

Approved: February 3, 1998
Date

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Garry Boston at 1:30 p.m. on January 29, 1998 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Steve Lloyd, Excused
Representative Ralph Tanner, Excused

Committee staff present: Mary Galligan, Legislative Research Department
Jill Wolters, Revisor of Statutes
June Evans, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Representative Galen Weiland
Kevin Sloop
Kristin Kestler
Tyler Pyle
Allison Neibling
Carol Chesnut
Patrick Sheeran
Brad Reschke
Matt Aller
Jason Rockey
Laura Yarger

Others attending: See Attached List

The Chairman called the meeting to order and asked staff to give a briefing.

HCR 5022 - QUALIFICATIONS OF ELECTORS; AGE.

Mary Galligan, Legislative Research, gave a briefing on **HCR 5022**, stating every citizen of the United States who has attained the age of eighteen years on or before the date of any general election, and is otherwise qualified as provided by law, shall be deemed a qualified elector for the purpose of voting at the primary election held for the purpose of nominating candidates for such general election and for voting upon any proposition submitted at any question submitted election held in conjunction with such primary election. This would authorize persons becoming 18 years of age on or before the date of any general election to vote at the primary election held for the nomination of candidates for such general election even though such person is 17 years of age at the time of the primary election and to vote upon any proposition submitted at a question submitted election held in conjunction with such primary election. This amendment would favor authorizing persons becoming 18 years of age on or before the date of any general election to vote at the primary election held for the nomination of candidates for such general election and to vote upon any propositions submitted at a question submitted election held in conjunction with such primary election.

Representative Galen Weiland stated he represented the 49th District which includes all of Doniphan and Brown Counties. The political science and government class of Hiawatha High School approached him about their desire to allow a seventeen year old, who would be eighteen by the general election, to vote in the primary election.

Information was requested from other states asking who allowed this and the following states responded: Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Wyoming and West Virginia. (Attachment 1)

Kevin Sloop, a junior at Hiawatha High School, testified as a proponent, stating that **HCR 5022** would amend Section 1 of Article 5 of the Constitution of the State of Kansas relating to qualifications of electors.

This is a proposition to amend the state constitution to let eligible citizens of Kansas, whose birthdays are between the primary election in August and the general election in November, to be able to vote in the primary election in August. Seventeen year olds are responsible and mature enough to vote. Most are in high school, own cars or trucks and must be paid for, maintained and driven responsibly. This also means we must have a job to make the payments for our vehicles.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS, Room 519-S
Statehouse, at 1:30 p.m. on January 29, 1998.

Mr. Sloop stated if given the chance to vote he would vote on the issues, study the issues and candidates and vote for the candidate who would represent his ideas the best. The young adults are the future of the United States and it is felt we should have a voice in being able to vote. (Attachment 2)

Kristin Kesler, Hiawatha High School, a proponent, stated one issue being brought up is maturity. The dictionary states that "maturity" means ripe, ready, or becoming due of something. Some say we are not mature, but would three months change our maturity immensely? Ms. Kesler stated in her opinion, as a seventeen year old, three months wouldn't change growth in maturity or knowledge much. (Attachment 3)

Tyler Pyle, Hiawatha High School, a proponent, stated HCR 5022 should be carried out for the main reason of allowing those who are legal to vote in the general elections have the opportunity to vote on who will be the candidates from the primary elections. There are many young adults who are or would be legally able to vote in the general elections but are not allowed to vote in the primary elections. This amendment would allow those individuals to do so. There are no significant legitimate reasons that this amendment should not be carried out. The age of the voters in the general election would remain unchanged. The age of the voters in the primary election would be lowered by a maximum of somewhere around three months. Along with age, there have also been a few concerns about the maturity level of the affected voters. The time span between the primary elections and the general elections is so minute that the maturity level of the affected individuals would not be changed. (Attachment 4).

