



**HAILEY DELPHIA LaFRANCE**

is a 9th grader at Kenston High School. She likes hanging out with friends, enjoys all kinds of dance and is on the school dance team. She is interested in becoming an orthodontist.

In the past few years I have seen more and more signs on store fronts stating that children under the age of 17 are not permitted without an adult. Unfortunately, not all kids are disruptive and don't have money to purchase what it is they want to buy. I feel as though this is discriminatory against teens because for those of us who know how to conduct ourselves we are unable to shop with a group of friends or even alone.

At sixteen years of age I am permitted to drive an automobile but yet I cannot go into certain stores without my parents. Not to mention the fact that I can't take my brother or sister into certain places if I wanted to once I am able to drive. I guess the point I'm trying to make is that you should not be able to discriminate against all teens. I feel as though if you have been in a store and could not conduct yourself properly then you should not be allowed back in that establishment. I understand why establishments don't want groups of kids but yet they also need to respect the fact that kids are typically the target shoppers to their company. I feel as though they are hurting their own profit because we as teens will go to another store and spend the money. We generally don't care who takes our money or our parent's money in most cases.

It really bothers me that all teens are being depicted as bad people who can't control themselves. Just as many adults can steal and conduct themselves in a less than acceptable manner. I don't think that teens should be the product of discrimination in regards to stores; however, the signs should state if you can't act appropriately nor plan on paying for any items that you may want, then you should probably reconsider entering this establishment.

A few ways in which I can take an active approach in my stand on the discrimination of kids under 18 not allowed in stores without an adult would include sending appropriate and polite letters to the stores, attend council meetings in those cities, or ask to speak to a store manager, and if I did not feel as though I received a satisfactory response, I would then attend a city council meeting as well as send a letter to the corporate offices of the stores.

I don't feel as though this is being done to kids intentionally, but it's our job as the ones being discriminated against to take a stand for what we believe is right. This is true to any form of discrimination not just relating to store policies. Discrimination is far from being a thing of the past and will continue far into the future, but we need to hold people accountable. Today I have a much greater appreciation for the word "discrimination."