



TESTIMONY in SUPPORT of 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.

Co-Chairs Senator Gayle Slossberg and Representative Chris Caruso, I write you today to urge passage of HJ 21 a 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. I currently serve as the President of the Greater Hartford Young Democrats an organization committed to the engagement, education and empowerment of young democratic voters ages 14-35. In the Greater Hartford Young Democrats Chapter we act as an advisor to High School and College Chapters which include those who are not eligible to vote but are active in the Democratic Party and process. In my hometown of Wethersfield, the Wethersfield High School Young Democrats have been active since its inception by Congressman Chris Murphy.

I urge your support and passed of HJ 21 because it is quite frankly unconstitutional that we would offer 18 year olds the right to vote in a GENERAL election but not have that very right in a PRIMARY election whose result will determine the candidates for the GENERAL election.

While the opposition may state that this resolution will create frustration during elections or that we are giving the rights of SOON to be 18 year old persons who are not aware of the election and issues at hand; I would have to disagree. We have seen in the year 2008 alone an influx of young voters across the country. From the Iowa Caucus with a RECORD number of young person's turning out, for the first time the number of young people partaking in the caucus was EQUAL to that of seniors, to here in our own home state of Connecticut where over 25% of new registered voters were under the age of 30!

I commend your efforts and willingness to bring this resolution forward. There are no easy solutions to the problems you face day in and day out. This resolution, on the other hand, is not only groundbreaking but critical to our election process and continuing to engage the youth in politics and the democratic process.

Again, I urge your support and passage of HJ 21. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Jennifer L. Paquette, President

Greater Hartford Young Democrats