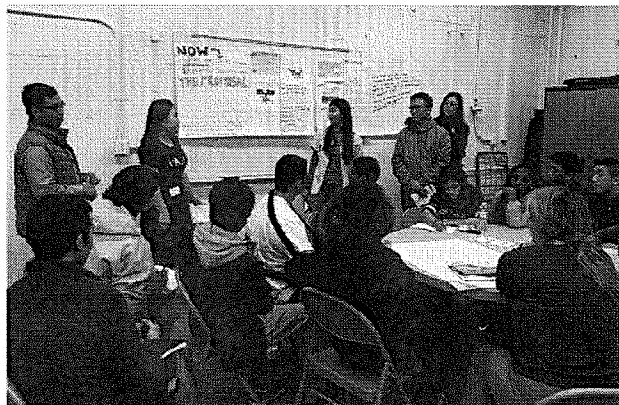


Voting at Age 16

Local efforts to expand voting rights to 16 and 17 year olds



- YC and BOS passed respective resolutions in 2005
- Strong youth participation in November 2014 ballot issues
- Successful 2014 Young Voters' Forum at Balboa HS



YC'ers facilitating Minimum Wage workshop at Young Voter's Forum



- Historically low voter turnout in SF and nationally
- Youth commissioners began research in Summer 2014 and passed a resolution on expanding voting rights to 16 and 17 year olds in municipal and school district elections in January 2015 after multiple readings



- Since 2008, increased voter suppression efforts in some states; 2013 Supreme Court Decision on Sec. 5 of the Voting Rights Act
- 17 year old participation in Chicago 2014 primary
- 16 year old voting in two MD cities
- Efforts to lower the voting age in MA and VT cities
- 16 and 17 year old voting in Austria, Argentina, Brazil, Germany, Norway, and the UK

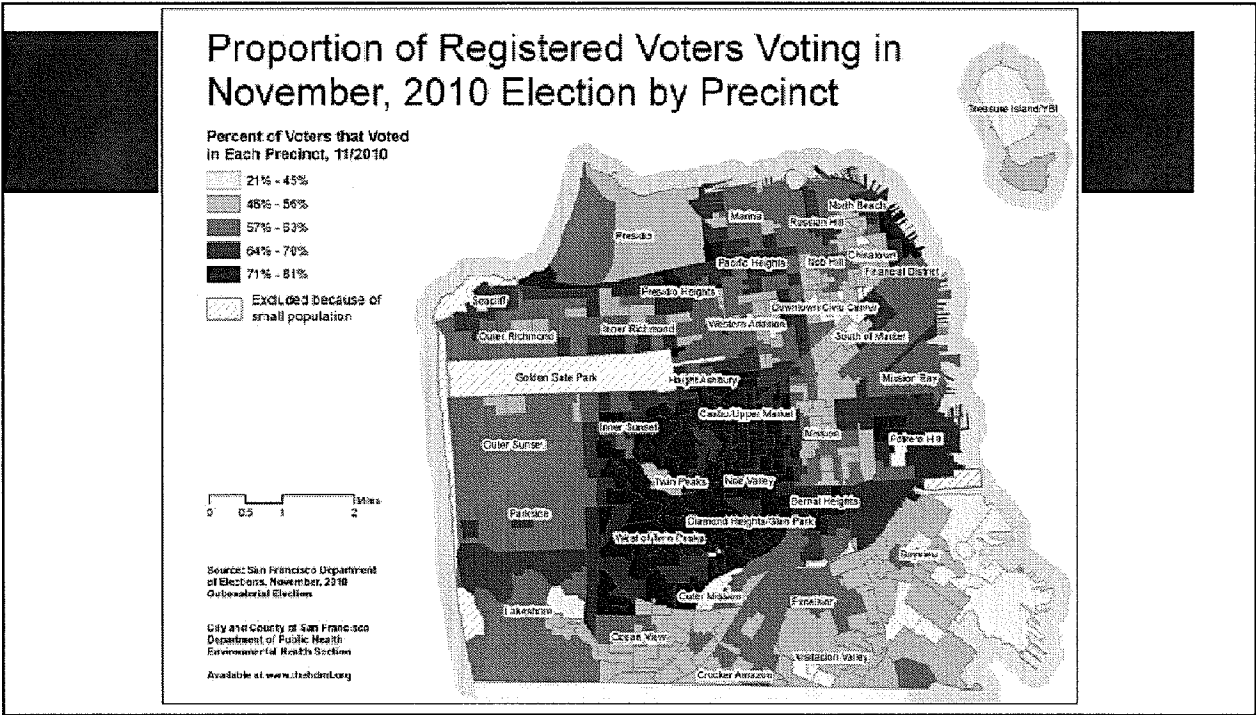
- The US has poor voter turnout rates compared to other established democracies (40-60% versus 80-90% in other countries)
- Nationally, voter turnout is at its lowest levels since WWII
- Nationally, voters 18-29 have lowest turnout of any age group, though have increased their numbers since 2008