Allison Neibling, Hiawatha High School, testified in favor of HCR 5022, stating the young adults this resolution would affect have sufficient maturity and knowledge to handle the responsibility to would be given to them. If given the opportunity to vote, seventeen year olds would take advantage of the opportunity. Even though not many of the people between eighteen and twenty-one vote, the chance for younger people to vote would encourage young people to be involved with politics. (Attachment 5)

Carla Chesnut, Hiawatha High School, a proponent for HCR 5022, stated some people think seventeen year olds are not responsible but they are. A large majority of high school students work to pay off many things. They are responsible for maintaining their cars, pay insurance and drive responsibly. They are responsible to be at work on time, keeping jobs and getting things done the right way. In the future they will be making the decisions, they are the future. (Attachment 6)

Patrick Sheeran, Hiawatha High School, a proponent, stated in our country, voting is not only a privilege, but a right. To deny someone the chance to vote in the primary election merely because their birthday is a few days or weeks later, is just not logical. The idea is to let those seventeen year olds that would be eighteen before the general election, vote in the primary election. A person that can vote in the election deciding who is elected to office in November, should also be able vote in August. (Attachment 7)

Brad Reschke, Hiawatha High School, a proponent to HCR 5022, stated in the 1996 election this bill would have allowed 34,000 more people to vote in the primaries. People who are able to vote in the general election should be able to choose their candidates in the primary election. (Attachment 8).

Matt Aller, Hiawatha High School, testified as a proponent to HCR 5022, stating the proposal would supposedly significantly change the voting age, but this is incorrect since only 17 year olds that can vote in the primaries would vote instead of all 17 year olds voting. The eligible individuals would be 18 by the time of the election anyway. In summary, the age would be lowered for only people who could legally vote in the general election. Mr. Aller also stated he felt the 17 year olds were mature enough to vote. (Attachment 9).

Jason Rockey, Hiawatha High School, a proponent to HCR 5022, stated that in only a three or four month span of legal age to vote a young adult's maturity level would more than likely be the same. It is felt this group would be mature enough to vote. (Attachment 10)

Laura Yarger, Hiawatha High School, a proponent to HCR 5022, stated as a young adult it is felt that seventeen year olds take on a lot of responsibility. Most have cars and have to pay for the upkeep, have jobs, go to school and save money for college. Many help in the community in several ways by giving music lessons, tutoring young kids or helping with church and other social happenings. American Government is a required subject and the process of candidates running for office and voting are studied. Ms. Yarger stated that if given the change to vote in the primaries at age 17 she would vote for the best candidate. (Attachment 11)

The Chairman closed the hearing on HCR 5022 and thanked the class for participating in the hearing.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 3, 1998.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
JOINT COMMITTEE ON GAMING COMPACTS

January 29, 1998

TESTIMONY FROM REPRESENTATIVE GALEN WEILAND
BENDENA, KANSAS
ON HRC 5022

My name is Galen Weiland, I represent the 49th District which includes all of Doniphan and Brown Counties.

About three years ago the Political Science and Government Class of Hiawatha High School, that is in my district, approached me about their desire to allow a seventeen year old, who would be eighteen by the general election, to vote in the primary election.

Following is an incomplete list of states that now allow this:

Kentucky	Maryland	Mississippi
North Carolina	Wyoming	West Virginia

This is not a complete list because some states have not responded to our request for information about voting age. This legislation would require an amendment to the Kansas Constitution. I agreed to sponsor this legislation because I believe it would generate more interest in the election process by young people voting for the first time.

We do have young people here from this class of Hiawatha High School to testify about their feelings on this amendment and why they believe it is the right thing to do.

Thank you for allowing me to appear before you today and testify in support of HRC 5022. I will be happy to stand for questions.

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Good morning Representatives. My name is Kevin Sloop, a Junior at Hiawatha High School. I would like to thank you for the opportunity and the chance to voice my opinion on the issue here today. We are here today to amend Section 1 of Article 5 of the Constitution of the State of Kansas relating to qualifications of electors.

