

HB

496

23-LS1766H
Kurtz
3/25/04

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 496()
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES DAHLSTROM, McGuire

A BILL
FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act creating the youth vote ambassador program and relating to that program;**
2 **authorizing the members of the program to be appointed to serve on election boards;**
3 **relating to qualifications for appointment to election boards; and providing for an**
4 **effective date."**

5 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

6 *** Section 1. AS 15.10 is amended by adding a new section to read:**

7 **Sec. 15.10.108. Youth vote ambassador program. (a) The youth vote**
8 **ambassador program is established in the division of elections.**

9 **(b) In order to serve as a member of the youth vote ambassador program, an**
10 **individual must**

11 **(1) be a student age 16 or older**

12 **(A) enrolled in a public or private high school program in this**
13 **state; or**

14 **(B) being educated in the student's home by a parent or legal**

1 guardian in this state under AS 14.30.010(b)(12);

2 (2) volunteer to serve in the youth vote ambassador program and be
3 appointed to the youth vote ambassador program by the director of elections; and

4 (3) if appointed, agree to complete a program of training as determined
5 by the director of elections.

6 (c) An election supervisor may appoint a member of the youth vote
7 ambassador program to serve on a precinct election board appointed under
8 AS 15.10.120. A program member who is appointed to serve on an election board
9 under this subsection serves under the supervision of the chairperson for that board.

10 (d) A member of the program who is appointed under (c) of this section is
11 compensated as provided in AS 15.15.380 only for service on the election board of the
12 precinct.

13 (e) A member of the program may provide unpaid volunteer services related to
14 education and outreach on state elections as directed by, and under the supervision of,
15 the director of elections.

16 (f) In this section, "program" means the youth vote ambassador program.

17 * Sec. 2. AS 15.10.120(a) is amended to read:

18 (a) An election supervisor shall appoint in each precinct within the election
19 supervisor's district an election board composed of at least three qualified voters
20 registered to vote in that precinct. If the election supervisor is unable to locate
21 three qualified individuals registered to vote in that precinct who are willing and
22 able to serve on the election board, the election supervisor may appoint any
23 qualified individual registered to vote in the election district in which the precinct
24 is located. If the election supervisor is unable to locate three qualified individuals
25 registered to vote in the precinct or in the district who are willing and able to
26 serve on the election board, the election supervisor may appoint any qualified
27 individual registered to vote in this state. In addition to the three qualified voters
28 registered to vote in the precinct, district, or state, an election supervisor may
29 also appoint not more than two members of the youth vote ambassador program
30 established in AS 15.10.108 to serve on a precinct election board.

31 * Sec. 3. AS 15.10.120(c) is amended to read:

1 (c) An election supervisor shall appoint one nominee of the political party of
2 which the governor is a member and one nominee of the political party that received
3 the second largest number of votes statewide in the preceding gubernatorial election.
4 [THE ELECTION SUPERVISOR SHALL APPOINT AT LEAST ONE
5 ADDITIONAL QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL REGISTERED TO VOTE IN THAT
6 PRECINCT.] If a party district committee or state party central committee of the
7 party of which the governor is a member or the party that received the second largest
8 number of votes statewide in the preceding gubernatorial election fails to present the
9 names prescribed by (b) of this section by April 15 of a regular election year or at least
10 60 days before a special election, the election supervisor may appoint any qualified
11 individual registered to vote [IN THAT PRECINCT].

12 * Sec. 4. This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: HB496
 () Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: OOG
 Title An Act creating the Youth Vote Ambassador RDU Elections
 Program _____ Component Elections
 Sponsor Representative(s) Dahlstrom, McGuire
 Requester State Affairs Committee Component No. 21

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2004) cost: 0.0
 Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2005 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)
 This bill has no fiscal impact on the Division of Elections.

Prepared by: Leonard G. Jones Phone 465-3051
 Division: Division of Elections Date/Time 3/26/04 8:24 AM
 Approved by: Laura A. Glaiser, Director Date 3/26/2004
 Agency: Office of the Lt. Governor, Division of Elections

Subject: House Bill 496

Date: Thu, 25 Mar 2004 09:33:10 EST

From: JNovakKS@aol.com

To: hsta@legis.state.ak.us

CC: whitney_brewster@gov.state.ak.us

Memorandum:

TO: Ginny Austerman

FM: Joe Novak

RE: Testimony on behalf of House Bill 496

I am currently a high school principal in Shawnee, Kansas. This district is a growing suburb of Kansas City. The state legislature in Kansas passed a similar bill several years ago. It allows 16 year old students and older the ability to work the polls on all election days. Students in Kansas can also help setup and break down polling places before and after each election. Much like your bill, students who are interested must attend and are paid for a full day of training prior to working the polls. I see two distinct advantages to this law in Kansas and applaud Representative Weyrauch's efforts to pursue this in your state.

