

# The State of Washington

## Office of the Secretary of State

*2006 Winner of the Voters' Pamphlet Essay Contest*

### **My Vote Gives Me Power**

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The view of voting as a trivial matter has become an increasing trend among many people in our society today. In fact, less than sixty-one percent of those eligible voted in the last presidential election. This shocking trend is undoubtedly the result of a lack of understanding of the complete ideas behind and the implications of voting. As I reached the voting age, I too had fallen into these common misguided ideas regarding the value and affect of my vote, and it was not until I began to better understand voting that I was able to fully realize the blessing I have been given.

Voting has substantially wider effects than I had ever previously imagined. Our elected officials make laws that will affect our country as well as others for many years. To know that my vote has the potential to be a factor in helping people all around the world is something that I find amazing.

Additionally, unlike in other countries, our right to vote is among the inalienable rights guaranteed to us by our Constitution. Citizens of Afghanistan, for example, only just obtained this right as they voted in their first elections in years, which was secured only through much preceding violence. Knowing that, I feel tremendously grateful to have such a precious gift.

Without a full understanding of voting, many fail to recognize the great effect and power that their vote has. This right is a blessing that I believe we all should cherish.