We young adults in the state of Kansas feel that we meet the qualifications of being qualified voters in the primary election except we are not of legal age, being eighteen years old. This bill is a proposition to amend the state constitution to let eligible citizens of Kansas, who's birthdays are between the Primary Election in August and the General Election in November, to be able to vote in the Primary Election in August. For example, the election in Brown County is actually in August because of the lack of Democrats on the voting ballot. By the General Election there is only one name on the voting ballot which is the winner of the Primary Election. So, in reality, the citizens who had just turned eighteen between the Primary Election and the General Election do not get to vote for the best candidate in their opinion.

Some of the issues that are brought up to reject this bill are that we are not responsible and mature enough to vote at the age of seventeen. We are responsible and mature enough to vote! Most seventeen year old people are either juniors or seniors in high school. This shows that we are responsible and mature enough to go through high school, stay in high school, and to get our high school diploma. Along with being in school, that means that most of us own cars or trucks that must be paid for, maintained, and driven responsibly. This also means that we must have a job to make the payments for our vehicle. These are all examples of how seventeen year old students are responsible and mature enough to vote. Is this not showing responsibility?

Other signs of maturity and responsibility are sports that we participate in, savings and checking accounts, and community service.

In reality, this does change the voting age to seventeen in a some ways. This bill is only directed towards the eligible seventeen year old people in the state. This means that their birthday must fall between the Primary Election and the General Election. Here is a statistic for you to consider. In the 1996 election thirty-four thousand young adults in Kansas would have been eligible to vote in the Primary Election if the bill would have been passed.

Another issue brought up to reject this bill is that it will propose a cost problem. I believe this issue is very inaccurate. I do not think that this is a factor of the issue. The only extra cost would be to get them registered and ballotted. Is money or eligibility the issue?

We juniors and seniors do have knowledge and some experience in the voting process. By the end of the school year, all seniors and most juniors will have taken American Government class which will teach us the entire voting process. Also, all students at Hiawatha High School have some experience in the voting process. We elect all kinds of officers in school including class officers, organization officers, student council officers, etc. While electing these officers in school, we get to listen to their solutions to help our school and students. Then we have a three-person voting booth where we get to vote in privacy. So, many of us do receive knowledge and experience within our educational system.

When given the chance to vote, I will vote on the issues, study the issues and candidates, and will vote for the candidate who will represent my ideas the best. I know that our age has the least participation label, but I feel that this will change over the years. We young adults here are the future of the United States of America, and we feel that we should have a voice by being able

to vote. Of course we will get to vote when we are eighteen years old but some do not get to vote on their beliefs and ideas, because by the General Election there is already a winner.

I would like to thank all Representatives for letting me voice my opinion on the subject of getting Section 1 of Article 5 amended. I would like to thank you for your patience and attention for allowing me to address this Assembly with my thoughts on this issue. Thank you.



Kristin
Kesler

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. My name is Kristin Kesler from Hiawatha High School in Hiawatha, Kansas. Could 34,000 votes change a decision in which candidate may be chosen in an election? Well, we will never know because in 1996 there were 34,000 seventeen year olds that could have qualified to vote in the primaries if this bill would have been approved. There are many factors why this bill has been set aside and not properly inspected. For example, one reason if seventeen year olds are permitted to vote in the primaries it is thought to cost more. Well, the answer to this problem is to have early registrations for these seventeen year olds. This will then solve this cost problem. Next, there is lowering the age to vote. We are not asking for a whole age group to be permitted to vote. Just the ones who qualify to be able to vote for the general elections who would not be allowed to vote in the primaries.

Another issue being brought up is on maturity. What does the word maturity mean, well in the dictionary it says to become ripe, ready, or becoming due of something. Well, aren't we the seventeen year olds becoming ripe, ready, or becoming due to be able to vote and voice our opinions like all the other adults. Some say that we are not mature enough, but will three months change our maturity immensely. In my opinion as a seventeen year old three months will not change my growth in maturity or knowledge drastically.