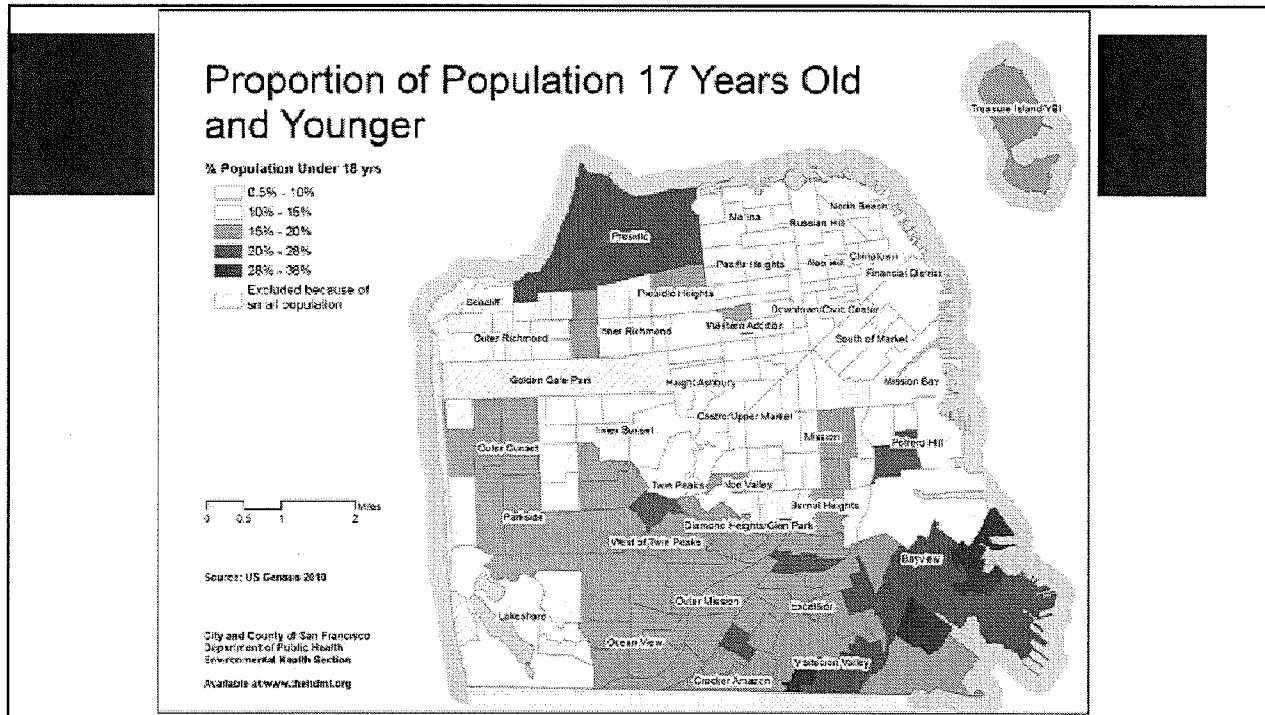
- 85% 16-17 year old turnout in 2014 Scottish referendum
- Senator Leno co-authored state constitutional amendment to allow 17 year olds to participate in primary elections



