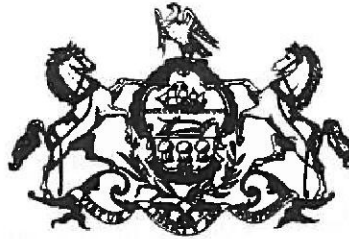


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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
CHILDREN AND YOUTH
COMMERCE
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

May 5, 2008

Committee on State Government
c/o Rep. Babette Josephs, Chair
300 Main Capitol Building
PO Box 202182
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Madam Chair Josephs,

I wish to express my support for House Bill 520: a law that would extend primary voting privileges to seventeen-year-olds who will have turned eighteen by the time of the general election. This legislation has bipartisan support in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. In this climate of renewed enthusiasm for the democratic process—with record-breaking civic participation and heightened interest in political discourse—it is appropriate to further expand voting rights to include younger Pennsylvanians. I believe that this measure would result in even greater interest among young adults, and help cultivate a life-long appreciation for the gift of voting.

I am happy to join with students from Mt. Lebanon High School in support of this important legislation. Young people have long been written off as apathetic and politically disengaged; however, those here today are evidence to the contrary. As

legislators, we should welcome these eager new voices to our democracy, and hope that their desire to contribute would be an example to our Commonwealth. I have talked with many young adults in my legislative district who wished to participate in this year's historic primary, but could not do so even though they will be able to vote in the November general election. This represents a regrettable participation gap in our system, and the wonderful opportunity to express oneself on Election Day should be expanded to include these energetic, engaged young people.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Smith", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matt Smith
State Representative
42nd Legislative District
www.pahouse.com/msmith

cc: Gary Ford, Mt. Lebanon High School