Q63 – There are four amendments to the U.S. Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.

DOUGLAS GINSBURG, Federal Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit:
Four amendments to the Constitution have protected or expanded suffrage: the right to vote.

The Fifteenth Amendment – ratified after the Civil War – was meant to protect the right to vote regardless of race, or whether a citizen had once been a slave.
The Twenty-fourth Amendment – ratified during the Civil Rights era of the 1960's – outlawed poll taxes, which had been used to keep black Americans in the former slave states from voting.
The Twenty-sixth Amendment – ratified during the Vietnam War – lowered the voting age to eighteen.
The Amendment that most expanded suffrage was the Nineteenth, which gave women the right to vote.
Fittingly, the West pioneered the movement.

When the Wyoming legislature applied for statehood, it told Congress, "We will remain out of the Union one hundred years rather than come in without the women." Utah, Colorado, and Idaho followed Wyoming into the Union – with the women.
By 1919, women could vote in fifteen states. That year, after decades of debate, the Nineteenth Amendment was finally passed by the Congress and went to the states for ratification.
Tennessee was the clincher. Imagine the pressure on men. 24-year old Harry Burn – a freshman member of the Tennessee legislature – opposed the Amendment until his mother sent a letter saying "be a good boy and vote for it".
Tennessee ratified the Amendment by a vote of 49 to 47 … thanks to Harry's mom.
Now some people want to lower the voting age to sixteen – two years before legal adulthood. Well, maybe. Maybe if they've passed a civics exam.