

H.J. No. 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

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The nation is in deep trouble in this age. I am not talking about what particular policies are being undertaken by our President and our Congress, though I am sure those are quite objectionable and troublesome by some within our population, but rather about how those decisions are made. In a democracy, like our country, all decisions are supposed to be made in the interest of the people. This is ensured through the people be able (and willing) to vote in the general election. As many people have noted, though, in the past years voting rates have been down. For example, about half the voting population voted in the last election. This means that the President was put into power with the support of about a quarter of the population. This is a very saddening fact.

Now, this is where this proposal comes into place. A probable reason why people are unwilling to vote is that the candidates in the election do not inspire them. They lack any traits that people have an actual personal investment in and their policies may be considered a bit lackluster. The way that we control the people who enter into the race, which should be a main concern for us, is through primaries. If we do not enfranchise people to vote in primaries then we disenfranchise them from voting in the actual race, because they had no voice in the decision as to who would be in that race and their candidate might not have gotten into the race.

This proposal would, I believe, act as a means to solve for this situation. If we are able to get young Americans enfranchised in the voting process at an earlier age, then they might find more reason to engage in voting at a later date. Now, this is pure speculation, but if people who would be able to vote in the Presidential race are allowed to vote in the Presidential primaries, then it would give them total enfranchisement right at the beginning, not four years later. And this enfranchisement is essential to get the young voters into the system before they see politics as being too corrupt to actually have an effect on. Also, allowing the young voters to engage in the primary is similar to a test run for them. Instead of them voting for who will be President, they will vote on who they think they might want to be President, and then they can change their decision at a later date and vote for someone else.

I acknowledge that this proposal is not a “solve all” proposal. It probably will, in truth, do little in terms of actual enfranchisement, and the impact of the bill will probably be minimal. But the intent behind the bill, and the purpose that the bill is meant to serve, are both important things in our nation’s politics. Therefore any action, even a token gesture like this, that we can take to further those ends is preferable to doing nothing.