



NEWS, ANALYSIS and OPINION

Although most high school students can't yet vote, many argue that being informed about political issues now is important to understanding the future of their country.

Every Friday in Sara Schaufler's AP Government classes, students hold a lively discussion about current events, often revolving around nuclear weapons in Iran, new discoveries in the scientific community and U.S. politics.

"Sure, I have some kids that read their Yahoo news page every day, but a lot of kids never read the Yahoo news page. And the [current events] I get are from NPR or the global security newswires," Schaufler said.

Schaufler spends an entire class period a week discussing current events because she thinks it's important for her students to know what's going on in the world.

Senior Jonathan Volker is one of the students in Schaufler's class. Volker is interested in politics and thinks it's important for other students to pay attention to what's going on in Washington.

"If we don't pay attention, if we don't learn about what's going on in our world, it will all fall apart," Volker said.

Schaufler agrees that it's important

for students to pay attention to politics.

"It's their country, too," Schaufler said. "I mean, even though some of you aren't voting yet, it's best to understand the system now, so when you do have a chance to get involved, it's not something new."

Volker does his best to understand the facts behind all of the heavily debated political issues.

"I just had to go do research. For things like the environment, you don't want to read newspapers or watch TV. They are all biased. They are giving you facts that are mutated into their view of [the situation]."

While most of Volker's views are conservative, he holds liberal opinions about what should be done with education and the environment.

"For example, I go to usgs.gov, the U.S. Geological Survey, and I see how much carbon dioxide we're actually putting into the air," Volker said. "I learn how much we're putting out versus how much nature puts out on its own. I find a source that's not political and learn the subject matter

before I apply it to politics."

While Volker's opinions on most issues are based on scientific evidence, his views on same-sex marriage and abortion are based on his religious beliefs.

"Killing a fetus is the same as killing a human in my eyes."

Schaufler encourages all of her students to form their own opinions about the issues and have their own experiences with the political system.

"If it was an election year this year, one of my independent studies would be that you have to volunteer on a campaign," Schaufler said. "Once they do it, they love it. They can really see politics in action instead of just mudslinging ads on TV. It's just a neat learning experience."

According to Volker, it's important for everyone to be informed about politics.

"Our economy will fail and our government will fail. By not paying attention you will allow your world to fail. As much as people think their vote doesn't matter, it does. Every vote matters." *by maria davison*