

JFK famously said , "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country". What does this mean and how can you fulfill your civic duty?

“Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country” embodies the meaning of performing your civic duty. This quote from JFK is also very inspirational because it asks you to change your mindset to giving rather than taking. Ways that you can give back to your community include: voting, running for political office, taxes, serving jury duty, volunteering, serving in the military or a public benefiting job such as a teacher or police officer.

JFK was referring to performing civic duty. Asking what the country can do for you shows you expect to receive without putting in effort. Asking what you can do for your country shows you want to give to your country. In this speech JFK motivates the citizens of America to help the country and to put their country first. He wants the American people to be involved in making the country better. When you are a part of bettering the country you have a sense of pride and that will make you feel good. If you are fulfilling your civic duty, you will in turn will help better the country.

Fulfilling your civic duty is important. A person's civic duty is his/her responsibilities to the community. Something as simple as paying taxes has a big impact. For example local taxes go to paying for the local schools as well as police officers. At the Moore School we have access to new technology due to the generosity of our taxpayers. For example, all of the seventh and eighth graders are assigned their own Chromebooks. We use them in class and are allowed to take them home. Being able to take the Chromebooks home has made it possible for the students without computers at home to do homework assignments that are online. In my family we have one computer and four kids that need to use it but because I am able to take my chromebook home, I don't have to use the home computer. I know that if I did not have it the other three kids

would have to wait every night to get the computer. In school we use our Chromebooks in almost all of our classes daily. If we did not have them we would not be able to get school work done as efficiently as we do now. Our teachers would have to reserve computers or we would have one Chromebook cart assigned to the seventh and eighth grade. In the latter of the two scenarios there would not be enough Chromebooks for all of the students to be using at once. The taxpayers in Candia have made it possible for students to get their homework and school work done more efficiently.

Making sure that you pay your taxes is only a step in fulfilling your civic duty. The next step would be to make voting in every election a priority. A democracy only works if you have the majority of people from all classes and backgrounds going out to vote. It ensures that the public opinion is heard and those in office voice the opinions of the public. When only a select group is voting, that group “controls” the government because only they are voting and their views will be represented by who they elect.

Another way to have your view voiced is to run for political office. Running for political office betters the nation as a whole because people who run for political office have direct involvement and can help make positive changes. My aunt Beth has been elected to four terms in the Maine House of Representatives. She does it because she loves being a part of the community and helping the people she represents. By being a member of the Maine House she is helping run the state and make positive improvements to Maine. Her voice represents a district in Maine and those people trust her to vote on important decisions for them. If you think of that from a national perspective, without people in the House, the Senate or the White House our country would not be able to function. If running for a political office does not seem feasible, it

is also effective to contact to your congressmen and senators. When someone emails, calls or writes a handwritten letter the congressmen and senators listen and take into account the caller or writer's viewpoint.

Another way to fulfill your civic duty is to volunteer in your community. Volunteering in your community betters the nation as a whole. Volunteers help the community work. Candia is so small that we have volunteer firefighters. If nobody decided to volunteer for the job then we would be without firefighters and our first responders would have to come from other towns. That would mean that it would take longer to get help when you need it.

A more involved approach would be to create a non-profit organization dedicated to helping those in need. By creating these organizations, people help the people or animals in our country who need it most by donating time and money for their cause. Another way to accomplish that is to donate to already existing organization. An example is when people buy one of those meal boxes at the grocery store around the holidays. It is a little thing but it feeds a family that otherwise might not have food on the table.

You can also choose a job in public services, where you are being payed by the government. In a job like this you are fulfilling your civic duty everyday. Jobs in this field help make the country run. A teacher would be one of these jobs. Without teachers to teach their would be no one teaching kids. If kids are not able to learn and go to school when they grow up it would be hard for them to get jobs. Being a teacher is a way to fulfill your civic duty because there is no doubt that they make a big contribution to better the country.

Even a job as simple as a construction worker is vital to the function of the country. They build and maintain all of the roads, bridges buildings. This impacts everyone directly in a

positive way. Technically, most of the time they are not paid by the government, but still counts as a civic duty because the work they do benefits the country. If people don't, the community will fall apart. If there was nobody to build and maintain all of the roads, buildings and bridges each person would need to build their own businesses and homes. Roads would not be paved. Waterways would be impossible to cross without a boat. The country would be a mess without people to build and maintain the roads, bridges and buildings.

When you are helping out in your community and being a part of it by volunteering, voting, running for political office, taxes, serving jury duty, serving in the military or a public benefiting job such as a teacher or police officer, you will be able to see growth and positive changes in your community. Going back to JFK's quote, "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country", when you are asking this question you are doing the first step in completing your civic duty. The next is to act on your thoughts and find some way that you can become a part of the change that you want to see in your community.