

1 [Supporting SCA 2: lowering voting age to 17]

2 **Motion to support SCA 2: lowering the voting age from eighteen to seventeen in**
3 **all public elections throughout the state.**

4 WHEREAS, ensuring active participation in democracy among young citizens is
5 crucial for fostering a vibrant and inclusive society; and

6 WHEREAS, lowering the voting age can empower young adults to engage in the
7 democratic process, encouraging civic responsibility and promoting political awareness
8 at an earlier stage; and

9 WHEREAS, individuals aged seventeen possess the capacity to understand and
10 contribute meaningfully to public discourse, as demonstrated by their increasing
11 involvement in community affairs, social issues, and education; and

12 WHEREAS, numerous countries and municipalities across the globe have
13 successfully implemented a voting age of seventeen, with positive outcomes and
14 increased youth involvement in politics; and

15 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the San Francisco Youth Commission
16 expresses their unwavering support for SCA 2: lowering the voting age from eighteen to
17 seventeen in all public elections throughout the state; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the San Francisco Youth Commission urges
19 Mayor London Breed and San Francisco Board of Supervisors to support this
20 legislation.

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2 **all public elections throughout the state.]**

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4 **Supplemental Information:**

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6 See attached document [Letter of Support]

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Youth Commission
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June 5, 2023

Senator Steven Glazer (Chair)
CA Senate Elections Committee
Sacramento, CA

Subject: SUPPORT SCA 2 (Stern)

Dear Chairman Glazer,

On behalf of the San Francisco Youth Commission, we ask you to please support SCA 2 (Stern) which would lower the voting age from eighteen to seventeen in all public elections throughout the state.

Young voters (ages 18-24 years old) in California have the lowest turnout rate of any age demographic, leaving them drastically underrepresented. In the 2014 general election, only 8.2% of California's eligible youth voted. The low turnout of young voters is partly due to the fact that they enter voting eligibility at a time of drastic transition; many 18-year-olds are graduating from high school, going to college, or getting a job.

Research has shown that the earlier in life one votes, the more likely they are to continue voting. Furthermore, a robust body of evidence demonstrates that 16- and 17-year-olds have the necessary cognitive skills and civic knowledge to vote responsibly. As a result, there has been a nationwide movement to engage youth earlier in the



electoral process. California, along with ten other states, allow 16-year-olds to pre-register to vote. California's pre-registration program began in 2016, and as of 2020, more than 500,000 California teens have taken advantage of the preregistration program.

Research demonstrates that voting is habitual—if someone votes in the first election for which they are eligible, they are far more likely to continue voting throughout their lifetimes. Furthermore, when younger voters participate in the political process, this civic engagement is more likely to trickle up and influence their friends and families. Lowering the voting age not only will bring younger voters into the electoral process but will also have positive impacts on those around them.

The passage of SCA 2 would allow California to pave the way toward a stronger democracy and help heal generational wounds that have negatively impacted equitable voting. As of May 2022, 21.9 million of California's 26.9 million eligible adults (82%) were registered to vote. This is six percent higher than just 4 years before. However, about six in ten unregistered adults in the state are Latino. A growing body of political science research concludes that one of the primary determining factors in whether someone becomes a lifelong voter is whether their parents voted. This hereditary habit voting has been historically inhibited for many minority groups, and those effects can still be seen in turnout today.

It is for these reasons that the San Francisco Youth Commission strongly urges your

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yes vote to pass SCA 2.

Emily Nguyen, Chair

Adopted on 06/05/2023

2022 – 2023 San Francisco Youth Commission

cc: State Sen. Stern