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Argument Essay

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Younger people don't need celebrities to form political opinions

In our current age of social media, celebrities always have many eyes on them. Taylor Swift, one of the most influential artists of our generation, over the last few years has become increasingly outspoken about politics, using her platform to encourage fans to vote and engage with social issues. Younger people today have plenty of access to political information through social media, education, and personal experience, allowing them to think critically without needing celebrity influence. Although figures like Taylor Swift may help start important conversations, young people do not need celebrities to form their political opinions, they can shape their own beliefs.

During the recent election, I experienced firsthand how easily people assume that young voters are influenced by celebrities. In my family, I am the only liberal, and I was also the only one who voted for Kamala Harris. After my brother told my dad who I voted for, my dad was initially shocked and then joked that I probably did it because Taylor Swift told me to. At first, I laughed it off, but the comment stuck with me. It made me feel like he saw my political beliefs as shallow and secondhand, as if I couldn't have formed my own opinion and have my own values. The joke hurt because it made me feel like my dad thought I was stupid. Even though I spent time learning about the candidates and made my own decision on who I wanted to run the country.

Back in middle school during the 2016 election, I supported Donald Trump simply because that's what my parents did. At that age, I didn't really understand politics or the impact of my opinions. I literally just repeated what I heard at home. Looking back, I realize that I was completely uneducated and unaware of how complex political issues really were. As I got older, I started to educate myself, read articles, watch debates, and pay attention to how policies affected different groups of people. Over time my perspective shifted, and so did my friend groups. The difference between my friends in middle and high school makes me laugh, because there was no overlap whatsoever. But I began to see the many flaws in the views I had accepted without question from my parents, and I kept my changing beliefs mostly to myself, knowing that my family would disagree with me. This silence made my dad's reaction to my voting for Kamala Harris even more surprising to him, since our household gets most of its news from Fox.

Young people today are more politically aware than ever before, and that awareness doesn't come from celebrities, it comes from constant exposure to information and the ability to research issues independently. With social media and online news, it's almost impossible not to encounter political discussions, especially for younger generations. Many of us learn about world events, social movements, and government policies directly from digital platforms, not from celebrity endorsements or even network news. Because of this, celebrity influence, even from someone as powerful as Taylor Swift, isn't the driving force behind most young voters' choices, even if that's what my dad may believe.

While celebrities like Taylor Swift may use their platforms to raise awareness, their influence can sometimes oversimplify political issues. When Swift publicly endorses a candidate or shares her political opinions online, millions of fans like myself see it instantly, but not everyone takes the time to understand the deeper ideas behind her message. During past

elections, voter registration spiked after Swift encouraged her followers to participate, but it feels more like what's popular than making an informed choice. Politics isn't something that should be treated like a trend, yet celebrity involvement can make it seem that way. Young people should be encouraged to think critically, not just follow the beliefs of someone they admire.

Forming political opinions is about informing yourself, not influence. Taylor Swift's activism might start conversations, but young people didn't need her to know what to think. When my dad joked that I voted for Kamala Harris because of Taylor Swift, it made me realize how often older generations assume young people can't think for themselves. But it makes sense since my dad came up in a time of celebrity endorsements, but it's just not something I need. But I know the time and effort I put into learning about the issues and deciding what I believe. That decision came from who I am and what I value, not from a social media post. Independent thought matters and you should believe in something because you chose it yourself, not just blindly following someone else.

And honestly, that's a big part of what keeps democracy alive. Democracy only works when people stay informed and think for themselves instead of letting others think for them. When people take the time to understand policies, question things, and form their own opinions, it strengthens the system. It's not just voting or picking a side, it's about participating in a bigger conversation about what kind of country we want to live in. Being informed gives your vote real weight, so it is very important that young people aren't just tagging along behind celebrities or their parents. We can shape our own beliefs, and that's exactly democracy needs.