

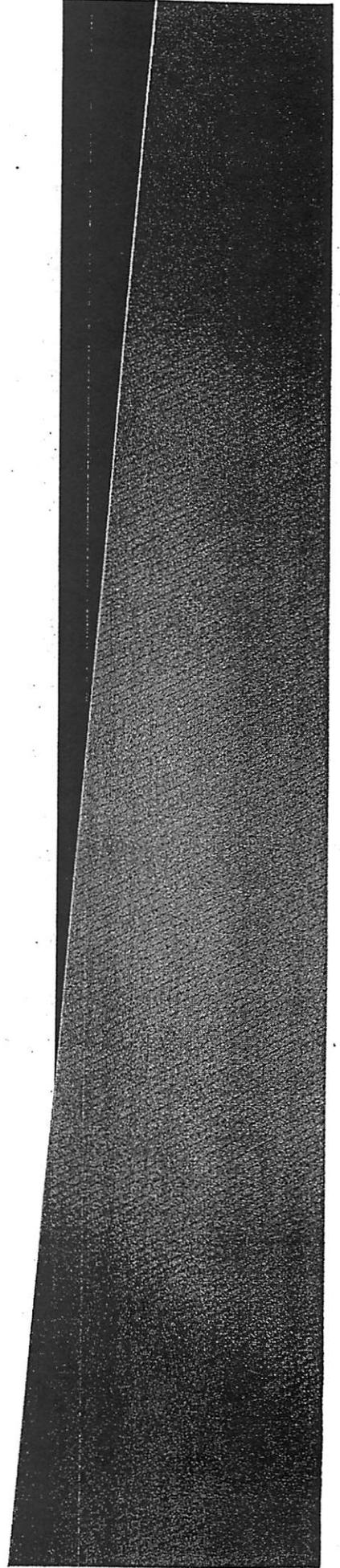
Y15  
Nelson

ATTACHMENT A

# Youth Voting Age Project

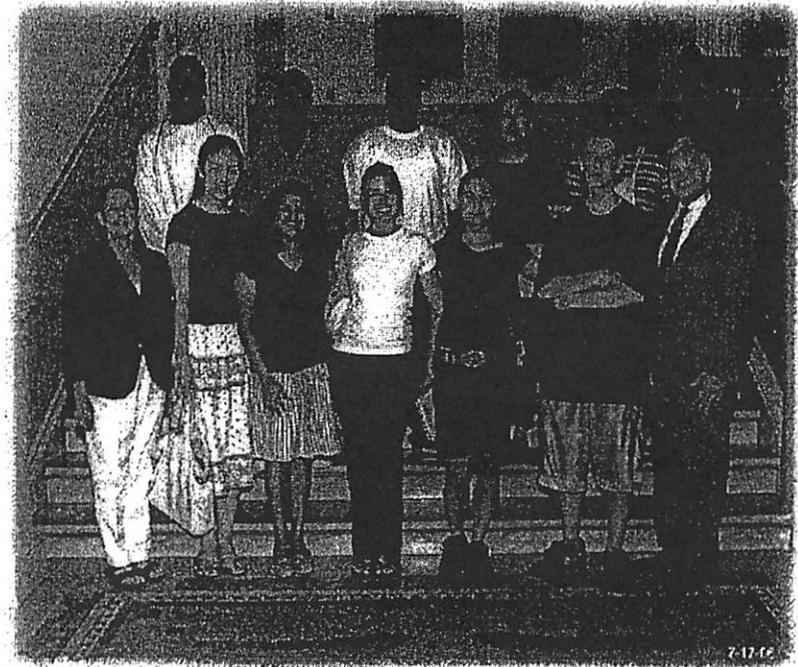
*(giving 17-year-olds the right to vote  
in local elections)*

