



Position: Favorable
House Ways and Means Committee

To: The Honorable Delegates Fair, Acevero, Ebersole, Pasteur, Shetty, Simpson, and Terrasa

Greetings,

My name is Lauren Wyatt and I am the Advocacy Lead for Black Girls Vote, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to engaging, educating, and empowering black women to activate their voice by using their vote. I would like to thank the House Ways and Means Committee for the opportunity to share why this issue is important to our organization.

Black Girls Vote has four main pillars: economic development, education, healthcare and of course voting rights. We are committed to democracy and protecting our right to free and fair elections. We do this by cultivating a community of informed citizens and mobilizing them to polls through voter registration. Recognizing the importance and impact of young adults in democracy, we intentionally focus our efforts on ensuring that high school and college students are registered to vote.

For this reason, we urge support for HB0436 which would alter from 16 years old to 15 years and 9 months old, the age at which an individual may register to vote. Below you will find more reasons why it is imperative that we lower the voter registration age:

1. Young people are already participating in politics. They are familiar with running campaigns and organizing around issues that are important to them.¹
2. Lowering the voter registration age will establish new voters when people are less likely to be moving as a result of attending college or leaving their families. People under 18 tend to have stronger roots in their community, often having lived in the same area for many years and established connections to their school, family and friends, and other community groups. This gives them an awareness and appreciation of local issues.²

Sincerely,

Lauren A. Wyatt, MS
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Black Girls Vote, Inc.
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¹ <https://www.youthrights.org/issues/voting-age/top-ten-reasons-to-lower-the-voting-age/>

² <https://www.youthrights.org/issues/voting-age/top-ten-reasons-to-lower-the-voting-age/>