

Good Morning. My name is Sarah Darling and I am a senior at Bangor High School and the President of our Student Government. On April 22nd I had the opportunity to vote for the first time. When I turned 18 years old one of the first things I did was register to vote. Our school and community have always encouraged students who are eligible to vote to take advantage of that right. As a first time voter, I was excited to go to the polls and finally have a voice in our country's future.

After voting on the morning of the 22nd, I came to school only to hear a buzz of seniors saying "Did you vote yet?" "Are you going to vote?" however I also heard several seniors saying "I can't vote yet, I'm not 18." As my school day continued, lunch conversations came to the same conclusion; several seniors disappointed that just because of their birth date they would only be able to vote in November's general election.

I honestly did not realize how many students felt that they should be able to vote in the primary elections so long as they would be old enough to vote in the general election. At that moment I felt that I had such an awesome secret about Representative Grucela's proposed bill. I was so excited to tell my classmates that in a week I would be testifying in support of a bill that would allow 17 year olds to vote in the primary if they would be 18 by the time of the next election. As I explained this new bill, my classmates responded in such a positive way, agreeing that this was a fantastic idea and also wishing that it had been passed earlier!

I completely support Representative Grucela's new bill. I truly believe that young adults who are old enough to vote in the presidential election should have the right and opportunity to vote in the primary election. We want to have an influence on the entire election process, not just half. I can honestly admit that today's young voters are eager to have a voice and want to help our country become a better place with a brighter future.

Altering the age requirement to vote will ultimately encourage even a younger crowd to become interested in what is going on in our country and how they can have a voice and make a difference. I believe that it is our responsibility to make sure that we are engaging every young adult possible in the voting process especially 17 year olds who will be able to help determine who the next President of the United States will be.

As a recent first time voter, I can understand the excitement and sense of responsibility that some 17 year olds feel that they are missing out on. Exercising the right to vote as a citizen of the United States is something that too many Americans take for granted. Seventeen year olds who will be 18 for the general election are eager to begin to take part in our election process. I think about how many more students from Bangor High School would have been able to vote on April 22nd if this law was in place, and then I think about all the other high schools and 17 year olds who missed the "cut-off" date by very little.

Therefore, I urge everyone who is here today to support Representative Grucela's bill. Tell your peers, friends and family about today and how Representative Grucela is genuinely doing his best to help today's young adults have more of a voice in our society. Thank you to Mr. Grucela and all of the other supporters of this new bill. I truly believe this bill could make such an enormous difference and encourage us, the leaders of tomorrow to begin making a difference today.

Sarah C. Darling