Which brings me to my next point; we do possess knowledge about our government and politics. Which we obtained from our government classes which are required for juniors and seniors. Our knowledge is there yet we are not acknowledged

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and able to voice it. Still yet there are issues about our experience on making decisions that will effect our daily lives. We are however experienced because in our schools and probably others schools we have to vote for our class officers along with club officers. Without the chance to voice our opinions we will not be able to have experience in voting. We the seventeen year olds are also responsible because we are able to own a car, maintain it properly, and while paying bills on its insurance. We are also responsible by being able to maintain a steady job, while going to school, receiving good grades, and even participating in sports.

Statistics state that our age groups have low percentages in voting. Why are there low percentages? Probably because we think that our voice doesn't matter to older adults because they do not take us seriously. For example, am I making a difference by standing here speaking my opinions to those of you out there, or are these words just words from some kid who does not care about anything that goes on in our country today. If I knew I was making a difference by standing here in front of you and stating my opinions it would drastically change my views on voting. Because I would know that we the young adults can make a difference in our country by stating our opinions.

Aren't the young adults in America today the ones who will be holding your future when you are elderly, and will we not be the ones who decide on your futures. If we aren't taken seriously by those of you running our government now why should we care about your futures then. So you the holders of our future tell me, can we the seventeen year olds who could qualify to vote in the primaries if this bill is passed make a difference. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

T. Ryle

Good morning/afternoon ladies and gentlemen, we are here today to gain your support in the task of carrying out the House Concurrent Resolution No. ⁵⁰³²5035. The House Concurrent Resolution No. 5035 should be carried out for the main reason of allowing those who are legal to vote in the general elections have the opportunity to vote on who will be the candidates from the primary elections. Currently there are many young adults who are or will be legally able to vote in the general elections but are not allowed to vote in the primary elections to vote for which candidates will actually be on the ballot in the general elections. This amendment will allow those individuals to do so. There is no significant legitimate reason that this amendment should not be carried out.

There have been some concerns about the costs that will arise if this is executed, but in reality there will be no extra significant costs. The only step that would be required would be that those affected would register to vote a short time earlier.

There is a second concern that this would in reality be lowering the age to vote. Only those who would already be of legal age to vote in the general election would be allowed to vote in the primary election. The age of the voters in the general election would remain unchanged. The age of the voters in the primary election would be lowered by a maximum of somewhere around three months. Along with age, there have also been a few concerns about the maturity level of the affected voters. The time span between the primary elections and the general elections is so minute that the maturity level of the affected individuals will not be changed. They will be no less mature in making their decisions when voting in the primaries than they would be when they were voting in the general elections.

Another concern that some individuals may have is that these young voters would lack both the knowledge and experience required to make a competent responsible decision when casting his or her vote. Today's young adults are required to have taken some sort of government class prior to graduation of high school. These classes educate them as to how today's government system works and why it is important for the people

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to get involved. There is no better way to gain knowledge about anything than to get involved. You can't learn to swim without getting into the water first. Young adults have gained experience in being involved in an election through schools, churches, and their communities. They do not choose leaders by just a show of hands, but rather go through the process of having an election. Young adults understand the process of registering, listening to the candidates, and voting in both primary and general elections. They understand that it is important that they cast their votes based on their beliefs and the candidate's stands on the issues at hand.

It has also been a concern that the young adults affected do not have responsibilities. There are many responsibilities that a young adult at this age has. Many individuals, myself included have the responsibilities of staying in school, making the decision of what to do after high school graduation, being involved in athletics, and having a job. All of these require the responsibilities of showing up on time, handling and keeping track of the materials needed to perform successfully, and putting forth the effort to get the required tasks done correctly and on time. Also there is the responsibility of owning and maintaining things such as vehicles and computers. Every young adult has the responsibility of managing his or her time and money. These are just a few examples of the responsibilities an individual my age has.