1. 68% of voters in the age bracket 18-26 did not vote in the 2002 election. When asked about why young people do not vote, two top reasons included that they did not know how to register and then vote, and, politicians do not listen to young people. I submit that politicians do not listen because young people do not vote.

Your House Bill 496 will assist in breaking that cycle in Alaska. In working the polls and learning more about the voting process, more young people will start to vote and during more local elections.

2. Adding young people to the polls has helped to create intergenerational relationships. Older, established poll workers have taken young students under their wings to "show them the ropes." In doing this, we have opened up a whole new line of communication in our community thus putting more meaning back into the lives of older Americans. This has helped to bring senior citizens back into our schools in a variety of ways.

Finally, may I suggest that a provision of your bill strongly encourage high schools to become registration sites for potential voters. The more students are around and active in the process, the more they will tend to exercise their civic responsibility for years to come.

Joe Novak

Education Outreach Director - Freedoms Answer

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REPRESENTATIVE NANCY DAHLSTROM

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SPONSOR STATEMENT HOUSE BILL 496 *Youth Vote Ambassador Program*

House Bill 496 presents us with a unique opportunity to enliven the interest of young people in the political process and in their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

The intent of this bill is threefold:

- To increase awareness and interest in voting among Alaska's young people,
- To allow for meaningful student involvement in elections; and
- To relieve the shortage of election workers.

Youth Vote Ambassadors, high school students 16 years and older would assist at the polls as part of elections boards. These Ambassadors would be appointed and trained by an election supervisor and supervised by an elections board chairperson.

Currently, 74% of states have laws that allow for Election Day workers under 18 years of age. In Alaska, legislation is necessary to create the Young Vote Ambassadors Program since current law requires members of the election board be qualified voters.

In an attempt to reverse the 25-year decline in voter participation among those within the 18-24 age group, HB 496 plants the seed of civic responsibility at an early age and encourages more young people to become action in the political process.

This legislation also amends the qualifications for appointment to a precinct election board by removing the requirement that the appointee must be registered to vote in that precinct. This changes allows a qualified voter anywhere in the state to serve on any precinct's election board. This provides more flexibility to the election supervisors as they seek qualified individuals to serve in this important function.

I greatly appreciate the committee's favorable support of this legislation. Thank you.

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Too Young to Vote but Old Enough to Run an Election

Facing Shortage of Poll Workers, Md. and D.C. Join List of Jurisdictions Hiring High School Students

By Colleen Jenkins
Washington Post Staff Writer
Thursday, August 29, 2002; Page A20

For most 17-year-olds, the Maryland primary election will mean one thing: a day off from school. But Jennifer Clark of Waldorf will forgo sleeping late on Sept. 10 to help run an election she isn't old enough to vote in.

The high school senior is among dozens of 16- and 17-year-olds enlisted this fall for the first time by election boards in Maryland and the District, where officials are desperate to remedy a shortage of election judges and poll workers.

The strategy has emerged as a key change since the 2000 presidential debacle in Florida. More than a dozen states are recruiting high school students who haven't reached legal voting age but are willing to work a long day for about \$6 an hour.

Experts expect that list to grow.

"The positive responses that we have heard from the states that have done it indicate that a number of states will be trying to do the same thing in the future," said Doug Lewis, executive director of the nonpartisan National Election Center.

In the past, election boards relied largely on stay-at-home moms and senior citizens to work as election judges, said Montgomery County election director Margaret Jurgensen. But as more women entered the workforce and more seniors busied themselves with other activities, officials were forced to find alternatives.

Florida's messy election proceedings just illuminated the problem, said Tim Storey, an elections analyst for the National Conference of State Legislatures.

"One of the things that came to light is that there is a real problem getting enough qualified poll workers to handle a complex job," he said. "States have to recruit more than 1.2 million poll workers to meet the demand around the country in a presidential election."

Maryland election officials estimate that at least 18,000 election judges are needed statewide to run this fall's elections. Prince George's County still needs about 600 poll workers; Montgomery, about 550.

