

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE Y1

Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy. Yet less than 20% of 18-29 year olds voted in the 2014 midterm elections, the lowest youth turnout rate ever recorded. We must do something to better engage our youth – Measure Y1 will do just that by allowing 16- and 17-year olds to vote in Berkeley school board elections.

The Berkeley City Council unanimously voted to put Measure Y1 on the ballot and the Berkeley School Board unanimously supported doing so. By lowering the voting age in Berkeley school board elections, Measure Y1 will:

- increase voter turnout,
- give young adults the ability to truly influence the direction of their local schools,
- increase civic engagement among young adults, and
- provide a strong incentive to improve civics education.

Currently two cities in the United States allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote and the results are very encouraging. After Takoma Park in Maryland lowered its voting age for the 2013 election, for instance, turnout among 16- and 17-year-olds was higher than any other age group.

The international evidence is just as compelling. In Norway, more than 20 municipalities lowered their voting age to 16 on a trial basis for the 2011 election. The result was that turnout of 16- and 17-year-olds was much higher than first-time voters ages 18-21. Other countries such as Brazil, Ecuador, Argentina, Nicaragua, Germany, Scotland, Hungary and Austria all have gone forward with letting 16- and 17-year-olds vote in local, state, and/or national elections.

In California, 16- and 17-year-olds are provided with most of the rights, privileges, and obligations as other adults. They can drive, work, pay taxes, and even be charged with a felony as an adult. It is time for the right to vote should be provided as well!

Vote YES on Measure Y1.

s/Nancy Skinner
Former State Assembly Member

s/Laurie Capitelli
Berkeley City Councilmember, District 5

s/Jesse Arreguin
Berkeley City Councilmember

s/Beatriz Leyva-Cutler
Berkeley School Board President

s/Sheila Jordan
Alameda County Superintendent of Schools Emerita