It has been shown that in the past there has been low amounts of participation in elections from the younger individuals. That is the past. There are many individuals including myself who will vote if and when given the opportunity to do so. It is the young generation that has the largest reason to vote. Voting affects what will be happening and how things will be done in the future. We are the future. We are the ones with the largest stakes in the future. We need to be allowed to have the opportunity to voice our opinions on the issues currently in politics.

Young adults should not be deprived of voting in the primary elections if they are going to be legal to vote in the general elections. Brown County is one example of why it

is almost mandatory that the amendment be carried out. In Brown County the primary elections are more important than the general elections. The reason for this is that Brown County is solely a Republican county. The nominees on the primary ballot are all Republicans so when the general election comes around there is only one name on the ballot, and that is the name of the winner of the primaries. In order to have a voice and make a difference in Brown County you must vote in the primary election. This does apply only to Brown County, but also several other counties across the state.

As you can see the reasons to support this effort greatly outweigh those to oppose it. Everyone deserves the opportunity to be heard, and right now there are many individual who are being deprived of that opportunity. When we are not allowed to vote in the primaries our voice is weakened and that should not be allowed. The House Concurrent Resolution No. 50~~35~~²⁷ needs to be carried out in order to allow young adults to speak their voice to its full potential. We are the future so allow us the opportunity to have as much of a voice in it as possible to make it as good as possible. Please show you care about today's young adults and give your support to our cause.

Allison
Neibling

Good afternoon-

Thank-you for giving me the opportunity to address you. My name is Allison Neibling. I attend Hiawatha High School in Hiawatha, KS. I'm here to speak in favor of House Concurrent resolution No. 50³²35. I feel this is a very worthy resolution for the following reasons:

First, I feel that the young adults that this resolution would affect have sufficient maturity and knowledge to handle the responsibility that would be given to them. The young adults that will be interested in taking advantage of this opportunity will most likely be the same students who are very involved in student government, extra-curricular activities, who are leaders in their churches and communities, who hold down jobs and who are college bound. In addition, we are knowledgeable about the candidates and their issues because of the government class required for graduation of every student in the state of Kansas. After being encouraged by their teachers throughout high school to vote, I'm afraid students may lose their motivation if not able to vote until the age of twenty in the primaries. After all, we are the future leaders of this country.

If seventeen year old people are allowed to vote, they will take advantage of the opportunity. Even though not many of the people between eighteen and twenty-one vote, the chance for younger people to vote will encourage young people to be involved with politics. The people who do vote are going to be the leaders tomorrow anyway, so they might as well get involved early. Responsibility is taught at an early age and the opportunity to get

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involved just three months sooner will only encourage involvement in politics. When it comes down to it, less than fifty percent of Americans vote. If people are wanting to vote, it should be encouraged, not fought against.

When people say it costs too much I don't believe that is really an issue. Cost would be minimal because the only cost is when the paperwork is being done after a voter registers.

Thank-you for taking time out of your busy schedule to listen to my viewpoint. If you have any questions, I would be happy to attempt to answer them.

Thank-you,

Allison Neibling

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Carla Chesnut and I am here to tell you why I think you should pass our bill. First of all I want to say that our young adults are far more educated than ~~there~~^{their} parents were when they were younger. Some of our parents would never think about taking college level classes in high school. Anymore that is about all young adults do ~~there~~^{their} Senior year. We take College Algebra, College English, and College Speech. Not only are we taking college classes we are also taking high school classes that help us see what the Economy and the government is all about. We take government classes to help us expand our knowledge about the government so we can see how you work. We also study the issues. We do current events in order to expand our knowledge about the government today. The government made it a law for us to go to school until a certain age so why not let us use what we learned in ~~to take~~ history and government classes and put this knowledge to good use and let all seventeen year olds vote in the primaries if they are going to be eighteen by the general election. If you let us vote in the primaries then you will have around 34,000 more voters eligible to vote in each election. If you will pass this bill this will increase the amount of voters and I know that the young adults will vote for what they have to say rather than who the candidates are. Most adults today go and vote because they feel obligated but if the young adults were to go and vote today we would feel honored.

