

Gordon Tsai is a junior at Clements High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. His essay topic is: In your opinion, why is it important to be involved in the political process?

The United States is a relatively young and unique country. It was only about two hundred years ago we entered the throes of revolution and asserted our independence. As a country, we tend to forget the principles that were fought for and won on that fateful day. This American Revolution was fought for freedom, especially the freedom to vote and/or run for public office.

The value of independence and freedom has almost been lost upon our current people. Ironically, we have a large population of people who don't necessarily even pay attention to or understand politics and current affairs. They live in their small bubble of influence within work, friends, and maybe a community church. This kind of American citizen is definitely not the right one. It is our duty as citizens to vote and uphold the practice of choosing our leaders that was fought for back then two hundred years ago. This country's citizens have almost come to take freedom for granted. In modern day, the average man is protected on many levels by various forms of legislation that ensures their basic human rights. Some would even argue that the United States grants too much freedom as in the controversial case of the gun law. We have become an ungrateful country. Even recently, we can see in the Arab Spring that the value of freedom and independence are worth dying. In the countries of Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and currently Syria, people are and have been willing to die for the slight possibility of a free independent process for choosing their leaders. And around the world, other elections are plagued by bribery and corruption with country leaders serving multiple terms that exceed the limit set upon by their constitution. When observed realistically, the American election process and atmosphere is almost a dream. So why won't the citizens of the United States fulfill their responsibilities as a nation and assert the privilege that is voting? It is clear that around the world many people are willing to die for this chance to play their tiny part in the direction and leadership of their country.

It is apparent that many people in the United States don't ever vote. Even my mom waives this right that I would jump at a chance to have. This decision, however small it is individually, on the next leader of the United States is not one to be taken lightly. We are playing our small part in deciding the direction and future of the most influential country in the world. In this light, voting should be unprecedented honor, not an annoyance which the average citizen should fulfill.

HONORING DR. GEORGE ALVIN  
"G.A." JOHNSON FOR HIS PUBLIC  
SERVICE AND ADVOCACY TO THE  
STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2012*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable civil rights advocate and public servant, Dr. George Alvin "G.A." Johnson. Dr. Johnson earned his Doctorate of Divinity in 1979 from the Trinity Church Association in Shreveport, Louisiana.

He was born in Massies Mill, Virginia to the parents of Samuel and Virginia Johnson on

January 29, 1944. In 1963, after moving from Massies Mill to Washington, D.C. he stood on the grounds of the Lincoln Memorial to hear Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. deliver his "I Have a Dream" speech. As a young nineteen year old with an impressionable mind, Dr. King's speech became a defining moment in Dr. Johnson's life.

In 1970, seven years after Dr. King's infamous "I Have a Dream" speech, Johnson moved to Rolling Fork, Mississippi to take an active part in the civil rights movement. His first active role was in a position that was both admired and feared as becoming President of the Voter's League in Rolling Fork, Mississippi. As President, Dr. Johnson began to experience the indoctrination practices of the "traditions of the south."

After leaving his position as the President of the Voter's League in Rolling Fork, he took a position as manager of "Freedom Village." "Freedom Village" was one of the many strike cities that began emerging throughout Mississippi, as African Americans walked off plantations in protest of Jim Crow laws and unfair sharecropping practices. Dr. Johnson was also manager of one of the first self-help housing projects in the Mississippi Delta.

In 1971 Dr. Johnson moved to Greenville, Mississippi and became active in Delta Ministries sponsored by the Council of Churches of New York, New York. In 1976, he extended his ministry to television airing on WABG Channel 6 in Greenwood for 27 years. In 1988, Dr. Johnson founded GAIN, INC. (Goals, Aims, Intention Network) which stemmed from his prison ministry at the Mississippi State Penitentiary, known as Parchman Farm located in Sunflower County, Mississippi. He now resides in Charleson, Mississippi where he continues to be an advocate for children, the poor, the disadvantaged, and the displaced.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. George Alvin Johnson for his dedication and service as a civil rights advocate and pioneer during the 1960s civil rights movement in the great state of Mississippi.

CONGRATULATING THE NEW  
HAVEN LIONS CLUB ON THE  
CELEBRATION OF THEIR 90TH  
ANNIVERSARY

**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2012*

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to extend my very best wishes to the members of the New Haven Lions Club as they gather to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of this extraordinary community organization. Over the course of its history, the New Haven Lions Club has enabled its members to contribute to our community in a positive and meaningful way. Indeed, in the last century, members of the New Haven Lions Club have helped to shape the very character of our community.

Founded in February of 1922, the New Haven Lions Club was only the second such club started in New England. From the very beginning, member's work in the community concentrated on assistance to local blind per-

sons and underprivileged children. In its earliest years, Lions would repair radios for the blind and transport them to and from local meetings as well as donate dinners and presents to needy families during the holidays. Over time, the Lions club has expanded both its membership and its activities on behalf of those in need.

Today, the New Haven Lions Club can be very proud of the two very special Service Projects it supports on an on-going basis. The first is Camp Cedarcrest, a forty-two acre facility located in Orange, Connecticut that began its operations in 1928. The New Haven Lions have partnered with four other service organizations—the Kiwanis, Probus, Quota and Rotary Clubs—who own the grounds and buildings, set policy, and provide capital improvements. In partnership with the New Haven Department of Parks and Recreation which provides a resident Ranger as well as organizes and supervises day camping and other activities, Camp Cedarcrest is available for recreation to thousands of young people and adults each summer season. In addition to the substantial financial support provided by the Club, over the years, New Haven Lions have contributed hundreds of hours of voluntary labor to ensure the upkeep of the grounds. The second service project to which the New Haven Lions have dedicated themselves is the One-To-One Program. This project, which is organized as a hands-on personal involvement of one Lion and one blind person, was first established in 1975 and has been a great success ever since.

In addition to these two service projects, the Lions also give back to the community by supporting Leo Clubs in local schools, volunteering their time and energies to other local service organizations like the Salvation Army and the Special Olympics, and providing scholarships to young people beginning their collegiate studies. In fact, as of their annual report last year, the New Haven Lions Club had spent in excess of \$750,000 to assist the less fortunate—all of which was raised by members.

The New Haven Lions have had an extraordinary impact on our community and we cannot thank them enough for all of their good work. As they celebrate their 90th anniversary, I am proud to stand to congratulate them on this remarkable milestone and to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to members past and present for their outstanding efforts on behalf of our community. I have no doubt that they will continue to do so for many more years to come.

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 33RD  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE TAIWAN  
RELATIONS ACT

**HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2012*

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 33rd anniversary of the enactment of the Taiwan Relations Act.

Since the end of World War II, the United States and Taiwan have fostered a close relationship that has been of enormous strategic and economic benefit to both countries. When the United States shifted diplomatic relations