



Representative Andi Story

House District 3

Alaska State Legislature

Sponsor Statement

House Bill 21 Version 34-LS0241\N

“An Act relating to voter preregistration for minors at least 16 years of age.”

House Bill 21 aims to engage the next generation of voters to become informed, engaged, and active citizens. As civic engagement among young people declines nationwide, we must take steps to strengthen the foundation of our democracy. Under current law, Alaskans can register to vote at 17 if they are within 90 days of their 18th birthday. By making voter registration more accessible at an earlier age, we can foster a culture of participation that carries into adulthood.

This bill allows 16-year-olds to voluntarily preregister to vote, ensuring they are automatically registered when they turn 18. To uphold the integrity of this process, the Division of Elections will send a nonforwardable piece of mail to the registrant's residence address before issuing a voter registration card. This step helps confirm residency while still making the registration process simple and accessible for young Alaskans.

We've already seen the benefits of preregistration in 23 other states, where it has contributed to higher voter turnout among young people. In Alaska, while 82% of eligible residents are registered to vote, only 55% cast a ballot in the last general election. Studies show that pre-registration increases civic engagement while youth are waiting to vote and increases voter turnout when they become eligible.

HB 21 also corrects a flaw in current statute to protect the privacy and safety of minors. Specifically, it ensures that the address and telephone number of anyone under 18 who registers or preregisters to vote shall remain confidential and are not subject to public records requests.

I respectfully ask for your support in passing HB 21.

Contact

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