

H.P. 780
An Act To Promote Civic Engagement and Voter Participation
for Young People by Lowering the Voting Age for Municipal
Elections to 16 years of Age
By
Representative Morales of South Portland

April 12, 2020¹ Testimony to The Committee on State and Local
Government

Thank you for reading my testimony today.

I agree that is important to the future of our State and Country
to engage our young people with our political system.

I do not agree that at the age of 16 or 17 that children are
ready to be voting on issues that may not be totally understood
by someone with so little life experience.

The State of Maine restricts their driving to no more that 1
passenger (except family members or licensed drivers 21 years
or older) and are restricted from driving between midnight and
6 a.m. This is done because they need experience.

Charge Card Companies, Banks and other institutions will not
loan money to children under the age of 18. They are too
young to buy alcohol, cigarettes, etc.

If we understand that these children are not ready for the above responsibilities, why would we entrust them with voting on municipal elections, but still restricting their “right” to vote on other elections?

Elections are not “driver’s ed” where students get to learn how to vote.

I see lots of High School age children being very politically involved, whether it’s mock elections at school, debates, rallies, etc. Let’s give our children time to be children.

I recommend that this bill be voted: Ought not to Pass

Thank you for your time and attention

Nancy R. Coshow

55 Sunnybrook Farm Road
Bridgton Maine
207-647-3656

Nancy Coshow
Bridgton

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