

Good Morning! My name is Na'Shaya Gilliam and I am a senior at Monaca Jr./Sr. High School. Recently turning 18, I had the pleasure and the honor of being allowed to vote in an election that truly has the potential to make history. Unfortunately, many of my classmates did not receive the same honor, not because they didn't want to, in fact, many of them tried to register the same time I did, and were rejected. Why is it that our government rejected nearly half of my class who takes honor and pride in the American name and fulfilling their civic duty? Simply, because they weren't born in time. However, all of them will be 18 in time to vote in the general election. I feel, it is unfair that my classmates are going to have to vote for a candidate they possibly didn't want to see on the ballot, when they didn't have the opportunity to vote in the primaries to choose which name they could vote for. Many other states including: Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, Louisiana, and West Virginia allow 17 year olds who will be 18 by the general election to vote in the primary elections, None of these states have seen any major issues or have any regrets about their decision; rather they have seen many positive effects. Pennsylvania is already being praised for our high voter turnout this year; we were even given the compliment of having a turnout bigger than the candidates egos. I can only imagine how much greater the turnout would be if everyone regardless of age who would be old enough to vote in the general election could vote in the primaries. My hope is in 4 years, I won't have to imagine, I hope that we will be able to enjoy a politically-minded young society, who finds pride in voting and aren't discouraged by the fact that they have no in-put on who's name is on the ballot. The only people who can make my dream come to life, is the Pennsylvania Legislature and I truly wish you the best of luck in your decision from the bottom of my heart. Thanks a lot for your time and consideration, and for looking to the people this law affects, the young people, who are often overlooked, we greatly appreciate your efforts to get us involved.