
Our Nation's Fractured Future: College Admission Essay Sample

Few things make my grandfather more proud than fulfilling the sense of duty that comes with casting a ballot. A Cuban political refugee, my grandfather never misses an opportunity to reinforce just how important voting and democracy are. The sad reality, however, is that the very democratic system that the United States prides itself on is broken.

Through shameful gerrymandering practices, campaign finance loopholes, and consistently low voter turnout rates, democracy in the U.S. is failing to protect the principle of one person, one vote. The consequences are tremendous: the country faces increased polarization and is left unable to effectively find bipartisan solutions to its most pressing challenges in education, infrastructure, and social services.

This year, I launched a voter registration campaign at my school with three friends, with the goal of registering 85% of our senior class to vote. While increased voter participation in elections would have a significant impact on the current political system (since politicians would be forced to appeal to their entire constituencies) this would not be enough to resolve the issues that lie beyond the control of the voters. Even with a mandatory voting system such as Chile's, the U.S. would still face overwhelming political obstacles in ensuring fair elections.

Quite simply, democracy is undermined when certain votes come packaged with multi-million dollar campaign contributions. While the McCain-Feingold Act of 2002 appeared to steer the country in the right direction, the situation has only further deteriorated since then as the 2010 Citizens United Supreme Court ruling and the subsequent emergence of Super PACs virtually shattered any limitations to campaign contributions. The more we allow money to dominate elections, the less they will represent the desires of the American people.

Finally, the issue of gerrymandering is one of the most egregious yet shockingly accepted breaches democratic principles. A system in which partisan groups of politicians draw district lines in distorted ways in order to ensure that their party retains its dominance is simply anti-democratic. The drawing of district lines must be handed over to independent, non-partisan commissions to ensure a fair electoral process. Democracy in the U.S. holds the potential to be the voice of the people and the hallmark of a free society, yet we must strengthen our broken system in order to effectively address the nation's most pressing challenges.

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