

**PA DEMOCRATIC PARTY**  
**Abraham Amorós**  
***Executive Director***  
**Testimony on House Bill 520**

**Good morning and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify before the House State Government Committee regarding Rep. Grucela's bill that would allow 17-year-olds to vote in primary's prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.**

**The Pennsylvania Democratic Party favors this bill for the simple reason that it would allow more Pennsylvanians to vote and harnesses the enthusiasm and energy of young people in the electoral process.**

**This presidential election has captured the imagination and energy of many young people who have been inspired to participate and volunteer on a campaign.**

**Campaign offices throughout Pennsylvania have seen more young people than ever before. High school classrooms have also been buzzing with excitement as a result of history in the making as the possibility**

**exists for the first woman or first African-American to become president.**

**Young people are also an excellent barometer of the electoral mood. A recent study by the Pew Research Center found that young people were concerned about the economy, jobs and the War in Iraq. This is consistent with all of the polling done in Pennsylvania as to what has voters anxious.**

**During this past primary election, several high school classes that contacted our offices in support of this legislation. For the first time in decades, young people are excited to participate in the electoral process. The Pennsylvania Democratic Party would welcome this demographic into the fold as future leaders not just within the Party but also within our communities.**

**It goes beyond good civics, as House Bill 520 takes young people seriously which leads to greater participation at the polls.**

**According to the University of Maryland's Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement young people aged**

**18-29 will make up 25% of the electorate in 2008, up from 21% in 2006. In addition, they will account for a full third of the electorate by 2015.**

**During the 2004 presidential and 2006 mid-term elections, participation among those aged under 25 - though still lower than that of older voters - rose faster than in the population as a whole. According to according to Rock the Vote, a non-partisan organization that aims to educate and mobilize young voters, 4.3 million more voters under-30 turned out in 2004 than in 2000, while 1.6 million more voters under-30 voted in 2006 than in 2002,**

**In Pennsylvania, the 18-29 vote surprisingly constitutes 56 percent of the total vote. That number would increase should this bill become law.**

**In conclusion, we are pleased to learn that 17-year olds have pushed for this bill to become part of the electoral process. With voter apathy rampant in parts of the state and the nation, it's refreshing to see so many students, teachers and civic organizations embracing inclusive legislation such as this. Thank you.**

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