



**FOX CHAPEL AREA  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

**Oral Testimony of  
Kevin Pflumm  
Fox Chapel Area High School**

**Before the  
State Government Committee  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives**

**House Bill 520**

- Madam Chairman, members of the committee, I would like to start by thanking you for allowing us speak in front of you today. I would also like to give a special thanks to Representative Dermody, for without his help and dedication House Bill 520 would not be where it is today.
- I'm currently a senior at Fox Chapel Area High school. I traveled to Easton today with several of my classmates in order to show our support for House Bill 520.
- At the last hearing the idea was posed to make House Bill 520 permanent in the state constitution potentially by adopting it as an amendment through the lengthy two year process. We would like to clarify our position on this matter. We feel this issue should simply be passed as a bill rather than going through the process of making it an amendment.
- For the following reasons:

- We understand that the rationale for amending the Pennsylvania Constitution is to allow 17 year olds to participate in ALL primary ballot questions, and this is a noble cause. However, we feel that our primary goal is to first ensure the right to vote in the primary, which is arguably the most important political right next to voting for president. This may seem contrary to the ideal scenario, but sometimes big ideas need to begin with a small step. If we take the giant leap into the amendment process, we are fearful our cause will be lost. Therefore we would like you to pass this legislation as a bill, and not go through the two year amending process at this time. For example when America tackled the issue of racial equality, it took two bills and an amendment to finally obtaining full political rights for the African American community. It was the small steps that helped mold racial equality today.
- Many people believe that their right to vote should also include the right to vote on referendum items, a condition which is not included in this bill. While debatably election of the president could be just as important, most 17 year olds are not affected by things such as property taxes or highway funding. The absence of this secondary right should not impeach the primary goal and focus of this committee, that being to attain the right to vote in the primary for 17 year olds. Please give us the basic American right to vote in the primaries and allow us to support the candidate who we think is best fit.

- A former Vice President of the United States, Al Gore, quoted "The continued vitality of American business, our communities, and our nation is highly dependent upon the knowledge and capabilities of our young people." It is this belief in which we need to fall back on. Our youth will eventually run our country, and must trust them, and give them the rights that they are entitled to. I ask for your support in House Bill 520, not only for me, but for all youth in America who just want a voice.
- Madam Chairman, members of the committee, again thank you for allowing me to testify and show my support for House Bill 520.