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Carl
Chesnut

Some people may think that we are not responsible but we are. A large majority of high school students work to pay many things off. I work two jobs, pay a loan off on my car and next year I will be paying for college and among all that I still have time to go to school and get an education. Among all the responsibility with cars we also have to keep up the maintenance on our cars, pay the insurance that we have on the car, and drive responsibly. Our responsibility for the work area would be to be at the place of employment on time, keeping our job, and getting things done the right way.

People may think that we do not have the experience we need to vote, but we do. We vote for many clubs in the high school. Such as, Stuco, KAYS, FFA, and BPA.

In years past there has been a very low participation ~~and~~ today's young adults. ^{in elections} That is because we have not been given the opportunity to vote. And if you give us this opportunity to vote we will go to the poles in August and we will vote. While we are at the poles we will vote for the issues that each candidate has to say and also use the knowledge that our government class has given us.

We also want you to know that in the future the young adults of today will be representing our state. We will have to be making the decisions of whom will be in the government. We are the future so we ask you to help us get involved now so that we can start seeing what voting is all about.

Good afternoon legislative members, I am Patrick Sheeran from Hiawatha High school, in Hiawatha Kansas. I am here today to speak on the behalf of the House Concurrent Resolution No. 5035. In our country, voting is not only a privilege, but a right. To deny someone the chance to vote in the primary election merely because their birthday is a few days or weeks after it, is just not logical. The idea is to let those seventeen year olds that will be eighteen before the general election, vote in the primary election. A person that can vote for the election deciding who gets in office in November, should also be able to give their vote in August.

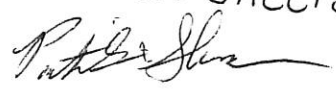
I have been informed that this idea raises many problems. Such as the idea will cost too much, it lowers the age to vote to seventeen, young people lack the maturity, young adults lack knowledge, experience, there will be low participation, and they lack responsibility.

First of all the cost would only be as much as it takes to get this Bill passed and print the extra ballots. It costs nothing extra to have these extra people register. Next is the concern about lowering the age to vote. This Bill only applies to those who have an eighteenth birthday between the August and the November election. It does not allow all seventeen year olds to vote. This would not affect me, but if I had a birthday in between those days I would want to be able to place my vote in the primaries. Thirdly is the question of the maturity of young adults. This also ties in with the responsibility question. People of this age own their automobiles and with their maturity are responsible enough to make the payments each month on their vehicles. They are also responsible by holding a job while going to school and some doing after school sporting events. Next is the question of this age group's knowledge. In our high school we are

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required to take an American Government class. It teaches us about how politics work and most importantly the way our government works. We also keep up on current events around the world for this class. In today's newspapers, magazines, and television broadcasts, it is hard to read or watch something without there being a political issue involved. The next issue is the lack of experience. Throughout my junior and senior high I have voted on class officers, student council members, and club officers. I have always placed my vote on the person's views on the issues. This experience is the same as an eighteen year old would have when he or she placed their vote in the primaries. Finally there is the question of participation. If this Bill is passed it will send a message to people in this age group. It will show that the government wants them to have an opinion on the issues. In 1996 this Bill would have let 34,000 people in Kansas vote in the primaries. In a county like ours the real election is in August. It is this way because our communities are predominantly one party. Since other party members do not run for election, the real election is in August.

With the help of House Concurrent Resolution No. 5035, it will make young adults realize that we have the biggest stake in our future government. It will help us take our step towards making decisions on the political issues to come. If we are going to run the government, the time to put our say into it is now.

Patrick Sheeran


BRAD RESCHKE

Hello my name is Brad Reschke, I attend Hiawatha High School. I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to stand before you and address opinions about House Concurrent Resolution No. 5035²².

In the 1996 election this bill would have allowed 34,000 more people to vote in the primaries. People who are able to vote in the general election should be able to choose their candidates in the primary election. The legislators who oppose this bill should take into consideration the following:

1. ~~Cost.~~ The bill would not create any cost problems at all. There is no way it could. All that would happen is that more people would register to vote and that does not create any cost problems. So money should not even be an issue.