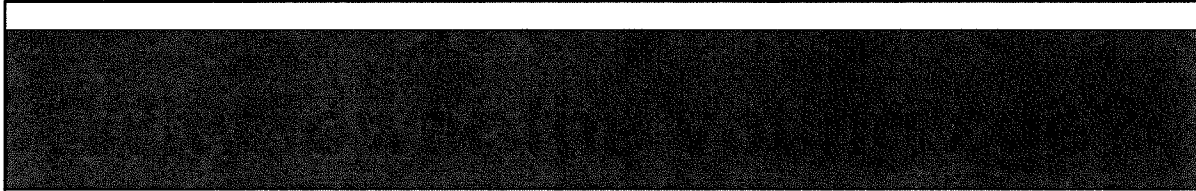
Youth turnout in force during Scottish referendum

- Voter turnout in SF was only 53% in Nov 2014 and 29% in Nov 2013
- In SF, voter turnout is lowest in the two neighborhoods with the highest number of youth and children: Bayview and Visitacion Valley
- Many children in SF are living in households where parents cannot vote. 35% of SF residents were born outside the U.S and 1 in 3 SFUSD students has an immigrant parent
- San Francisco has an aging electorate (currently 45.8 up from 44.2 in 1980, and projected to reach 47.6 by 2025)



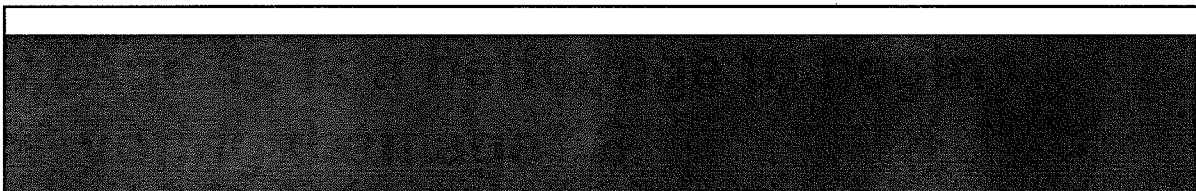


- Youth participated heavily in issues on the 2014 ballot: ie, Prop C, soda tax, minimum wage
- Youth initiate legislative efforts: i.e. tobacco permit legislation
- Youth lead civic engagement efforts, ie. YAD, YEF, YC
- City makes critical investments in youth leadership
- We have a diminishing number of youth and families in San Francisco at the same time as we face economic and ecological challenges that will require young people's leadership to solve
- We need all hands on deck. We need young people to begin developing their civic leadership and participation now, not later.



Robust voter participation is the core of a healthy democracy. We are positioned to build lifelong voters and invest in voter turnout over the long term.

We know this is a “second look” issue. We believe research shows that age 16 is a better time to begin voting than age 18.

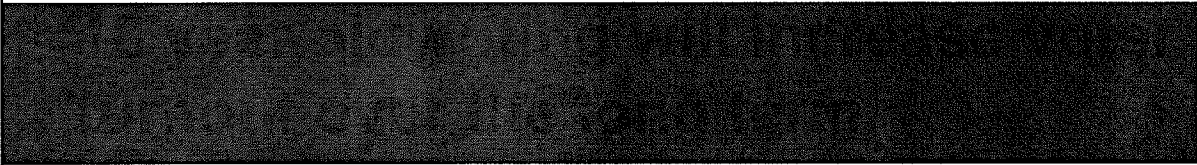
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- At age 16, young people are embedded in their communities of origin, where they know and care about local issues
 - 16 and 17 year olds are enrolled in school and are living with family members who are voters. They have the opportunity to have classroom and dinner table conversations that support informed voting choices
 - By comparison, age 18 is a year of intense transitions for most young people, making it a challenging time to establish new voting habits
 - As a result, many young people currently do not begin voting until their late twenties



Research shows that:

Voting is habitual. Once someone casts their first vote, they will continue voting

The earlier someone starts voting, the more likely they are to be a lifelong voter



Teen voting will have a “trickle up” effect on parents and “trickle out” effect on peers, increasing voter turnout all around.

Research shows:

When 16 and 17 year olds engage in civics, conversations about politics and civic life are brought home, with a positive effect on voter turnout for parents and family members of all ages.

Voting among young voters 18+ encourages peers and roommates to register and vote.

