

TO: The Honorable Anne Kaiser  
House Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Annie Coble  
Assistant Director, State Affairs

DATE: January 26, 2021

Johns Hopkins offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 156 – Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act**.

Johns Hopkins University has made a commitment to increase voter registration and engagement rates. Building on the work of the 2018 "Hopkins Votes" initiative, the University's Center for Social Concern is working to convene university-wide collaborations to increase non-partisan voter registration among students and support every student in casting their ballot in future elections.

This initiative remains focused on voter access, regardless of political affiliation, location or voting method, or registration status. The effort began in 2018 and supported a 30 percentage point increase in the student voting rates from the 2014 mid-term election cycle. Data for the 2020 election has not been released.

The mission of Johns Hopkins University is to educate its students and cultivate their capacity for life-long learning, to foster independent and original research, and to bring the benefits of discovery to the world. Hopkins Votes manifests that purpose by preparing students for life-long learning through their civic engagement. Being part of the political process is imperative for all members of a community, regardless of which community they call home. Hopkins Votes hopes to encourage students to explore both national and local politics – as both are imperative for strengthening our democracy and shedding light on the issues most important to oneself.

This bill would further the goals of Hopkins Votes by ensuring that voter registration and election information is readily available to students and by physically bringing polling locations to our students.

Johns Hopkins University takes seriously its obligation to cultivate active and engaged citizens and urges a **favorable committee report on HB 156**.