

The United States at its core is an experimental state. It is the first modern nation state to be based on democratic values rather than some kind of monarchy. Anyone living in America has a right to liberty and justice. One of the first sentences in the Declaration of Independence is "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal". This is the beauty of America, and what has drawn many immigrants like my family to it. Obviously throughout history, this sentence has been ignored. From the injustices of systematic racism, to the oppression of homosexuality, to the suppression of female voices, America is not perfect in this regard. Every marginalized group has stepped up to claim their rights and make their voices heard. As free citizens, we all need to speak, and America should provide a safe platform where that is possible for all. I fear that we are now living in a time where that right is being threatened. This is a fear that all minorities grapple with, including myself, a 16 year old Muslim boy with Bengali heritage. As a free citizen of America, I should not have to apologize for the actions of a few delusional criminals who claim to share my faith. It is my responsibility to fight for my rights. One of the ways I can take action is to be informed about current policies and know about candidates whose views resonate with my goals. I realize the significant impact any election can have on my future. This is why journalism and elections are so important to me. Views are shaped by what people see in the media, and this has the power to change the outcome of elections. That is why fake news and misinformation are so dangerous. I do not think there will ever be a lack of lies and misinformed people in the world. However, we can change how people perceive groups who are fighting for their rights by highlighting the positive things that they do. For example, It saddens me that I rarely see highly qualified Muslims in the news rather than terrorists. There is no lack of influential American Muslims, but biased news sources deliberately choose not to talk about them to hurt the Muslim image. If people had some positive information about groups like us, maybe they would consider a candidate who is actively fighting for the rights of minority groups. Change does not happen unless people who have the power to do something support it. After all, this is what being an American is all about: the fight for liberty and justice for all.