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Easton Area High School

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Comments on House Bill 520:

- This bill should be a “no brainer.” There is no reason why this bill should not pass. A similar piece of legislation is working well in Maryland, and Connecticut is pursuing the same legislation.
- The voting patterns of people in the Commonwealth of PA and in the United States, in general, are pathetic, especially for a democratic country.
- Because of mediocre turnouts in most elections – primary and general – we are really a nation ruled by a minority of voters – not a majority, as it was intended to be.
- We should encourage more people, especially the youth of the Commonwealth, to participate in “The System,” and we should emphasize that they vote in all elections – local, county, state, and federal.
- Historically, people do not vote on a regular basis until age 28 – when they normally are secure in a job and are probably married with a family. Also, they are more apt to take part in a Federal Election over a local one, erroneously believing that the Federal Election is more important to them.
- They do not heed the thoughts of the former Speaker of the House of Representatives – “Tip” O’Neill – about the importance of local elections. O’Neill believe passionately that “All politics is local.”
- Voters have to learn at an early age the importance of local and state elections – school board, city council, board of supervisors, county council, county row offices, state legislature and other state elected positions.
- Examples of local issues: Local school taxes and municipal and county issues are of utmost importance to the economic survival of local areas – especially local school taxes. The youth of the Commonwealth should also be concerned about the educational issues on the local and state levels.

- Too many times the turnout at local and state elections does not exceed 20% of the registered voters. This is obviously rule by the minority.
- You, as legislators, are aware of the property tax complaints in the Commonwealth. We need to encourage people to attend local meetings and to vote in local – and all – elections – especially the youth of the State. Actually, we need to get more people, regardless of age, involved in the election process, period.
- Mr. Grucela and I encouraged students to register to vote at Easton Area High School for over 25 years – before the Commonwealth encouraged schools to do so. We even provided students with the necessary forms. Students always asked: “How should I register?” We explained that this was an individual decision and that we could not, by law, sway them in any manner. We registered hundreds of students over the years.
- Students were excited to register and even more thrilled to tell us that they actually voted. There was a great deal of pride in the fact that they actually participated in “The System.”
- It is important to get voters participating at an early age and to get them in the habit of voting at an early age – to return to the day of “rule by majority.”
- I strongly urge the Pennsylvania Legislature to pass House Bill 520.
- Thank you for the honor of speaking before this panel.
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