

EXPANDING ENGAGEMENT AMONGST YOUTH VOTERS

CREATING A PATHWAY TO EXPAND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

Rep. Teuscher & Sen. Weiler

HB 422: SCHOOL DISTRICT VOTER ELIGIBILITY AMENDMENTS

Bill Background

- This legislation is **not blanket approval** that forces all school boards to allow students to participate in board member elections. This legislation **will allow** for individual **local school boards to make that decision**.
- Juniors and seniors could cast a ballot or vote in person, **only** for their local school board races.
- If a local school district enacts the measure, **juniors and seniors must register to vote, and must take initiative to go to their county clerk's office to get this ballot**.
- All students **would not automatically receive a ballot**, they need to **take the responsibility** of accessing that privilege being granted to them and in turn, they will be **registered to vote for full elections** races come age 18.

Why School Boards?

- Voter **apathy and disengagement** are leading factors of **why young people fail to participate** in the elections process.
- For juniors and seniors, **local school boards provide the greatest impact on young lives**, more direct than perhaps any federal institution.
- Exercising voting as a civic duty is critical at every level; there is no clearer example of impact than local school boards.
- By **encouraging students to vote in local school board elections**, we raise a **generation of informed voters**.
- Students will see firsthand the **impact of local votes**, and will **continue to vote in local elections** throughout their lifetimes.

Why Juniors/Seniors?

- At 16, you can... **register to vote**, pay taxes, and **drive**.
- For 2 years, students have **no experience with voting**, but the earlier one votes, the more likely that voting becomes a **habitual act**.
- Currently, students are **only allowed to vote for their school board representatives once they have aged out of the schooling system**.

Frequent Questions

- "**Aren't teen brains underdeveloped?**" Juniors/Seniors have reached full adult cognitive capacity levels. Nothing special happens at age 18.
- "**Won't students just become political pawns for teachers?**" This bill prohibits electioneering by teachers.
- "**Why should students be able to vote on property taxes?**" All tax revenue is fungible for education funding - Utah has the greatest youth income tax revenue in the country.

FACTS AND STATISTICS

In Utah, **only 14%** of students aged 16/17 are pre-registered to vote.



In the 2020 elections, an estimated **30% of voters failed** to complete their full ballots.



When voting and the importance of voting are taught in conjunction in high school, students are **40% more likely to vote** and to **continue to vote** throughout their lifetimes.



Utah has one of the **lowest** youth voter turnout rates - in 2018, the turnout was 16% - ranking as one of the **bottom 3 states** in the nation.