

- VOTING RIGHTS ARE ADDRESSED
- DONALD TRUMP IS DISCUSSED

# OPINION

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## Do not diminish the cultural importance of rap music

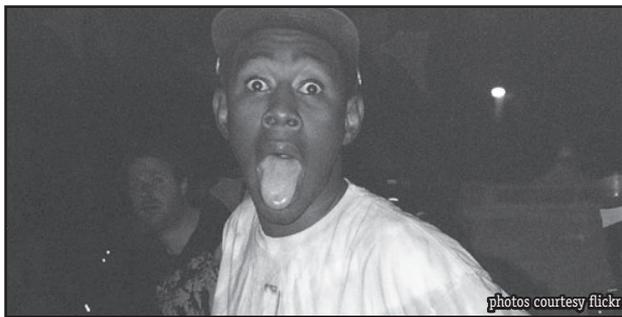
by Sean Clark  
Editor-in-Chief



"I hate rap music. It's all about drinking, women, and money," says the subtly racist white person. To some people, that may sound like a valid opinion, but that white individual is actually saying that he or she thinks a significant part of contemporary African-American culture is invalid. Rap has been used to cope with oppression and

strengthen communities for decades. Clarence Lusane of The Black Scholar, a journal dedicated to black studies, once said that "From the moment Harriet Tubman sang 'steal away' to signal runaway slaves that it was time to flee, music has been not only a weapon of African-American resistance to racism, but part of the African American strategic arsenal of group consciousness."

According to The Black Scholar, black poverty rates reached 32.7% between 1989 and 1991. During that time, rap became an increasingly popular, creative outlet for young black men to vent their frustration towards a racist society. Rap is a genre of music that was born out of an extremely oppressive time period. Consequently, when white people say they hate rap music, they're saying they hate how black people cope and have coped with oppression caused by white people. With a few exceptions, white people make country music, and black



people make rap music. People often complain that rap glamorizes drinking, drugs, and a promiscuous lifestyle, but no one criticizes country music for including the same exact themes. Specifically criticizing rap for being explicit is just another way that society demonizes black people, specifically young black men. Easily-offended and overly-concerned white people need to criticize all explicit content or none at all.

Tyler the Creator, a popular African-American rapper, is currently banned from entering the UK for three to five years because of the violent and homophobic lyrics in his old albums. While I don't condone the content of Tyler the Creator's old music, the fact that Eminem isn't banned from entering the UK is indicative of a double standard. Eminem, the caucasian "Rap God," has written notoriously violent, misogynistic, and homophobic lyrics, even in his newest music. Let's not forget how Eminem recently threatened to "punch Lana Del Rey right in the face twice, like Ray Rice in broad daylight in the plain sight of the elevator surveillance, 'til her head is banging on the railing, then celebrate with the Ravens." White people excuse Eminem's violent music as art, but they fail to give that same leeway to African-American rappers. White people have clearly demonstrated, on a government level, that they accept white anger, but not black anger.

It's not racist to dislike rap music, but it is racist to profusely hate and discredit rap music. Regardless of its content, rap music is an important, empowering aspect of black culture.

## Youth need to take advantage of their voting rights

by Hyuntae Byun  
Editor-in-Chief



United States citizens have a couple of responsibilities as defined by the Constitution, and one of these is the responsibility to participate in the democratic process. In short, citizens are supposed to vote in national, state, and local elections. Since voting in the United States becomes permissible after

potential voters reach 18 years of age, it would be reasonable to assume that new voters would immediately seize the opportunity to participate in the political process and express their views.

Unfortunately, statistics indicate that this is not true; a recent report released in July of this year by the United States Census found a general decrease in voting rates in congressional elections by youths between the ages of 18 and 24 and also found that youths have the lowest levels of political participation of any age demographic.

At this point, it would be easy to make a relatively clichéd argument about the importance of voting for the preservation of democracy and how political participation is an inherently important aspect of living within society. Both of those things are true, but they are probably not the main reason why youth should be compelled to vote. The most important reason is that a significant voter turnout among youth is a direct method of rapidly ensuring the creation of a new political ideology.

High school and college students might make the argument that voting will not change the system; the political system of the United States frequently seems archaic, monolithic, and immutable. These points are valid; however, it is important to vote not in spite of these reasons, but because of them. A Pew Research Center study from 2014 discovered that while many individual political views evolve over the course of lifetimes, generations themselves have distinct political identities. The fundamentals of these political identities are shaped by early political exposure. The study cited a Columbia University study that found that political events during the so-called psychological "formative years" of voters highly correlate with candidates and platforms that those voters then go on to vote for.

In fact, the Columbia researchers were able to classify the past few generations of voters into five main generations: New Deal Democrats, Eisenhower Republicans, Baby Boomers, Reagan Conservatives, and Millennials. For example, voters who turned 18 under President Roosevelt consistently vote for liberal, democratic, New Deal-esque politicians and policies. In contrast, early voters from Generation X, who turned 18 during the presidencies of Reagan and H.W. Bush, tend to support conservative programs and politicians.

The next generation of voters, which is composed primarily of students currently attending high schools like our own, has grown up

in an era defined by rapid technological developments, security and surveillance-related concerns, and global warming and environmental fears. Our generation has also been marked by an even more pressing need for speed and adaptability within our government and society.

At the nexus of the realizations that our demographic is politically underrepresented and that politics are defined by paradigms established by politically active generations is the inevitable conclusion that until our generation begins to vote in large numbers, the political paradigm of the United States, and the world at large, will not change soon.

Social sciences indicate that over time our generation will slowly vote in greater numbers until it eventually becomes the dominant generation in politics. Usually, that magic number is around 65 years of age or so. That means that if our generation follows the general trends followed by past generations, we will begin to make significant progress in reforming the government in around 2060. By that time, Al Gore predicts that most of North America will be a giant dust bowl anyway, so what does it matter?

Alternatively, our generation could be active and affect modern-day public policy by voting now. (Sources: US Census, Pew Research Center)



## Take a break over summer

by Kate Hinsche  
People Editor



I can count on my fingers how many days I had unscheduled at home this summer, and most of the students I talk to at LGHS can say the exact same thing. While I don't regret all of the wonderful memories I made, I wish I had more actively done nothing with my summer.

The college application culture at LGHS ingrains in the minds of students many mantras of advice on applications starting day one of their freshman year, one of those being to partake in some summer activity that will show academic initiative or curiosity. Whether taking a summer course at West Valley, working as a camp counselor, or getting an internship, students take this advice to heart, then they take it to the extreme.

While colleges look for hard work, a student's work ethic is apparent in their GPA and extracurriculars during the school year. Summer activities are a time to explore oneself and display ingenuity, creativity, and passion. Having a nine-to-five job every day of the summer only reveals that a student has the capacity to be a worker bee and is willing to pass up the even greater opportunity of being a child on summer vacation.

The mounting pressure of going to college is evident in the statistics on teenage mental health in the United States. 20 percent of American teens

experience depression before reaching adulthood, and suicide is the second leading cause of death in people ages 10-24. Teen suicide has increased by 128 percent since the 1980's, directly coinciding with the timing of increasing societal pressure to attend competitive universities.

Summertime used to be a break from the stresses of school and finding a career path. Too many students sacrifice the decompression time they need to relax after a challenging school year, resulting in continuous anxiety that can lead to serious health issues.

Mental health statistics aside, participating in summer programs for the sake of college applications does not make you appear interesting or unique; it makes you look complacent. When every student in America partakes in a summer class, doing so is no longer unique and interesting. Just as blogger and two-time Stanford graduate Eva Glasrud urges students not to normalize themselves by taking on too many AP classes, I encourage students not to overdo it on summer programs. Instead, take those wonderful two months to relish in the simplicity of childhood, explore personal interests and beliefs, and develop true passions that college admission officers will actually enjoy reading about come time for you to apply.



Scan the QR code to see an opposing view

## Don't embrace meninism

by Shreya Koushik  
Sports Editor



For the past year, there has not been a dull moment for feminism. Not a day goes by where social media feeds are not filled with feminist-versus-anti-feminist fights. The only things achieved from aggressively assaulting two hundred Twitter followers with invalid opinions are fights.

Girls are being persuaded into believing that not being into feminism is cool. For only 30 dollars, people can buy "#meninist" shirts. The term "Meninist," coined by an unruly Twitter account, has become the new fad. Girls buy and wear Meninist shirts because they feel the need to seek approval from men. The group mentality of Meninism gave rise to millions of social media put downs and cringe worthy fights.

Equally upsetting, "Every cool girl is half boy" has become a commonly used caption on Instagram. To be clear, the list of qualifications to be part boy are as follows: identifies as a boy, is a boy. Things that are not necessary to be a boy include wearing a baseball cap, riding a longboard, or working out. Trying to "fit in with the guys" is conforming to a personality that is uncommon. Teenage girls are unfortunately internalizing the idea that being cool and being a boy are synonymous. Similarly, reblogged hundreds of thousands of

times on Tumblr, the post "I don't need feminism because I don't choose to ignore the fact that men have issues too" is extremely flawed. A poll taken in April 2013 found that 16 percent of men and 23 percent of women consider themselves feminists. The same poll found that 82 percent of Americans agree with the statement "men and women should be social, political, and economic equals." Many people do not realize that feminism is about equality, and not about one gender's dominance over the other.

By putting their time to better use, teenagers could actually make a difference, but holding a poster that explains why you do not need feminism and attacking opposing views is not going to improve anything. Although it is easy to be frustrated by girls' trade off of equality for social status, it is not their fault; it is the way they were raised. Girls are brought to believe that being a boy is inherently better. Being "half-boy" and wearing a Meninist t-shirt does not make anyone cool, and everyone needs to realize that.

