

**Testimony Presented
By John R. Santoro
7 Covey Crossing
Guilford, Connecticut 06437**

**February 29, 2008
Room 2B LOB**

Re: Raised HJ 21, Resolution Proposing An Amendment To The State Constitution To Allow Seventeen-Year-Old Persons Who Will Eighteen Years Of Age At The Next Regular Election To Vote In Primaries Related To Such Election.

Good afternoon Chairman and representatives for the state of Connecticut. My name is John Santoro, a senior at Notre Dame High School in West Haven. I am seventeen years old and live in Guilford Connecticut. I am honored to be here talking to you about a subject that is of great personal concern to me. I am here in support of House Joint Resolution 21. I see what is going on in our society today, with very low youth voter turnout among eligible voters in Connecticut. This is a major concern for our state. According to civicyouth.org, the state of Connecticut has one of lowest youth voter participation levels. Across the United State there are 18 states that allow 17 year old to register to vote and vote in primaries if they will be 18 by the time of the general election. The states are Alaska, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia, and Washington. The state of Alaska, where this amendment has been passed, has a youth voter turnout in the 2008 Super Tuesday primary seven percent higher than Connecticut's. In the 2006 election Alaska had a youth voter turnout eight percent higher than Connecticut's. If the bill passes, it will lead to greater youth voter turnout for the betterment of our state, and of our local communities. This will balance the electoral process, and include the young voters in the new process. This change will help the

young adults who are underrepresented today, become more involved in the democratic process. It will encourage them to be far more involved and committed to the process. By engaging younger people, early on in the process, passage of this bill will help make all young adults in Connecticut more engaged for a lifetime of the civic responsibility and civic privilege of voting in our democratic process. I would ask for your earnest consideration of the passage of House Joint Resolution 21.

Thank you