



New York State YMCA
Youth And Government

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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Committee Assignment: Assembly Freedom 3

Bill #: AF-18

1 **Sponsors:** Jeremy Martelle Jr, Evin Mattupurath, Will Lanzoni and Maximilien
2 Grumberg

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4 **AN ACT TO:** An Act to amend the New York Election Law §5-102 to reduce the
5 voting age to sixteen years old for local town, village, city, and county elections.

6
7 *The People of the State of New York, represented in the Senate and Assembly, do*
8 *enact as follows:*

9
10 **PURPOSE:**

11 To reduce the voting age to sixteen years old for local town, village, city, and
12 county elections.

13 **SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS:**

14 **Section 1: Definitions**

- 15 1. "Resident" shall mean a person coming into a place with the intention to
16 establish their permanent residence, and remain there.
17 2. "**Citizen**" shall mean individuals born in one of the several states of the United
18 States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, or Virgin
19 Islands; individuals born in an outlying possession of the U.S. (American Samoa or
20 Swain's Island) on or after the date the U.S. acquired the possession (US non-
21 citizen national); foreign-born children, under age 18, residing in the U.S. with their
22 birth or adoptive parents, at least one of whom is a U.S. citizen by birth or
23 naturalization; individuals granted citizenship status by the U.S. Citizenship and
24 Immigration Services (USCIS) (naturalized U.S. citizens) and any future updates to
25 citizenship status by the U.S. federal government.
26 3. "Local town, village, city and county" shall mean the jurisdiction with the largest
27 degree of home rule and taxing jurisdiction over their residents; minor civil
28 divisions; and the primary administrative district in New York State.

29 **Section 2:** Amends New York Election Law 5-102 as follows:

30 § 5-102. Qualifications of voters; age and residence.

- 31 1. No person shall be qualified to register for and vote at any general election
32 above the local town, village, city and county level unless they are a citizen of the
33 United States and is or will be, on the day of such election, eighteen years of age
34 or over, and a resident of this state and of the county, city or village for a minimum
35 of thirty days next preceding such election.

36 (a) A person shall be qualified to register for and vote at any town, city and
37 county election provided they are a citizen of the United State and is or will be,
38 on the day of such election, sixteen years of age or over, and a resident of this
39 state and of the town, village, city or county for a minimum of thirty days
40 preceding such election.

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43 **JUSTIFICATION:**

44 At the age of sixteen, people should have a voice in the laws that affect their local
45 communities. Lowering the voting age in local elections to age sixteen increases
46 voter turnout and develops lifelong voting habits. Sixteen-year-olds are
47 knowledgeable about civics and make equally good choices as older voters. In a
48 recent study from *Annals Academy of Political and Social Science*, they saw that 16-
49 year-olds on average reach proficiency levels comparable to adults when being
50 tested on civil knowledge, political skills, political efficiency, and tolerance. In
51 recent years the voice of the younger generations has increased exponentially.
52 Through the use of tools such as social media, our younger population have been
53 showcasing their increased interest in participating in the election process. It's time
54 that we allow them to take action of this voice and participate in their civic duty.
55 Currently, more than 15 states allow for 17-year-olds to participate in elections.
56 Cities across the country such as Washington D.C.; Takoma Park, Maryland;
57 Golden, Colorado and Berkeley, California have implemented this policy with certain
58 ones such as Washington D.C. going so far as to begin the process to allow 16-
59 year-olds to participate in federal elections.

60 **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:**

61 The costs as a whole will be negligible. The infrastructure currently in place will be
62 able to handle the increase in voters.

63 **EFFECTIVE DATE:**

64 The law will go into effect one year after passage

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