A similar squeeze is being felt nationwide. To help, congressional staffers are working on the Help America Vote Act, an election reform bill with provisions to employ both high school and college students as poll workers nationwide.

Most states still require poll workers to be either registered voters or of legal voting age, but at least 18 states allow 16- and 17-year-olds to work the polls, Storey said. Long Beach, Calif., implemented a student poll worker program as early as 1997.

IT
DOESN'T
GROW
ON
TREES!

IT
GROWS
HERE.

CLICK HERE

The qualifications for young poll workers vary by state. Typically, they must be high school seniors in good academic standing, enrolled in a class about government and chosen by school counselors and teachers.

Area lawmakers have approached the concept with caution. Virginia allows high school students to serve only as pages during elections; they cannot touch ballots or voting machines, said State Board of Elections spokeswoman Jean Jensen.

"We may get to the point where the shortage is severe enough that the legislature might reconsider, but this is all we have on the books right now," she said.

In Washington, 16- and 17-year-olds won't be in place to assist poll workers until the November election, said elections spokesman Bill O'Field. They will receive either community service credit or a stipend for their work, but election officials still are hammering out details on the length of shifts and how much the students will earn.

Maryland lawmakers have extended the opportunity only to 17-year-olds. But unlike states that restrict young workers' duties, Maryland lets students serve as full election judges.

They will earn the same wages and perform the same tasks as their older counterparts: setting up voting booths, signing in voters, handing out ballots and answering voting procedure questions.

Prince George's tested the idea in 2000, when election board officials hired eight high school seniors. The pilot's success persuaded the General Assembly to expand the program throughout the state for the 2002 primary and general elections.

Fallon Loving, 19, was in the first Prince George's class of 17-year-old election judges two years ago. For her, it was a chance to make some money and see firsthand a civic process she knew little about.

Though older poll workers in some states have been wary to have younger workers around, Loving said her colleagues treated her well.

"I tend to fit in with the more older crowd anyway," she said. "They said it was nice to have someone young around."

In Charles County, Clark will earn \$125 for rising before dawn and spending approximately 14 hours at a polling place; no more than two 17-year-olds will work at each site. Pay for election judges varies across Maryland; Clark's peers will receive \$150 in Howard County, \$125 in Prince George's and \$100 to \$115 in Montgomery.

"I would do it even if I wasn't getting paid," Clark said. "I've always been pretty interested [in elections], ever since I was little. It will look good on college résumés."

The teenagers won't completely solve the shortage of poll workers. But local election officials said getting students involved before they head off to college could provide them with valuable experience and the counties with a future stock of workers.

Plus, not being registered voters, the students can fill openings for either political party at the polls, said Howard County election director Robert J. Antonetti Sr., who oversaw the pilot program as director of Prince George's elections two years ago.

"I'd love to see some of them in charge of a polling place someday," he said.

Serving as an election judge will bring the political experience full circle for Jonathan Exum, a 17-year-old from Largo. He campaigned during previous election seasons for his uncle, state Sen. Nathaniel Exum (D-Prince George's), and he spent this summer working as an intern on the Prince George's Board of Elections staff.

Exum isn't interested in a political life for himself, but he sees value in learning about the election process -- even if it does require an early wake-up call.

"You're not going to learn anything sitting in bed," he said.

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For Immediate Release:

October 1, 2003

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Office of The Attorney General
- Peter C. Harvey, *Attorney General*
Division of Elections
- Ramon de la Cruz, *Director*

State, Non-Partisan Group Announce New Effort to Spur Youth Voter Turn-out; Approximately 2,000 High School Students Will Train as Paid Poll Workers

www.njelections.org

TRENTON – Attorney General Peter C. Harvey and Division of Elections Director Ramon de la Cruz announced today that approximately 2,000 New Jersey high school students -- many of them not yet of voting age -- will be trained and certified to serve as paid poll workers on Election Day this year through a joint initiative involving the State, county elections officials and Freedom's Answer, a national, non-partisan civic awareness group.

"Through this initiative, thousands of high school students across New Jersey will gain exposure to the voting process on Election Day," said Attorney General Harvey. "Although students will be paid to work at the polls, this is not a jobs program. Rather, this program is designed to encourage young people to become more aware of the electoral process, to become involved and, ultimately, to go out and vote. Voting is the heart of our democracy, and it is vital that we teach young people the importance of this fundamental constitutional right."

