



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on May 1, 2021

Onward Young Socialist Soldiers: New Democrat Bill Would Conscript Kids into Politics

You had to be at least 60 years old to become a member of ancient Greek city-state Sparta's ruling body. Today, some Americans want 16-year-olds to vote. But now Democrats in Congress have conjured a perhaps equally bad idea:

They've launched "a backdoor effort to impose a de facto national curriculum," as *National Review's* Stanley Kurtz [put it](#), to impose anti-white Critical Race Theory and "Action Civics" on classrooms nationwide. It's called the "[Civics Secures Democracy Act](#)," but it's not your grandfather's civics. "In fact," writes Kurtz, "The very term 'Action Civics' is a euphemism for political protests for course credit, something close to the [opposite](#) of a proper civics course."



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Of course, this "protesting" would be on behalf of left-wing causes. So the act is essentially a way of catalyzing a massive youth army to advance a revolution. The young are ideal for this because it's easy for them to mistake old mistakes, such as socialism, for new ideas (especially when their history instruction casts error as enlightenment). Most *everything* is new to them.

Democrats grasp this on some level, obviously, and also know that the young support them by wide margins. Yet there's an even deeper problem to be addressed here: moderns' infatuation with youth. As the Federalist's Alexander Zubatov [wrote](#) Thursday:

[Ever since the "don't-trust-anyone-over-30" countercultural movements of the 1960s](#), we have been living in a culture that increasingly valorizes youth. In [the view](#) of the noted Harvard University cognitive scientist and author Steven Pinker, a technological change — the advent of television — is what propelled this social change.

The baby boomers of the 1960s, the first generation to grow up *en masse* with a TV at home, received unprecedented access to each other's doings. Television "allowed them to know that other baby boomers were sharing their experiences," giving "rise to a horizontal web of solidarity that cut across the vertical ties to parents and authorities that had formerly isolated young people from one another and forced them to kowtow to their elders," Pinker said.

Instead of learning from older relatives and teachers and taking time to mature into adulthood, the young instead started to imitate one another. It was now the judgment of their peers, not their elders, that mattered. "Youth culture" — a phrase that, in earlier times, would have been a contradiction in terms — was born.



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In our own age, a further technological change — the emergence of social media — has sent that culture into hyperdrive. Such platforms give their more tech-savvy [younger user base](#) an outsized voice in public affairs. It is no accident that some of the most prominent political movements that have roiled our cultural waters in recent years, such as Black Lives Matter and Me Too, have emerged from these youth-dominated channels.

We see this youth culture takeover everywhere. For example, fine children's clothes in the late 19th century were miniature versions of fine adult clothes. Being "grown up" was held in high esteem and aspired to. Today, however, the ostensibly grown up often embrace the latest styles of youth; hence, decades ago already we'd sometimes see sexagenarian men with earrings.

Zubatov points out that our cultural shift has transformed the elderly from sage heroes into aged zeroes. They no longer possess the characteristic assets of youth — such as beauty, robust health and physicality, and ease of learning — but they can enjoy wisdom. Yet with this quality having been demoted and the word barely understood today, the elderly are often viewed as burdens and out-of-touch impediments to change.

Consequently, their views of governance are subordinated to those of youth. This is quite a reversal from the historical norm. While, again, you had to be 60 to govern in ancient Sparta, boys were conscripted into their military camps at seven. The U.S. Navy's youngest-ever captain was 12-year-old David Farragut (it was a provisional captaincy), but no one ever suggested he should be allowed to vote. Like it or not, young men are ideal for fighting wars, but not for deciding whether one should be fought.

Overtaking this standard has made not just youth, but the most arrogantly ignorant among them, political movers and shakers. Zubatov mentions climate-change princess Greta Thunberg, the perpetually scowling Parkland gun-grabber David Hogg, callow Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), and puerile poet Amanda Gorman.

Yet conservatives are party to this phenomenon, too. Remember [Jonathan Krohn](#)? Trying to seem hip and keep up with the youth-elevating Joneses, conservatives allowed him to give a speech at the 2009 Conservative Political Action Conference. He was 13.

Of course, it was cute seeing a boy whose voice hadn't changed yet somewhat articulately trumpet conservatism from a podium. But here's the rest of the story:

Krohn [became a liberal](#) in later adolescence.

This isn't surprising. Kids are beautiful, but they're kids. As Zubatov points out, they're not wise.

Don't misunderstand me, "Wisdom doesn't always come with age; sometimes age just shows up all by itself," as the saying goes. Or one could say that regarding governance, old people stink.

Young people stink worse.

(In reality, among the many innate abilities with which we're blessed, there's *the gift of wisdom*. Take people possessing it and let them mature for several decades and, well, they're the ones who should be governing.)

But older people really do have more wisdom on average. Zubatov addresses this, asking how often you've heard teens expound intelligently on political issues. Any such kid would be the exception proving the rule.



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Moreover, just think back to your adolescent self. Who's far more fit to govern, that person or the you of today?

Mentioning the obvious, Zubatov cites studies showing that older people exhibit more "rational decision-making, more empathy, more knowledge, experience, and perspective, greater financial literacy and more nuanced thinking about complex issues." The knowledge issue is interesting, too: As with a computer that's been used heavily for many years, older people's minds contain far more information.

Of course, separating the factual information from the fiction requires wisdom. Yet the real definition of "wisdom" — knowledge of what is good or *true* — helps get at another reason the elderly aren't valued today.

Since Truth is unchanging, it's never out of date; a person who grasped it 60 years ago is as sagacious as someone who grasped the same amount of it two years ago. Therein lies the value of the best among older people: They are vessels holding greater amounts of that timeless and necessary commodity.

That's the sane view, anyway. But today we live in a relativistic age in which most don't believe in Truth (only *six percent* of teenagers in 2002 did, [according to a study](#)). All they have are emotion-born preferences, consensus opinion, styles and fashions, credos such as "Follow your heart" and "If it feels good, do it." And in a land unmoored from Truth, with modern media transmitting ideas at a button's touch, the spirit of the age changes quickly and continually. One generation worships its spirit, the next its spirit, and ne'er the twain shall meet. Hence "generation gaps."

This is where the elderly can't compete. They're often accused of not being "with it." But what is "it"? It is the latest spirit, which they likely will never know as well as one born into that spirit. Those who value Truth will respect those who have the greatest acquaintance with it: the old. Those who worship only fashions, however, will value most the most fashionable: the young.

Speaking of fashions, "Action Civics" is a perversion. Good civics is of the utmost importance, but it's the proper training that's a prerequisite for proper action. You don't put someone without aeronautical skills in a Boeing 777X's cockpit simply because "everyone should participate" (the theory behind get-out-the-vote drives); you don't put a young man in battle before he has the required martial training. It's no different in politics: Encouraging action before acumen is a recipe for disaster.

It's also a recipe for the rise of demagogues. The good news is that they're easy to identify: They're ever and always the ones most feverishly prodding youth to political action.



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