

***Testimony Presented
By Richard P. Antonetti
397 Kimberly Lane
Watertown, Connecticut 06795***

***February 29, 2008
10:30 AM
Room 2B LOB***

Re: HJ 21, Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow Seventeen-Year-Old Persons Who Will be Eighteen Years of Age at the Next Regular Election to Vote in Primaries Related to Such Election

Good afternoon , Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Richard Antonetti. Since 1962, I have been a teacher of Government and United States History at Notre Dame High School in West Haven. I am also the Faculty Advisor of The Millard Fillmore Club, our Notre Dame political action club. I am here today to lend my voice to that of our students in support of HJ 21, which if enacted would allow certain seventeen-year-olds to vote in primary elections if they will be 18 at the time of the general election. Our students have been actively advocating for such an amendment for the past four years.

I believe that any actions we can take to encourage our young people to become full participants in our political processes benefit both our state and our nation and I applaud our Notre Dame students for taking the initiative to pursue these legislative changes. Over my forty plus years of working with young adults, I have seen many changes in attitudes and patterns of behavior. The youth of today are better informed about current events and issues than those of ten or fifteen years ago. Technological advances and access to the internet have literally put the “world at their fingertips.” They

are ready to take on a more active role in determining their own futures, and that of their communities. Now is the time for allowing them to become full participants in our democratic electoral process. Without the means to have a voice in the selection of candidates for public office, our young adults are relegated to being only “half a voter.” To date, eighteen other states have enacted legislation allowing 17 year olds to vote in primaries if they meet certain criteria. As you have heard, such legislation has been shown to have a positive impact on young voter turnout. I urge you to enact legislation to extend full voting rights to our youth as a means of encouraging active participation in our most precious of democratic processes, the nomination and election of our community, state and national leaders.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "EPA", with a horizontal line drawn through it.