According to Division of Elections Director de la Cruz, the statewide Student Poll Worker Initiative involves the cooperative efforts of the Division of Elections, Freedom's Answer, the New Jersey Association of Elections Officials and local school districts in all 21 counties.

During a related kick-off event in the Assembly Chambers at the State House today, de la Cruz was joined by representatives of Freedom's Answer and the other participating entities, as well as approximately 50 participating high school students from Mercer and Passaic counties.

De la Cruz explained that, through the Student Poll Worker Initiative, high school students across New Jersey will undergo training and certification in the duties of election board workers – commonly known as poll workers. He noted that, under a bill signed into law by Governor James E. McGreevey in December 2002, students must be at least 16 years old to work at the polls.

Students who are 16 or 17 and have successfully completed their training can work a half-day at the polls and earn \$100. Students who are 18 or older can work a full day and earn \$200.

The actual recruitment and selection of students to be trained to work the polls on Election Day this year is being handled by county-level elections officials in conjunction with Freedom's Answer and local school districts.

"Students who become involved in this initiative will learn the responsibilities of poll working inside and out – in

some cases a year or two before they can actually vote," said de la Cruz. "Of course, the ultimate goal is to plant the seeds of civic responsibility -- to encourage more young people to become aware of the voting process, to have them understand how it works, and to have them participate."

Cole H. Kleitsch, State Director of Freedoms Answer NJ, said that many young people "are missing even basic information about their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and a lack of participation by young voters remains a problem." He added that a lack of voter participation among citizens of every age remains a concern throughout the United States.

"We can't just 'talk the talk' about democracy. We have to walk the walk," said Kleitsch. "By encouraging students who are too young to vote to serve as poll workers, we increase the likelihood of them becoming the kind of engaged, informed and active citizens that are crucial to a healthy democracy."

Among the attendees at today's State House kick-off event were participating students from Trenton High School, Clifton High School and Rosa Parks High School in Paterson.

In addition to touring the State House, students heard remarks by State Senator Thomas H. Kean, Jr. and State Assemblyman Alfred L. Steele, co-sponsors of the law that allows 16-and-17-year-old students to serve as paid poll workers.

Students also heard remarks from Dr. Alan Rosenthal, Professor of Public Policy at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, and from Mercer County Board of Elections Chairman Dominic Magnolo.

In a related ceremony, Secretary of State Regina L. Thomas presented three National Association of State Boards of Education awards related to New Jersey's 2002 Student/Parent Mock Election Day program held in November 2002.

The awards have been given by the NASBE to Governor McGreevey, Attorney General Harvey and Division of Elections Director de la Cruz in recognition of their "outstanding leadership in promoting voter education." New Jersey led the United States in participation in the 2002 National Student/Parent Mock Election Day initiative with 100,000 ballots cast.

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*This is the first 12 pages of a 56-page report
by the Youth Vote Coalition. If you would like
the full report, please let Rep. Dahlstrom's office know.*

NEW MILLENNIUM BEST PRACTICES SURVEY

July 2003

Last updated: November 12, 2003

*Compiled by Colin J. Moffett
& Kay Albowicz for*



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Issue: Declining Voter Turnout and Civic Participation Among Youth

Young people are not participating in civic life in large numbers these days, and the candidates are not paying attention. Nationwide, roughly 33 percent of 18-to-24-year-olds turned out to vote in 2000--arguably the closest and most contentious presidential election in modern history. This alarmingly low turnout record--part of a twenty-five year trend of decline--gives many state election officials cause for alarm. When those numbers are coupled with the fact that most high school students have never set foot inside of a polling place, the future of American democracy seems pretty bleak.

Determined to curb this decline in youth participation, the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) established the New Millennium Young Voters Project in 1998 to try and re-engage more young people in the democratic process. NASS began by conducting a national, nonpartisan study, which revealed that young people ages 18-24 are dropping out of the electoral process because they lack interest, trust, and knowledge when it comes to American government. They don't see their citizenship as an opportunity for involvement, they don't know how or where to get the information or skills they need for greater participation in civic life, and above all, they just don't make it to the polls on Election Day.

The 1998 NASS New Millennium Report also showed that traditional motivational strategies aren't working well with this age group. Consequently, NASS is constantly trying to identify new and innovative ways to provide our country's young people with the information and skills they need to become motivated, educated and informed citizens. The association seeks out these model election outreach programs to share with the nation's secretaries of state.

