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The majority of people shaping the future won't be around to live in it. We have a problem on our hands when it comes to electing the folks who will put laws and policies in place as our country moves further into the 21st century. That problem is the power of old people.

In her article, *Out With the Old, In With the Young*, Astra Taylor reveals some telling facts for why we should re-think the way our elections work. One that stood out in particular is the idea of who can vote in national elections.

There are several issues right now with how older people have a larger influence on elections than younger people. Older people have more money on average than younger people and are able to donate to campaigns easier. Older people (Baby Boomers) make up the majority of voters in 341 congressional districts while younger people (Millennials) are the majority in only 86.

And when it comes to actually showing up to the polls, the older generation blows the younger generation out of the water. According to census.gov, in the 2016 presidential election 70.9% of eligible voters aged 65 and older voted while only 46.1 of those aged 18-29 voted.

So, what this amounts to is, we have a group of younger people who are less able to support candidates, less able to swing the balance of power in the House, and less willing to show up to the polls. This, despite the fact that there are more voting aged people under the age of 50 than above it.

So, what's causing all this?

In many ways, the three issues above work in a circular fashion, younger folks don't show up to the polls because they feel they can't make a difference with neither their vote nor their checkbooks. But the reverse could also be said, and perhaps the reason these voters can't make a difference is because they aren't showing up to the polls.

In her article, Taylor talks at length about how active younger people are becoming in social issues, particularly issues involving the environment. These young people include many who are under 18 and therefore cannot vote. And maybe that's the problem?

Why not lower the voting age to include these young people who obviously care and are invested in their own futures? They are the ones who will live longer with the decisions being made now, so should they not have a say in them as well?

Imagine if the voting age was lowered to 16 years of age, the age by which all states will issue at least a restricted driver's license (give or take 6 months). By opening up this opportunity to younger people, we could see a ripple effect that could balance out the disproportionate nature of the voting age gap.

With these younger people voting while still in school, they'll be more likely to become used to the voting process and be more likely to make it a habit moving forward in their lives. Plus, with

the process starting while they are in school, it would be a lot easier for them to learn about things such as how to register, where to vote, how the process works, etc. It could be explained to them in school, making them better equipped to stay involved moving forward.

If getting them involved earlier does keep them involved, we would eventually see a shift in voter turnouts which would see the younger vote begin to rise to meet the older voters. Which would go a long way in helping the future be decided by those who will actually live in it.