Cambridge Youth Involvement Subcommittee  
of the Cambridge Kids' Council

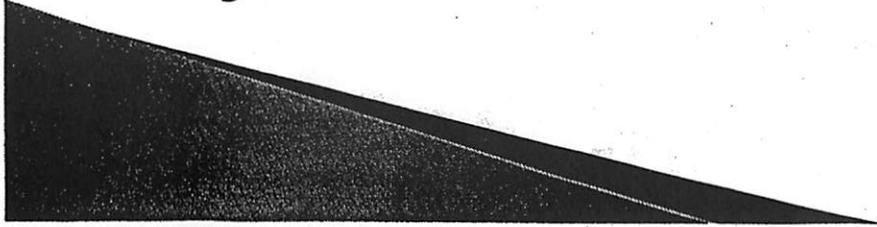


# Voting Age Project History 2005-2008

- ▶ 2005: YIS renewed effort on 2001 Youth Voting Age Project.
- ▶ 2006: Rally over 80 youth and adults to successfully advocate to Cambridge City Council to pass “home-rule petition” to lower the voting age to 17 in *Cambridge*. First filing of petition to become state bill as H.5126 by Rep. Wolf.
- ▶ 2007: Second filing of bill as H.3948. Joint Committee on Election Laws held hearing on bill.
- ▶ 2008: YIS invited to present on project at the National League of Cities in Washington, D.C.

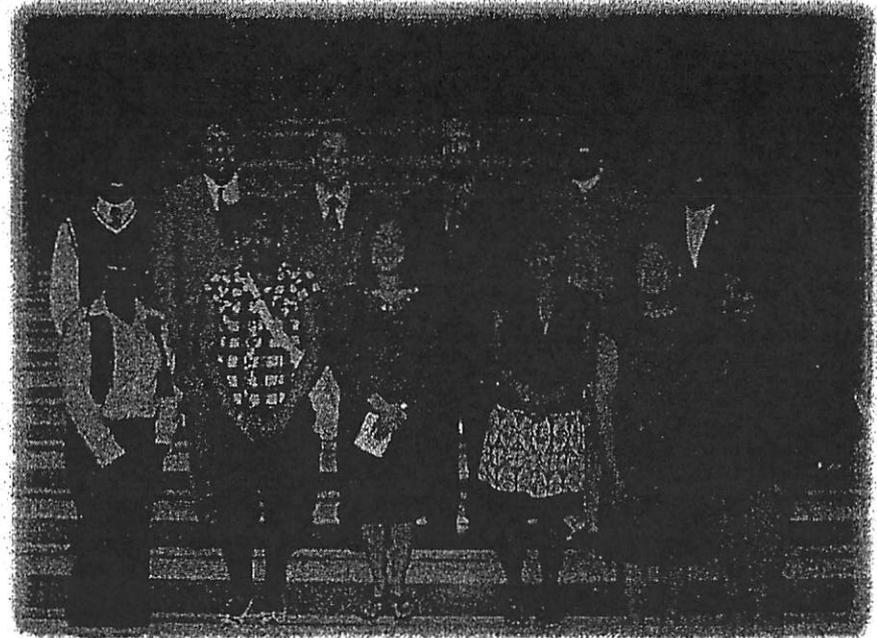


# 2009

- ▶ **March:** Met with Reps. Alice Wolf and Cory Atkins. Started collaboration with Rep. Atkins on bill H.553 to enable 17-year-olds to vote in local elections *statewide*.
  - ▶ **April:** Letter Campaign to support H.553 began.
  - ▶ **May:** Collected letters at Youth Reception.
  - ▶ **June:** Began collaboration with Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) to support effort.
  - ▶ **August:** Testified at hearing of H.553 before the Joint Committee on Election Laws.
- 

# 2010 to 2011

- ▶ **Jan.2010:** Collaboration with BSAC intensifies on effort.
- ▶ **March:** Organized nearly 30 youth to meet with Rep. Michael Moran to advocate on effort.
- ▶ **April to Dec.:** Continue to advocate and identify lawmakers to re-file bill.
- ▶ **Jan. 2011 to Now:**  
Reps. Gaballey, Wolf, Atkins, Toomey and Sciortino sponsor H.192.  
Joint Committee on Election Laws holds hearing on H.192 on May 11<sup>th</sup>.



30 + Youth meet with Rep. Michael Moran in 2009



Give 17- year-olds the right to vote!



