

Good afternoon Senator Slossberg, Representative Caruso, Senator Meyer, Representative Urban, Honorable Senators and Representatives. My name is Peg Ragaini. I live in Brookfield and work as a School to Career Coordinator at Newtown High School.

I am here today to testify on house joint resolution number 21, the 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 elections. I am in support of this legislation and am here to urge you to support it.

Every one of the adults in this room wants our youth to become responsible and productive citizens. One of the first formalized civic rituals available to our young people is the right to vote. Our young people spend many hours in their classrooms learning about democracy and the rights and responsibilities that it entails. This proposal to amend the State Constitution would allow 17 year olds who will be 18 at the next regular election to vote in the primaries for such regular elections. This change would give eligible electors the opportunity to help determine which candidates will be running for office at election time. I feel strongly this will encourage more of our young people to become and remain involved in the democratic process. Having the opportunity to vote while in high school will reinforce civic learning and understanding and allow our young people to apply what they have learned. It will also promote greater participation in the electoral process by our youth.

So, in conclusion, I ask you to vote your support for house joint resolution 21.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions.