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San Francisco Democratic Party Joins the Growing List of Advocates in Support of Expanding Voting Rights to 16 and 17 year olds

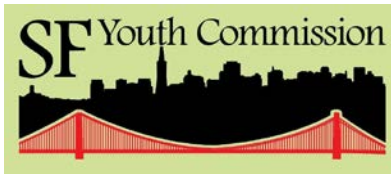
San Francisco, CA-- Student leaders turned out at Wednesday's DCCC meeting to voice their support for greater political enfranchisement and civic participation opportunities, successfully convincing the San Francisco Democratic Party to join the growing list of endorsers of the effort to expand voting rights to 16 and 17 year olds in municipal and school board elections in San Francisco.

The [resolution](#), "**Resolution Supporting the Enfranchisement of 16 and 17 year olds for Local Elections**" was sponsored by Assemblymember David Chiu and co-sponsored by Senator Mark Leno, Assemblymember Phil Ting, Supervisor Eric Mar, Leah Pimentel, Joshua Arce, Petra DeJesus, Hene Kelly, Rafael Mandelman, Rebecca Prozan, and Matt Dorsey.

The DCCC endorsement follows the unanimous support of the Board of Education in February, and another vote by the Board of Education Tuesday night to include voter registration curriculum in the district's required American Democracy courses. Other big names in Bay Area politics have already thrown their weight behind the initiative: City College Trustees Alex Randolph and Brigitte Davila, Public Defender Jeff Adachi, and BART Board member Nick Josefowitz. The voting age charter amendment is under consideration by the Board of Supervisors and is sponsored by Supervisors John Avalos, Jane Kim, Eric Mar, and David Campos.

"We need to be supporting initiatives that expand democracy and make it more open and inclusive. Lowering the voting age helps us achieve those goals as it can lead to long-term increases in voter turnout. The causes and issues that inspire us when we are young can lead to a lifetime of involvement. We should do everything we can to encourage that engagement and passion at an early age. With the many efforts across the country to implement voter ID laws and voter suppression tactics, we have the opportunity in San Francisco to do just the opposite and lead the country to a more open and inclusive democracy," said Assemblymember David Chiu, the primary sponsor of the resolution.

"It just makes sense to for us to vote for the first time before leaving high school, so that we continue voting later in life, and also because we know a lot about what our city needs right now to be a better place for young people and families," said 17 year old Balboa High School Senior Shara Orquiza.



Following a series of low-turnout elections in San Francisco and a 2014 ballot that was packed with issues affecting young people, youth leaders began exploring the issue of lowering the voting age and are now advocating to boost civic participation by removing barriers that impede young people from having a voice in shaping their future. Research shows that voting is habit-forming, and that the earlier someone starts voting, the more likely they are to become a lifelong-voter.

The effort is part of a nationwide movement to increase civic participation among 16 and 17 year olds, as well as young voters under 30. Two cities in Maryland have already passed such policies and similar legislation is currently under consideration in Washington D.C. If approved, San Francisco would be the first major city to include 16 and 17 year olds in local elections.

The charter amendment that would expand voting rights to 16 and 17 year olds is sponsored by Supervisors John Avalos, Jane Kim, Eric Mar, and David Campos and is currently endorsed by:

State Senator Mark Leno
Assemblymember David Chiu
Assemblymember Phil Ting
San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education
San Francisco Youth Commission
San Francisco Unified School District Student Advisory Council
The San Francisco Juvenile Justice Commission
Public Defender Jeff Adachi
City College Trustee Alex Randolph
City College Trustee Brigette Davila
The Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club
San Francisco Latino Democratic Club
SFUSD Peer Resources
Generation Citizen
Coleman Advocates for Children & Youth
Chinese Progressive Association
Kabataan at the Filipino Community Center
The Mix at SFPL Board of Advising Youth
San Francisco Citywide Transitional Age Youth Advisory Board
Youth Leadership Institute
San Francisco Youth Empowerment Fund
Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center
Bay Area Community Resources/CHALK: Youth Funding Youth Ideas
Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center
National Youth Rights Association
San Jose State University Human Rights Working Group
FairVote
CivicMakers