



Summary of the Youth Pre-Registration Bill

A bipartisan bill for the pre-registration of 16-17 year olds was adopted by the North Carolina General Assembly during the 2009 long session, effective as of Jan. 1, 2010.

This law allows 16-17 year olds to fill out a pre-registration form, particularly when they take the required civics course in the tenth grade or sign up for a driver's license. When the teenager reaches voting age, he or she will be automatically registered to vote and the board of elections will verify the information on the form following the same process used for all first-time voters.

The ratified bill also requires county boards of elections to conduct registration drives at high schools each year, and it broadens existing requirements for civics teachers to teach students about voting and the registration process. Forms completed with Division of Motor Vehicles personnel will be electronically transmitted to the State Board of Elections and will avoid many of the problems of reading, processing and verifying handwritten applications that are associated with other types of voter registration.

Sponsors of the Bill

The bill received bipartisan support and was initiated as H-1260 by four sponsors, including Rep. Tricia Cotham (D-Mecklenburg), the youngest Democrat in the General Assembly, and Rep. Justin Burr (R-Stanly), the youngest Republican, along with Rep. Angela Bryant (D-Nash) and Rep. Pearl Burris-Floyd (R-Gaston). The bill was later rolled into an omnibus elections bill (H-908) and passed overwhelmingly by the Senate.

Representatives of the NC associations of principals, school boards, and teachers approved the legislation, as well as a variety of nonpartisan organizations, including Democracy North Carolina, Action for Children, FairVote NC, Kids Voting, League of Women Voters, NAACP, NC Center for Voter Education, UNC Civic Education Consortium, and Youth Empowered Solutions.

What We're Doing Now

Democracy North Carolina has already begun the implementation phase for the youth pre-registration law, including working with the State Board of Elections on procedures for processing pre-registrations and talking with the Department of Public Instruction about ways to incorporate pre-registration in civics teaching. We are also beginning to talk with teachers and local administrators to encourage them to pioneer ways to implement the new law.

If you would like to assist us with the implementation of this new law, please contact Democracy North Carolina Head Organizer Adam Sotak at 919-286-6000, Ext. 11.