2. Lower voting age. This bill does not directly lower the voting age. Not all 17 year olds would be able to vote in the primaries, just those who will be 18 by the general election. It just seems right that these youth should be able to vote for the candidates they want in the general election.

3. Maturity. If we are mature enough to bring this bill into being and defend it, certainly we are mature enough to be able to vote. You say 17 year olds are too immature to vote in the primary election, well how much is somebody going to mature in

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3 or 4 months when they vote in the general election. You say we don't know what is going on, but we do!

4. Experience. We make choices everyday of our life. Some of us are elected leaders of groups and organizations. We are chosen officials and head groups. We know the voting process, the candidates, and the issues. We can cast our votes based on the candidates stance on issues.

5. Low participation. If this bill passes, our generation will know somebody cares about our vote; therefore participation in elections will increase.

6. Future. Youth have the biggest stake. The future is ours. We need to be allowed to vote.

7. Responsible. We are responsible. We run our own lives and are active in school government. Everyday we make decisions that affect our lives. We go to school and church, hold jobs, and many of us own a car, pay bills, taxes, and insurance.

We are America's future. Please support this bill and prove to the youth of today that you believe in us.

Voting

Matt Aller

Hello, I am Matt Aller. I am a Senior from Hiawatha High School in Hiawatha, Kansas. It is an honor to meet all of you here today. I am currently 18 years old, but it would have been a great privilege to vote when I was 17 years old. My birthday is November 2, which is very close to the election. I would have been eligible to vote because I would have been 18 by the election.

I would like to start off by stating that it is said that there are a few "problems" with our proposal. The first problem deals with cost. It is said that our proposal would cost way too much to make it happen, but this is incorrect because all that has to be done is a simple earlier registration. Those eligible would simply go in and register earlier than they normally would, and it would be of no additional cost. The next problem deals with lowering the age to vote. The proposal would supposedly significantly change the voting age, but this is also incorrect since only 17-year-olds that can vote in the primaries will vote instead of all 17-year-olds voting. The eligible individuals would be 18 by the time of the election anyway. In summary, we would be lowering the age to vote for only people who can legally vote in the general election. Problem three deals with maturity. The eligible individuals are supposedly immature or not mature enough, but this is wrong. Will the eligible 17-year-olds really mature a significant amount in three short months (the time between the August primary and the November election)? The eligible 17-year-olds won't actually mature but only a minute amount in that short amount of time. Problem four deals with knowledge in that 17-year-olds lack adequate knowledge to vote. This is incorrect since we take hard classes, make important decisions every day, and do other things that older individuals do. Seniors in my school have taken, will take, or

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are taking an American Government class. I am presently in the class, and we discuss topics such as political parties, the House of Congress, and other governmental aspects. Many of the eligible 17-year-olds have even taken classes for college credit. When I was 17, I was taking several of those classes, and I am currently taking these classes, too. There are other tough classes that are taken throughout high school as well. This somewhat goes along with the next problem, and that problem is lack of experience needed to make decisions. It makes no sense when it is said we lack decision-making skills when we make life choices every day. Everyone in my school (and, of course, other schools) participates in sports, clubs, and groups. We elect students in my school for student government, student council, and clubs each year, and many have served positions in these clubs at one time or another. I am currently in Biology Club, FFA, National Honors Society, International Club, and other groups. I have served positions in clubs in the past and present. A couple of examples are FFA Sentinel and National Honors Society Treasurer. A few students in my school, including myself, recently traveled to Paris, France for a ten-day educational tour. I even went to Russia for a month when I was 15 years old. How is that for making decisions? Two years ago, we had a senior elected for city commissioner. He went all of the way and got the position. The next problem is low participating in voting. I'll admit that it is a true statistic and fact that people who vote the least are in the age group of 18 to 21 years old. While this is true, it is possible that ways to alleviate or possibly eliminate this problem can be developed. Problem seven is that we have the biggest/largest stake in the future. This really isn't a problem; instead, it is a true fact that can't be ignored. It is our future, and we need to have a voice in the future. How else will it be our future if we have no say in what is going on? We need to be able to participate. The last problem that we "kids" have is with responsibility. We are supposedly not responsible enough and make bad decisions. I know we

are truly responsible. Isn't responsibility shown by our college classes, the choices we make every day, and other factors? As I mentioned before, we make important decisions and do things every day that older people also do each day.

