

# Puzzled by politics

by Anjali Bhat

**A**s a whole, it seems the youth of today lack awareness of American politics and cannot piece together the larger political picture — but what about the students of MVHS? We asked students and teachers to define student knowledge of politics: what they know, what they don't, what they care about and why it matters.

"My sense is that kids are aware to a certain degree of what's going on out there. But do they know the depth and impact of what's happening out there — and use that [knowledge] to form opinions and make good, rational decisions? I don't think that's there at all; **that depth, that quality isn't there.** But I think they're pretty savvy."



history teacher  
Margaret Platt

Anjali Bhat and Jennifer Lee | El Estoque Photo Illustration

"[What students know] is **appropriate for what Americans know** about their own government system. We have a government system that most Americans don't understand."



social science teacher  
Pete Pelkey

Anjali Bhat and Jennifer Lee | El Estoque Photo Illustration

"I actually think that not many people know about politics because we're all **so focused on school and grades** ... Also, lots of families here are immigrant families, so I don't think they understand how things work."



junior Edward Wang

Anjali Bhat and Jennifer Lee | El Estoque Photo Illustration

"I often see ... [students] are heavily influenced by the opinions of their parents ... I want students to **challenge their [own] thinking** or their parents' thinking and earn their opinion [on politics]."



English teacher  
Venessa Nava

Anjali Bhat and Jennifer Lee | El Estoque Photo Illustration

"Students should care about the different candidates' opinions on education, especially. **We're in school right now, and we'll be affected.** General welfare issues and how they're treated in politics should be important to [us]."



freshman Kirthi Gomatam

Used with permission of Kirthi Gomatam