

PORTLAND

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Ask Ariel: Election Confusion



Dear Ariel,

My thirteen-year-old son is very upset about the results of the presidential election. He skipped school to protest, he was suspended for writing an expletive and the president-elect's name on his forehead. He says things like, "how can half of our country think he is a good person when he says such awful things." We have talked at length about politics and activism but he doesn't believe that he can be an agent of change at his young age. Any advice?

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-Blue State Dad

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Dear Blue State Dad,

Half of our country is in shock about the election and the other half is cheering. Those opposing views are hard for many of us to fully understand, so it is more than reasonable that your son is also confused about the American political situation right now.

The first thing I would suggest is to help him understand that many people feel the same way he does. The majority of Americans believe that women, immigrants, Muslims, Latinos, LGBTQ folks, the disabled are all important parts of American society. The fact that the silent dog-whistle of racism is whipping some Americans into a power hungry frenzy doesn't mean that it is morally right.

The voices of young people are vitally important. Twenty-one young people ranging in age from 9-20 years old have filed a lawsuit against the federal government for not protecting their generation from climate change. In early November 2016 the judge in this case has allowed it to move forward and go to court, despite the deep pockets of the fossil fuel industry and the government trying to have the case dismissed. Young people have always been the voices of dissent and organizers of protests throughout American history. Your son can choose to volunteer his time and energy to a non-profit organization like one battling climate change or fighting for basic rights for all, or an environmental organization or any other non-profits whose mission speaks to him. He can write letters, call his representatives and educate himself and his friends about causes he believes in. You can always remind him that in five short years, he will be able to vote.



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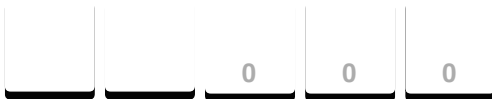


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Ariel Frager



at

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