I believe that the eligible 17-year-olds are definitely capable of voting and taking part in our future. We can do what adults do each day, and we do just that. I would have enjoyed the opportunity to take part in my generation's future when I was 17, just as the 34,000 other eligible 17-year-olds that could have qualified to vote in the primaries of 1996. I would like to thank you for your time in discussing this important matter, and I appreciate your consideration.

Jason Rockey

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. My name is Jason Rockey and I am currently attending Hiawatha High School. In the past 1996 election there 34,000 young adults in Kansas who could have voted in the primaries. If those 34,000 in Kansas would have been able to vote, the election could have turned out differently.

I see no cost problem in this bill. Seventeen year olds can be registered and then vote, if they are eligible. I see no money problem. Lowering the age to vote to eligible 17 year olds who will be 18 years of age in the General Election is a good idea. There is no difference than someone who is already 18 years of age. Three or four months from legal age will not change anything. When you turned 17 going on 18 you probably thought you were ready and mature enough to vote and should have been able to. Also, in that three to four month span of legal age a young adult's maturity level will more than likely be the same. I believe if we are mature enough to attend a government class we are mature enough to vote. We show our knowledge by researching current events and learning the voting system in our government class, which is a required course for graduation. Our experience is shown through voting for class officers and representatives at school. Also, once again learning through government classes. Our low participation is due to the difficulty of getting informed and those who are unwilling to vote. We should vote because we are the future and hold the future in our ability to vote. Young adults like myself are responsible in our own ways. For instance, I myself own a car, pay payments on time, pay insurance on time, maintain it as needed, and drive it responsibly. Also, I have a part-time job in which I have kept for over a year and a half and always show up on time. As well

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as maintaining a savings and checking account, all while I attend school.

Thank you for your time and patience. I have been honored to stand in front of you and share my feelings and concerns on this issue. Thank you and good day.

Laura
Yarger

Hello. I'm Laura Yarger from Hiawatha High School. I am here to try to persuade you to vote in favor of lowering the voting age to 17 during the primaries.

Responsibility

As a young adult I feel as though we take on a lot of responsibility. I own an old car that I have to pay for. I pay all of the bills and keep gas in it. In order to do that, I have to keep a good job. After paying all of my bills, I have to put the left over money in a savings account.

I know many people my age that help younger kids and the community in several ways. Some people give music lessons, tutor young kids, or help with church and other social happenings.

Maturity

By graduation time, every student must have taken a class on American Government. In that class, we learn about the issues that are important today, the process we must go through to be able to vote, and the candidates running for offices. Young adults are mature enough and have enough knowledge to understand these concepts and use them in their future.

Experience

Young adults do not have any experience voting for officials in the United States, but we do have plenty of experience voting for positions such as Student Council members, class officers, organization officers, etc... At Hiawatha High School we vote based on the candidates' stand on the issues.

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Low Participation

If I were given the chance to vote in the primaries at age 17, I would vote for the best candidate for the job. I know many young adults that would, given the chance, vote in the primaries and again in the general election.

Kids Have Biggest Stake in the Future

In Brown County Kansas the election is not held in November; the real election is held in August. Most democrats will not run for any office in Brown County. Only republicans are on the August ballot. If you cannot vote in the primaries, you do not get to voice your opinion. There is only one candidate on the ballot for the general election.

Conclusion

After hearing what I had to say, I hope that you will vote for lowering the voting age. I think that young adults are responsible enough, mature enough, have enough experience, and will participate in the primaries if they are given the chance.