

HB0153_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
1/21/2025

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TESTIMONY ON HB#0153 - FAVORABLE
Election Law - Voter Registration - Age and Notification to Minors

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#0153 Election Law - Voter Registration - Age and Notification to Minors

I am proud to support this effort by my Delegate Kris Fair and others to make the Frederick County Public Schools Strategic Plan Goal #1 a shared goal across the state of Maryland. That goal, in the goal area of *Organizational Culture of Achievement*, states “FCPS will equip each and every student to be an empowered learner and **an engaged citizen** to achieve a positive impact in the local and global community.”

Participation in voting and our political system is the essence of civics and citizenship. Not every student, especially in minority and lower income student populations, will go to the Department of Motor Vehicles and register to vote at that time. We are failing those students when we do not inform them that their cohort, just because they have access to an ability to drive, are registering. And since they can go to the DMV for a Learners Permit at age fifteen years and nine months we fail to get those under 16 years old new drivers as new voters. It is common sense to align the voting registration age with the Learners Permit availability age.

We are also missing out on the opportunity to recruit those newly registered voters to serve their community as election judges, a job which requires them to first register. Every year the local Board of Elections struggles to find election workers; this will expand the population from which they can focus their recruitment efforts.

Voter registration is a non-partisan activity, no partisan advantage is automatically conferred when that minor becomes a registered voter. If we are to increase teaching our youth that citizenship confers not only privileges but also responsibilities and requirements this bill facilitates that process.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#0153.