

Femi Agabalogun

Testimony for SB283

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs (EHEA) committee

Thursday, Feb. 4, 2021

Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act

**POSITION: FAVORABLE**

Hello, my name is Femi Agabalogun, and I am a sophomore at Johns Hopkins University. First, I want to thank Chair Pinsky and the committee for the opportunity to give my thoughts concerning the importance of this issue and thank Senator Elfreth for introducing the bill. I feel it is urgent that the senators vote in favor of Senate Bill 283, the Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act, due to voting's long-term consequences. Currently, I am in a professional communications class that focuses on government accountability initiatives. The topic of voting was an inevitable one, and my professor was curious about whether there were students who were old enough to vote that did not register and what their reason was for not doing so. One of my classmates is from New York and mentioned he did not have a driver's license at the time, and that is needed for the registration. However, he did not think it was worth the effort to file for a license less application because he lived in a predominantly republican county despite being a democrat. He felt that his vote would not matter, and this is a sentiment that many young voters share. In 2020, the national turnout of voters under 29 was about half compared to two-thirds for all eligible voters. The Voter Empowerment Act is necessary so that student voters realize that their vote can make a difference, and this act will increase their level of participation. This is important since numerous studies have shown that voting is habit-forming, and youth who vote

are more likely to become life-long voters. If the youth does not vote, then the turnout will continue to decrease and prompts the election of leaders whose views are not representative of their respective population's views. Ultimately, if passed, the Voter Empowerment Act has the power to affect future generations in that more people feel like their vote matters because it should matter. Once again, thank you for your time and consideration, and I hope you consider giving the bill a favorable report.