No organization represents the perspectives of today's youth more than the Youth Vote Coalition, the nation's largest, nonpartisan coalition for groups dedicated to increasing civic participation across the nation. We are grateful for their participation in this endeavor. Together, NASS and Youth Vote reviewed the youth-oriented voter outreach efforts of every state elections office and highlighted the best and most original work. The result is a consistent overview of the outreach work of the states, as well as a glimpse of the most innovative program ideas of 2003.

Additionally, NASS and Youth Vote gathered information on how the states are working to meet the challenges of the new Help America Vote Act, a federal election reform law with a number of deadlines that will take effect in 2004. Some of the law's provisions, such as the voter identification requirement for first-time voters, will have a direct impact on young people. The bill also contains federal funds earmarked to help states fortify their youth voter outreach efforts. This survey provides a quick overview of what's ahead in terms of state HAVA planning and outreach to young voters.

Overall, the survey results provide just a small snapshot of the young voter outreach work taking place around the country. A wide variety of other government, academic, and nonprofit organizations are carrying out this kind of work with commendable results. It is important for these organizations to have a clearinghouse where they can obtain state election contacts and other resources. NASS and Youth Vote hope the content of this document will help serve that purpose.

Best,

Mary Kiffmeyer, Minnesota Secretary of State
2003-2004 NASS President

Veronica De La Garza
Executive Director, Youth Vote Coalition

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Youth Outreach Programs:

72% of states conduct youth outreach of some variety.

Partnerships:

The most popular partnerships are with the National Student/Parent Mock Elections, Kids Voting USA, and Rock the Vote.

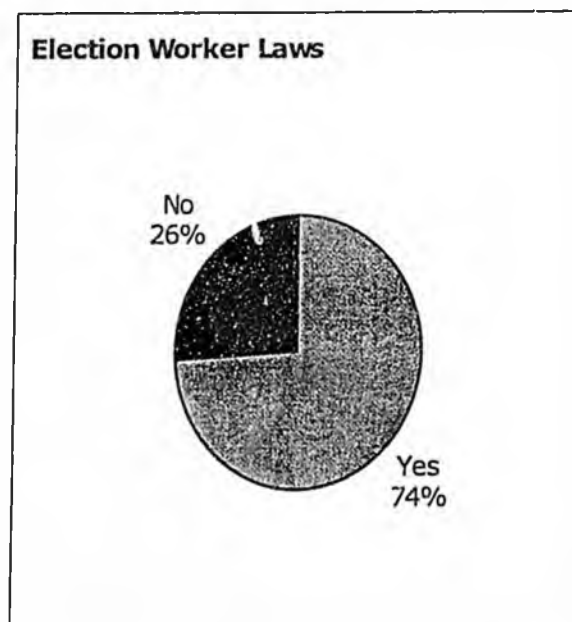
Capitol Forum	10%
Close Up Foundation	23%
Kids Voting USA	54%
NASS Vote America	28%
National Student/Parent Mock Election	67%
Newspapers in Education	10%
Rock the Vote	38%
Smackdown Your Vote	31%
Youth Vote Coalition	10%
Youth-e-Vote/Freedoms Answer	21%
YMCA Youth	15%
Vote for America	5%

Working with local/county election offices to help promote voting:

85% of Secretary of State offices partner with local/county offices to help promote voting among young people.

Election Day workers under 18:

74% of states have laws that allow for Election Day workers under the age of 18.



Partnering with Schools:

87% of state offices partner with schools to promote voting among young people.

Partnering with Community Organizations:

80% of state offices partner with community organizations to promote voting among young people.

Methods of reaching Youth about Voting:

56% of state offices use Citizenship Presentations to reach out to young voters;
69% of state offices use Internet Resources to reach out to young voters;
38% of state offices display voting equipment to potential young voters;
67% of state offices use PSA's and/or Radio spots to reach out to young voters;

Ages of Focus:

59% of state offices work with Elementary age youth to promote voting;
90% of state offices work with High School age youth to promote voting;
72% of state offices work with College age youth to promote voting;

Same-day Registration:

Only 13% of states have same-day registration laws, and 31% of the states that do not have same-day registration have put forward legislative proposals to do so.

Same-day Registration**HAVA Voter Education Programs:**

72% of state offices plan to introduce new voter education programs for teens/or twenty-somethings as a result of HAVA funding.

