

Mikhail Acebo

July 20 2018

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600 Dear Recipient Name

Re: Submissions Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Lowering Voting Age and Increasing Voter Participation) Bill 2018

One of democracy's major problem is encouraging an active and persistent political engagement from the citizenry. Influenced by a multitude of factors including their own life's circumstances, voters do not always vote for their country's best interests but for theirs. This is Public Choice Theory's postulations to the core, where self-interest fuels politics more than ideals or moral virtues¹. Democracy also have other problems like short-termist policies and "mob mentality" frequently labelling people as "Liberal", "Labor", "Republican", "Democrat" etc.²

Having recently participated from 2018 YMCA WA's Youth Parliament of Western Australia, one stark situation I often observed is that young people eagerly take sides in any disputes. Despite my fellow colleagues' protests for "conscience votes", I noticed that young people seemingly vote for either "Government" or "Opposition" sides. Very few would dissent or opt out of the voting process. It seems that collective ideals, like political parties' platforms, bears greater significance to young people than individual consciences.

Recently, a survey released by *Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation* Documents American Millennials' positive views of socialism and communism over capitalist ideals. But what's shocking is their apparent ignorance of communist regimes' histories and inability to define such political ideologies³. History's lessons are neglected by the youth, seduced by promises of "progress" and the future.

We young people have much intelligence, but not wisdom. We are idealists, but not yet able to sober up to the complex, confusing reality of the world we live in.

We understand, but we "don't get it".

Australia needs SMART voters, not MORE voters. Australia needs to educate us youth more on politics, not give us voting rights at a time when we are not mentally prepared to be fully involved in it or know the career paths for our lives. To vote marks a rite of passage from youth to adulthood – a path we are still learning to walk on.

Voting is not a privilege, but a responsibility to be exercised painstakingly.

Sincerely,

Mikhail Acebo

1. Shaw, Jane S. 2002. "Public Choice Theory." Library of Economics and Liberty. <http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc1/PublicChoiceTheory.html>.
2. Moyo, Dambisa. 2018. "Why Democracy Doesn't Deliver." *Foreign Policy*, April 26. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/04/26/why-democracy-doesnt-deliver/>
3. "Second Annual Report on U.S. Attitudes Toward Socialism." 2018. Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation. <https://www.victimsofcommunism.org/survey/>.