16 and 17 year olds register and turn out at greater rates than older voters. This has been seen in other countries that allow teens to vote (Norway Germany, Argentina, the United Kingdom, Brazil, and Austria).

It was also true in Chicago's 2014 primary and in Takoma Park, MD, where 16 and 17 year olds showed a four times greater turnout rate than older voters.

POLITICS

Takoma Park Sees High Turnout Among Teens After Election Reform

In the nation's first local election with 16-year-olds voting, many teens took advantage of their new right to cast a ballot this week.

BY J.B. WOGAN | NOVEMBER 7, 2015



Flickr/CC/Mr. F in DC

Teens today have more access to knowledge and information and more outlets for debating social and political issues than ever before.

Research shows that:

- 16-year-olds' political knowledge is about the same as 21-year-olds' and quite close to the average for all adults.
- Neurologically, 16 and 17 year olds have developed the ability to logically analyze information and make responsible voting choices

Teens can and do vote independently. In the Scottish independence referendum, 44% of teens voted differently than their parents.

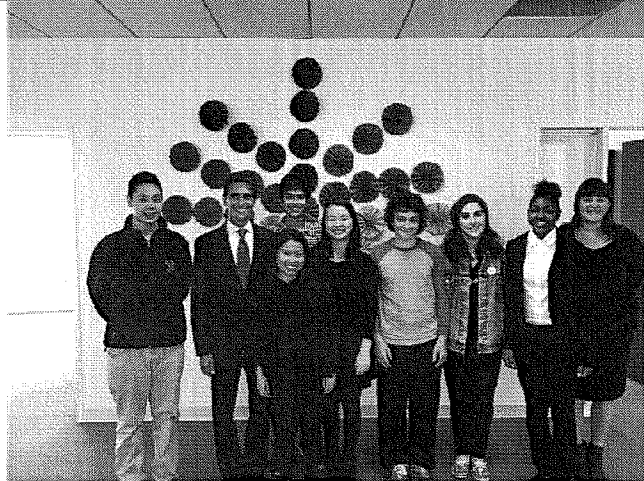
Many civic responsibilities accrue at age 16. 16-17 year olds can work without limitations on hours, pay taxes, drive cars, and be tried in adult courts. As people who use public services and are affected by government decisions--16-17 year olds are ready to have a say in how government is run.

Since the charter amendment was introduced in March, there has been a great deal of national and local press. The New York Times, Bloomberg News, Chicago Tribune, Seattle Times, the Atlantic and Detroit News all published stories on the legislation.

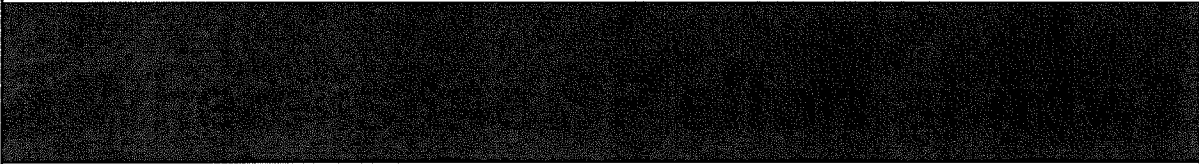



Advocates have begun conversations with other municipalities considering similar legislation

- Senator Mark Leno
- Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi announced general support in September
- 4 BOS sponsors, endorsed by members of the Board of Education, and SF Public Defender



- Legal research indicates California charter cities have the ability to make this change for local elections
- SF Charter amendment would apply to all local matters, school board, and community college board
- Controller has estimated minimal impact on cost of government
- Department of elections has indicated it could create special ballot with existing staff allocations

- 
- Headed towards BOS committee hearing in early 2016
 - Final vote at BOS in 2016 could place it on Nov 2016 ballot
 - This is a youth-led effort: Youth have begun work on youth campaign academy, youth speakers bureau, campus outreach, student leader toolkit

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- Partnering with Generation Citizen and have received support from advocates and researchers around the country
 - Building up base of legal and other research and web presence to support local efforts across US
 - GC beginning national YAB for 16 in '16 effort



Thank you very much!

Questions? Comments?

For more information: www.sfgov.org/yc