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
STATE HOUSE • BOSTON, MA 02133  
(617) 725-4000

**DEVAL L. PATRICK**  
GOVERNOR

**TIMOTHY P. MURRAY**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

June 15, 2011

Senator Barry R. Finegold  
State House, Room 416B

Representative Michael J. Moran  
State House, Room 443

Dear Senator Finegold and Representative Moran:

I am writing today in regards to three bills that are currently before your committee: "An Act relative to Voter Registration" (S299), "An Act relative to Age Requirements in Local Elections" (H192) and "An Act relative to Pre-Registration of Voters" (S302).

Civic engagement has been and continues to be a top priority of the Patrick-Murray Administration. From the beginning of the first term, we called on the people of the Commonwealth to become newly engaged in the political process. We asked them to bring forward their solutions, not just their problems, and join us in addressing the severe challenges we face as a Commonwealth.

We have made tremendous strides in supporting public education, stimulating job growth, extending health care coverage and on many other priorities because of the participation of engaged citizens across the Commonwealth. And we did it in the midst of the global financial crisis and unprecedented fiscal challenges.

Senator Barry R. Finegold  
Representative Michael J. Moran  
June 15, 2011  
Page 2

The bills before you today advance many of the goals that have made this progress possible. Bringing young people and new faces into the political process remains a critical priority. With those new contributors come new ideas and new solutions to challenges that we have to face together.

While the current bills, as drafted, raise some concerns regarding implementation and feasibility, I could not agree more with the principles and values that motivate these pieces of legislation. I urge the Committee to seriously consider the proposals before you and to work with our Administration in advancing the goals and outcomes embodied in these bills.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Finegold", written over the word "Sincerely,". The signature is stylized with a large loop at the beginning and a horizontal line across the middle.

## AN ACT RELATIVE TO AGE REQUIREMENTS IN LOCAL ELECTIONS

This bill would allow 17-year-olds to vote in local elections.

### Why the bill is important

Seventeen-year-olds are already taxpayers. They should be given the opportunity and power to voice their opinions on issues that impact their lives. The sooner that young people acquire the habit of voting, the greater the likelihood is that they will vote later in life. Having an active body of citizens involved and educated in the political process of their community is vital to maintaining a thriving representative democracy.

*"...youth participation and involvement in local government promotes the full and healthy development of young people. Through civic engagement, young people gain work experience, acquire new skills, learn responsibility and accountability, develop a greater sense of confidence, empowerment, and membership, and forge meaningful connections with other youth and adults." —Promoting Youth Participation, National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families*

### Benefits of passing the bill

- At age 17, young people are still living in the community and thus are more likely to vote on local issues (as opposed to leaving their home community to go to college or enter the work force).
- The first voting experience should not be absentee ballot; it should be a typical voting process.

*Voter turnout in local elections is typically very low. High school students generally study United States History and Government in eleventh grade. Many students do not reach the age of 18 until the end of their senior year. Most students never have the opportunity to participate in their local elections before leaving home for college or entering the workforce. By restricting the voting age to citizens 18 or older, we are missing an opportunity to get young people involved (The office of Rep. Cory Atkins).*

- Youths and parents will *mutually inspire* each other to vote.
- 17-year-olds can be *role models* for younger siblings, peers, and other family members to get involved in the political process.

*A study conducted by the Kids Voting USA program whose Massachusetts chapter is based in the UMASS Donahue Institute estimated that about 600,000 adults nationwide were encouraged to vote by their children, specifically in lower socio-economic families.*

- Earlier the habit of voting is formed, the more likely that voter will continue the practice throughout life.

*"Although parental influences are important, young people can also be influenced by their involvement in civic affairs. They are more likely to become civically active as adults when they get involved in civic affairs when they are young (Armstrong, 2008).*

*"[G]etting people hooked on voting early can increase the likelihood that they'll remain voters later on. This could have implications for lowering the voting age simply because it's easiest to do voter education and registration through high schools—and high school is the last time eligible voters are all in one place."*

*-Carrie Donovan, Youth Director, Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE)*

- The action of voting will make youths ponder about future goals and expose youth to a life of public service.

*A study conducted by the Washington Post indicated that over 73% of 12-17 year olds were interested or fairly interested in politics and 95% of those polled felt voting was important or fairly important.*

- Voting at local elections will prepare youths for State and National elections.

