



Why Can't I Trick-or-Treat?

OPINION

Written by Regan Simeon, Designed by Sabrina San Agustin

When I was in elementary school, October meant one thing: trick-or-treating on Halloween night. I would spend months nagging my mom for the perfect costume to wear out with my friends, my biggest concern being whether I should dress as a Disney princess or a Marvel superhero. Trick-or-treating was a big part of my childhood, I have many fond memories from the years I would dress up and go collect candy with my friends. Thinking back on those times, I am reminded of the innocence and joy of simply being a kid. So why does that innocence have to end?

Ever since my eighth-grade year, it has become very clear to me that I am considered "too old" to trick or treat. Apparently, once you turn 13 adults no longer consider you as an excited and innocent little trick-or-treater; you are, rather, a mischievous teen looking for trouble.

It has become a common belief that trick-or-treating is not for teens. Some people see it as "weird" or "immature," while others see it as a threat to their children's safety. In some cities, it has even become illegal to trick or treat past a certain age.

In Chesapeake, Va., Section 46-8 of the Code of Ordinances titled "Trick or treat activities," states any person over the age of 14 years shall be guilty of a class four misdemeanor. A class four misdemeanor, according to the Code of Virginia, is punishable with up to a \$250 fine. Additionally, any person found trick-or-treating after 8 p.m. will be found guilty of the same misdemeanor and faces the same punishment.

Similarly, in Belleville, Ill., Section 130.19 of the Code of Ordinances titled "Halloween Solicitation," states that it shall be unlawful for any person over the age of eighth grade to make trick or treat visitations on Halloween night.

Further, there is a strict time limit curfew for trick-or-treating, limited from the hours of 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. These bizarre laws were created as a result of the Belleville senior community's fears over teenagers knocking on their doors at the ungodly hour of 10 p.m.

These laws are almost comical. The fact that governments are more concerned with teens dressing up and knocking on doors for candy than with teen drinking and driving on Halloween night is insane. People who claim teenagers will cause mischief and pull pranks on young children are the same ones accusing teenagers of lacking the innocence they once had. To those people

I ask one question: How am I supposed to retain my childhood innocence if I am shamed for my childhood activities?

As teenagers we are not quite adults, but we are also no longer children. When we turn to our inner child and try to live out the little innocence we have left, we are shamed and told to act like adults. But, when we try to act like adults and take on big topics, such as voting or gun rights, we are told we are "too young."

This past Halloween I realized how much I miss trick-or-treating; the excitement leading up until the sun goes down and the

candy bowls come out, and the earnest conversations about trading candies. Something about dressing up and sitting in someone's basement just does not excite me the way that strolling down my neighborhood's streets collecting candy with my best friends does.

The fact of the matter is that our childhoods go by in the blink of an eye. Once we get to high school, we only have four years left of being kids. High school does not offer exciting Halloween parties or costume parades like we had in elementary school. As a teenager, trick-or-treating is one of the few innocent parts of my childhood that I still have left. And really, what's the harm? All I want is some free candy.

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-REGAN SIMEON