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January 15, 2019

To: House Election Law Committee and chair David Cote

From: Liz Tentarelli, president, LWVNH

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Re: **CACR5**, providing that 17 year olds be eligible to vote in the primary if they will be 18 by the general election.

The League of Women Voters NH urge the committee to recommend OUGHT TO PASS on CACR5.

Although the League is cautious about using the constitutional amendment process when legislation would achieve the same effect, we have not done enough research to know whether a CACR is necessary here.

However, the League supports any activities that get young people involved in the civic life of their communities. This bill would help for the following reasons:

Historically voter turnout among young adults is very low, less than among any other group, as shown in the chart in the appendix. I have not been able to isolate statistics for just 18-20 year olds, those eligible to vote for the first time. I have found, however, some statistics for the participation of 18-29 year olds in the 2018 election, and it's good news. (see appendix)

A habit learned young—whether flossing or voting—is a habit likely to continue.

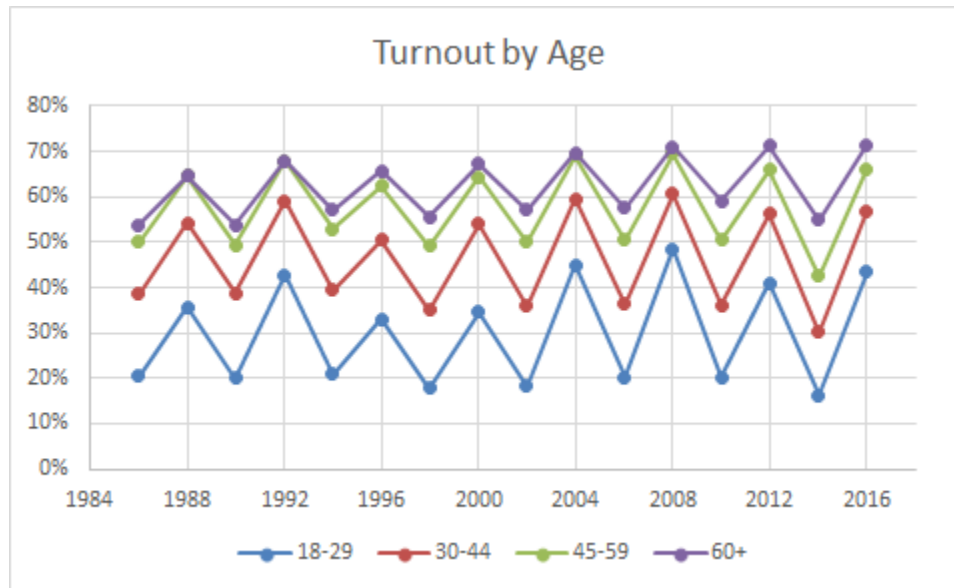
In high schools in NH, starting this year, students will take a half credit civics course. If done right, that should encourage some to vote. But few high school students, even seniors, are 18. However, most seniors will be 18 by the November after graduation. Looking ahead to 2020, when NH's First in the Nation Primary will be held early in the year, many high school seniors would be eligible to cast a ballot for the first time if the provisions of CACR5 were in place. Presidential primaries excite even young voters.

That means that high school seniors—still 17—would be able to register to vote in their home towns, before they leave for college or military service. We have heard in testimony on other bills that some legislators think that is the right thing to do, rather than register and vote where they go to college once they turn 18.

What really matters here is encouraging young people to become voters, and allowing 17 year olds to put their excitement about voting into action in the primaries is one way to do this. Please support CACR5 or related legislation.

Appendix:

Turnout Rates: Age



Source: Voter Turnout Project, U. of Florida, Prof. Michael McDonald.

<http://www.electproject.org/home/voter-turnout/demographics>

Apologies for frugality—we are submitting this without the expense of color graphics. In the chart above the data points read top to bottom are the reverse of the age ranges at the bottom of the chart. In other words, 60+ voters had the highest turnout and 18-29 voters had the lowest turnout.

Voter turnout among 18 to 29-year-olds in the 2018 midterm elections was [31 percent](#), according to a preliminary estimate by [The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement](#) at Tufts University.

That's the highest youth turnout ... since [this research group] started collecting data in 1994. It's also [a major increase](#) from turnout in the 2014 midterms, which was 21 percent....

The proportion of young people who joined protests and marches tripled since the fall of 2016, from [5 percent to 15 percent](#)....

We also found that young people were [paying attention to politics](#) more than they had in 2016. In 2016, about 26 percent of young people said they were paying at least some attention to the November elections. This fall, the proportion of youth who reported that they were paying attention to the midterm races rose to 46 percent...

Source: <http://theconversation.com/the-other-2018-midterm-wave-a-historic-10-point-jump-in-turnout-among-young-people-106505>