STATES BY STATE LIST OF POLL WORKER LAWS

**This list includes only those states and U.S. territories that responded to the survey*

States with election laws that allow Poll Workers under the age of 18		
Alabama		x
Alaska		x
Arizona		x
Arkansas	x	
California	x	
Colorado	x	
Connecticut	x	
Delaware		x
Florida	x	
Georgia	x	
Hawaii	x	
Idaho	x	
Illinois	x	
Indiana	x	
Iowa		x
Kansas	x	
Maine	x	
Maryland	x	
Michigan	x	
Minnesota	x	
Mississippi	x	
Missouri	x	
Montana	x	
Nebraska	x	
Nevada	x	
New Hampshire	x	
New Mexico		x
North Carolina	x	
North Dakota	x	
Ohio		x
Pennsylvania	x	
Rhode Island		x
South Carolina	x	
Texas		x
Utah	x	
Vermont	x	
Washington	x	
West Virginia	x	
Wyoming		x

STATE-BY-STATE LIST OF SAME-DAY REGISTRATION

**This list includes only those states and U.S. territories that responded to the survey*

States with Same-day Registration		
Alabama		x
Alaska		x
Arizona		x
Arkansas		x
California		x
Colorado		x
Connecticut		x
Delaware		x
Florida		x
Georgia		x
Hawaii		x
Idaho	x	
Illinois		x
Indiana		x
Iowa		x
Kansas		x
Maine	x	
Maryland		x
Michigan		x
Minnesota	x	
Missouri		x
Mississippi		x
Montana		x
North Carolina		x
North Dakota		x
Nebraska		x
New Hampshire	x	
New Mexico		x
Nevada		x
Ohio		x
Pennsylvania		x
Rhode Island		x
South Carolina		x
Texas		x
Utah		x
Vermont		x
Washington		x
West Virginia		x
Wyoming	x	

STATE BEST PRACTICES

2002 New Millennium Program Ideas

School Civics Education Curriculum & Activities

Florida: Hernando County "Make Freedom Count" School Program

Illinois: "Let's Vote" Elementary School Election Program

Missouri: Responsible Missourians Initiative

Nebraska: Statehood Birthday Parties

Several States: Statewide School Voting Equipment Tours

Registration & Voter Education Efforts

Georgia: "Take Your Grandchild to Vote" Campaign

Michigan Online Citizens' Guide to Voting Systems

Montana: Election History Trunk Tour

Ohio: "Expect More in 2004" Tour

Oregon: Community "Engagement" Parties

Utah: Statewide College Council

Vermont: Town Government Coloring Book

Washington Voters Pamphlet Cover Art Competition

West Virginia SHARES Mock Election Program

Several States: Secretary of State Young Speakers Bureau

Several States: "Citizenship" Badges

Poll Worker Recruitment & Training Programs

California: Ventura County Adopt-a-Poll Program

Colorado: Student Poll Worker Training Program

North Carolina: College "Civics Training" Program

Several States: Youth Vote Ambassadors

2003 Programs Overview

School Civics Education & Curriculum Materials

Alaska: Let's Vote Alaska
Arkansas: Talk Back
California: C.I.V.I.C.S
Maine: Fostering Youth Involvement
Mississippi: Promote the Vote
Missouri: Responsible Missourians Initiative
Texas: Project V.O.T.E.
West Virginia: SHARES

The following State Board of Elections offices also produce statewide school civics materials:

Illinois: Let's Vote (elementary only)
South Carolina: Kids Fun Book (elementary only)

Student Poll Worker Training & Recruitment Programs

Many secretaries of state assist their county clerks and registrars in recruiting and training young people for Election Day work. However, the following state offices have produced an actual program for these purposes:

Arkansas
Colorado
Georgia
Kansas
Minnesota
Mississippi
Montana
Utah (in development)
West Virginia

The following State Board of Elections offices also coordinate student poll worker training programs:

Illinois
North Carolina
Oklahoma

2002 New Millennium Program Ideas

Arizona: X-treme Voter Guide

California: Voter Registration Theme Week

California: Santa Barbara County Student Poll Worker Program

Connecticut: Classroom Visitation Program

Delaware: The Democracy Project (for teachers)

