it convinces me that at 18 a young man or woman is emancipated.

"Our chancery courts grant the chancellor the power to declare an 18 year old competent and, at his discretion, he may emancipate the individual concerned. I am not in conflict with this law, it too is fair and just. However, it too carries out my convictions that 18 year olds are emancipated. . . ."¹¹

E. *Participation in politics through exercise of the suffrage is an important aspect of training youth for citizenship.*

"In our schools today students . . . develop an interest in politics that even their parents may not have. But when the students graduate at 17 or 18, they find that they cannot put their knowledge to use. Their political enthusiasm drops off. Polls show that when they reach 21 too many do not bother to vote.

"Lowering the voting age to 18 would solve that problem. Young people would have a chance to put into practice what they learn about government in their classrooms.

Teachers, in turn, would be put on the alert and challenged to improve training for good citizenship. . . . The National Education Association once declared: 'Reduction in the voting age would raise the average level of civic effectiveness.'¹²

"There is no better civic training than the exercise of the vote. Without the vote, all other forms of civic training are lacking in meaning and effectiveness. It is essential that our young people take on political responsibility as soon as they are ready to do so, for the real value of education comes from its association with responsibility."¹³

¹⁰ Statement of Governor Theodore R. McKeldin of Maryland at Commencement Exercises at Anderson College, in Washington Post, June 16, 1953, at 7, col. 5.

¹¹ Statement by Col. W. R. Watson, U. S. Air Force, Ret., *supra* note 1.

¹² *Supra* note 7 at 10.

¹³ Statement of former Senator Hubert Humphrey *supra* note 1.