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Dear Lois Lowry,

Even though the word “government” is never mentioned once in *The Giver*, your book forever changed the way I think about government. Before I read *The Giver*, government was just a tedious topic endlessly discussed by adults. I realized only after finishing the book that the few, mysterious people making all the decisions for Jonas and his Community were actually the government. Why did they have the power to withhold all of the bad memories, which were so vital for the citizens to be able to live fully? Even though these memories were incredibly painful, was that the right decision? Would I want my government to make such decisions and to have such power? No! A government should serve its people, not shield them from basic human experiences.

Because of *The Giver*, I started paying more attention to news stories about governments. I learned that there are some governments that regulate the kind of clothing a woman can wear and who can receive an education. There are governments who rarely tell their citizens the truth and punish them for attempting to discover it on their own. I heard stories about abuses of power in my own government: bribes taken and ethical lines crossed.

Still, I realized how lucky I am to have a government that strives to bring such abuses out into the open. I realized what a priceless gift this is, one that must be nurtured, appreciated, and above all, never taken for granted.

I think the best way to help ensure this is for me to be the best citizen I can be. I will keep my eyes, ears, and mind open to learn more about my government: how it runs and the decisions it makes. I will encourage everyone around me to do the same, especially my peers. And on the day I turn 18, my most cherished birthday present will be the privilege to register to vote.

The Giver showed me how critical it is to have a voice in the government. Maybe if enough citizens take this right seriously, my government can serve as a positive example for other governments. Eventually, I hope no one has to live with a government that has claimed too much power, like Jonas’ in *The Giver*.

Thank you for writing such a thought-provoking, moving novel that has changed the way I think about the world.

Sincerely,

Cori Mazer