Georgia: What Do You Think? Program

Illinois: Project Next Generation

Maine: Vote in Honor of a Vet Program

Minnesota: Election Judge Trainee Program

Ohio: "Vote" Youth PSA Campaign

Pennsylvania: Voter Hall of Fame

STATE PROFILES

STATE OF ALABAMA

Secretary of State: Nancy L. Worley

P.O. Box 5616

Montgomery, AL 36103

Phone (334) 242-7205

Fax (334) 242-4993

Email: nworley@sos.al.gov

Youth Outreach Coordinator: Vicki O. Balogh

State Election Director: Stephanie Daniels and Ward Sullivan

Youth outreach program? Yes

State law allows Election-day workers under the age of 13? No

Poll worker/Election Day volunteer recruitment program for youth? No

Same-day Registration? No

This office works with the following national outreach partners:

National Student/Parent Mock Election; Smackdown Your Vote

This office coordinates its own statewide outreach program:

In Alabama, universities and high schools are distribution points for mail-in registration forms. The secretary and her staff visit several schools systems between January and May for Government Day activities. The secretary also mailed a letter to every school system's government teachers, a mailing that included voter registration forms and voter education materials.

This office reported the creation of the following new HAVA-related youth initiatives:

The Office of Secretary of State will be working with the media to develop PSA's specifically targeted to increase voter participation among young people. The secretary will also be developing a teen/20 something website page for voter education.



Young Workers Could Solve Poll Problems

St. Louis Post-Dispatch. 1/10/2002.
Matt Blunt and Gerald Tirozzi.

The electoral reform bill passed last month by the U.S. House of Representatives aims to overcome several obstacles to successful elections. Fixing the system involves challenges in the technology, the process and the people.

The first two are important to fix -- and costly. But most election officials at the state and local level will tell you that their greatest challenge is recruiting the people -- finding trained and motivated poll workers for Election Day. The nation's high schools should be seen as a resource to develop poll workers. But young people leaving high school tend not to vote. Since 1972, the first year 18-year-olds were allowed to vote, their participation has steadily declined -- dipping below 30 percent for the first time in the 2000 election.

It's not apathy. Most young people are highly motivated for community volunteer service and tend to be well informed. But they are in a vicious cycle: They don't vote, so the politicians ignore them, so they don't vote and so forth. But there might be a fairly simple, inexpensive and exciting solution for the shortage of poll workers and the lack of voting among young adults.

A little publicized provision of the election reform bill is designed to turn college students into nonpartisan poll workers. And another provision would create the Help America Vote Foundation to facilitate recruiting high school students to help out on Election Day by working at the polls or doing whatever election judges want them (and train them) to do.

No college, high school, student or election official would be required to take part. But what a wonderful opportunity to engage our young people in the political process and provide friendly faces at the polls!

This technologically savvy generation can explain the voting machines to those who need an explanation. They can help new and elderly voters understand the process. They can assist disabled voters who need help to get to the polling place. Some can even serve as translators.

Some states still have laws requiring poll workers to be at least 18 and registered

voters. Such laws would keep most high school students from working inside the polling place, but younger students could still offer support.

Other states, because of the difficulty of recruiting new poll workers, have been experimenting with recruiting both college and high school students. Missouri used such a law to allow 16-year-olds in the polling place for the first time in Jackson County, and it has worked.

For too long, our political system has seemed to forget about young people. Using students as poll workers empowers a new generation to be part of solving a problem all too obvious in the 2000 Election Day marathon.

Congress still has much to do. The cost of the full House-passed electoral reform package is \$2.65 billion (for new machines and grants to the states for process changes). The bill to recruit and train college and high school poll workers is \$10 million -- or less than a small fraction of 1 percent of the total.

The biggest problem can be solved for the least money.

We serve on the board of a nonpartisan organization called Youth Voter Corps, which will try to earn a contract to organize the high school program. The National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Students Councils will encourage student participation. The Center for Civic Education will develop materials. And America's Promise and the Points of Light Foundation will promote the program at the community level across the country.

In short, we're ready to go.

But the Senate must pass the legislation -- and the funds must be included in the supplemental appropriation for this fiscal year. The elections of 2002 can be another exercise in frustration at the polls, or they can be a breath of fresh air. The biggest difference may be whether our young people will be engaged, trusted and welcomed.

NOTES: COMMENTARY; Matt Blunt is Missouri's secretary of state and co-chair of the New Millennium Project of the National Association of Secretaries of State. Gerold Tirozzi is executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. They serve on the executive board of the Youth Voter Corps.

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