*The youth are the largest and most diverse demographics in the United States and currently represent more than 21 percent of the current electorate, and by 2015 will grow to become one-third of the electorate (Nold, 2010)*

*"Due to civically engaged youth, 8% of voters in 2004 were 18-24" (civicyouth.org)*

*"[In the presidential election] voters 18 to 24 were the only age group to show a statistically significant increase in turnout, reaching 49 percent in 2008 (U.S. Census Bureau)"*

- Having the right to vote provides a real voice to an unrepresented constituency.
- Youths are ones directly affected by many local policies and should have a say. For example, a major local issue is education.
- Youths are tax-paying residents, so their opinions should be heard:

*According to a report published by the City Council of Berkeley, California in 2005, teenagers pay an estimated 9.7 billion dollars in sales tax alone each year as well as millions in income tax. Youth pay billions in state local and federal taxes but they have no say in the distribution of that taxation.*

## AN ACT RELATIVE TO AGE REQUIREMENTS IN LOCAL ELECTIONS

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

**SECTION 1.** Chapter 51 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2006 Official Edition, is hereby amended in section 1 by adding at the end thereof the following:

**“Every citizen seventeen years of age or older who is a resident in the city or town where he or she claims the right to vote at the time he or she registers, and who has complied with the requirements of this chapter, may have his or her name entered on the list of voters in such city or town, and may vote therein in any election for officers in such city or town.”**

Voter Registration Totals 1999 - 2012

ATTACHMENT B

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
RMV COMPUTER	5132	5512	3365	4782	3609	3561	3334	3906	5183	4605	4812	4814	5079	1475
AAB	12	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAA	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BBA	21	19	9	14	2	7	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
ABB	7	9	3	1	1	3	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0
MAIL-INS	2920	8733	1594	4449	3864	8488	1265	4026	1585	10609	1477	3220	1970	911
OV COUNTER	321	1583	206	665	261	1448	174	810	348	2696	387	696	424	341
VOTER REG - (Cambridge only)	236	47	92	47	99	304	45	182	142	881	189	230	192	6
CENSUS	262	0	141	310	285	536	267	515	380	532	223	612	524	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8914</b>	<b>15908</b>	<b>5415</b>	<b>10268</b>	<b>8121</b>	<b>14347</b>	<b>5085</b>	<b>9440</b>	<b>7639</b>	<b>19328</b>	<b>7088</b>	<b>9573</b>	<b>8189</b>	<b>2733</b>

VOTER REG - (Outside of Cambridge)	n/a	725	98	179	93	14								
Total Voter Reg (Cambridge only & outside of Cambridge)	236	47	92	47	99	304	45	182	142	1606	287	409	285	20

## Voter Turnout In Massachusetts Cities

	<b>2010 Census Population</b>	<b>November 2, 2010 State Election</b>	<b>November 8, 2011 Municipal Election</b>	<b>March 6, 2012 Presidential Primary</b>
<b>Boston</b>	<b>617,594</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>7.83%</b>
<b>Worcester</b>	<b>181,045</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>19.91%</b>	<b>7.74%</b>
<b>Springfield</b>	<b>153,060</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>5.61%</b>
<b>Cambridge</b>	<b>105,162</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>
<b>New Bedford</b>	<b>95,072</b>	<b>39.28%</b>	<b>37.84%</b>	<b>8.64%</b>
<b>Brockton</b>	<b>93,810</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>8.5%</b>
<b>Quincy</b>	<b>92,271</b>	<b>57.22%</b>	<b>34.91%</b>	<b>12.7%</b>
<b>Lynn</b>	<b>90,329</b>	<b>39.02%</b>	<b>23.01%</b>	<b>8.51%</b>
<b>Fall River</b>	<b>88,857</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Newton</b>	<b>85,146</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Somerville</b>	<b>75,754</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>8%</b>

## Voters in Manning Apartments

<b>Election</b>	<b># of Voters</b>	<b>Approximated Percent Turnout**</b>	<b>Citywide Turnout</b>
March 6, 2012	34	21%	11.4%
November 8, 2011	57	35%	26%
November 2, 2010	88	54%	54%
January 19, 2010	81	49%	54%

\*\* Please note that the approximated turnout is based on the current number of registered voters in Manning Apartments. I do not have the exact number of registered voters at the time of the election.