

Teenage Rights and Laws

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Some laws surrounding teenage rights are about finances, education, appearance, speech, and health. Some of these laws I agree with and some are substandard. These laws affect most people under 18 in the US, and there are five of them I will look at. These are all national laws, and apply to most states in the US.

The first law is that “Parents have a right to their minor children’s income or earnings.” My first interviewee, Eli Thrush, says that you should have some freedoms with finances, but it is a reasonable law. My second interviewee, Matthew Vollrath, says “It should not be that way. Teenagers can’t control their parents account, so they should not be able to take from theirs.” Both of the interviewees are teenagers themselves, because I wanted to get an opinion from someone affected by these laws. Personally, I think that a parent or guardian should be able to influence and obviously direct you to spend your money in a reasonable way, but should not be able to pocket their teens income for themselves.

The second law is “Parents can control their child’s education, such as choosing to homeschool.” Thrush says a guardian should be able to influence a minors choice on education, but the teen should get the end decision for their own education. Vollrath says that a parent should be able to make a decision based around their financial situation but if they do decide to

override the teens decision, they should have a good reason. For this law I would say this is reasonable, and I agree with this.

The third main law on teenage rights is: “Parents and schools have the right to tell children what to wear, so long as any school dress code promotes good health or discipline.” Both Thrush and Vollrath had similar views on this law. The main opinion on this was that the teen should have some freedoms, but also restrictions where the situation is not appropriate. Thrush also made the point that if the teen is making their own money and they buy the clothing for themselves, they should have the choice of when and where to wear it. I do think that it’s okay to an extent, but I do see where parents and schools need to have restrictions on this.

The fourth law is the following: “Although a teen has the right to free speech, a parent has the right to prohibit a child’s use of curse words.” Both Thrush and Vollrath said this is a good law, and has the right to be enforced. I also agree with this; just like the clothing, often times minors need to have guidance in these areas.

The last law is: “With limited exceptions, teens need parental approval to see a doctor or medical professional.” Both of my interviewees had mixed feeling about this one, but overall they decided a teen should be able to seek medical help or guidance without a parent. “No. The teen might not want the parent to worry or get stressed,” Eli Thrush said. “If the teen can drive, then they should be able to do it on their own, but if they can not, they they should have someone to drive them there.” Vollrath’s view was that if a teenager is seriously hurt, but the guardian doesn’t think so, they might not get the help they need and a parent might not see the extent of

the sickness/injury, and the minor might could suffer consequences because of this. I would agree with both of these, and both interviewees have good points to make.

The laws probably aren't going to be changed anytime soon, but it is good to collect opinions from teenagers to get their view on the topic.