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Assemblywomen Vainieri Huttle, Speight, Dunn, Murphy, McKnight,
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SYNOPSIS
“New Voter Empowerment Act”; permits 17 year olds to vote in primary election if they turn 18 years old before next succeeding general election.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.
AN ACT concerning eligibility to vote in a primary election for the
general election and designated as the “New Voter
Empowerment Act,” amending R.S.19:31-5, and supplementing
chapter 23 of Title 19 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
of New Jersey:

1. (New section) Notwithstanding the provisions of R.S.19:4-1, or
any other law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, any registered voter
who is 17 years of age prior to the date on which a primary election for
the general election is held shall be permitted to vote in that primary
election if the registered voter attains 18 years of age on or before the
day of the next succeeding general election.

2. R.S.19:31-5 is amended to read as follows:
19:31-5. Each person, who is at least 17 years of age at the time he
or she applies for registration, who resides in the district in which he or
she expects to vote, who will be of the age of 18 years or more on or
before the first election in which he or she expects to vote, who is a
citizen of the United States, and who, if he or she continues to reside in
the district until that election, will at the time have fulfilled all the
requirements as to length of residence to qualify him or her as a legal
voter, shall, unless otherwise disqualified, be entitled to be registered
in such district. Each 17-year-old registrant shall be designated in the
Statewide voter registration system as temporarily ineligible to vote
until the registrant's 18th birthday, except as provided pursuant to
section 1 of P.L. [ ] (pending before the Legislature as this
bill).

Whenever an individual registers by mail after January 1, 2003 to
vote for the first time in his or her current county of residence, that
individual shall provide either the individual's New Jersey driver's
license number or the last four digits of the individual's Social Security
Number, or shall submit with the voter registration form a copy of: (1)
a current and valid photo identification card; (2) a current utility bill,
bank statement, government check or pay check; (3) any other
government document that shows the individual's name and current
address; or (4) any other identifying document that the Attorney
General has determined to be acceptable for this purpose. If the
individual does not provide his or her New Jersey driver's license
number or Social Security Number information or submit a copy of
any one of these documents, either at the time of registration or at any
time thereafter prior to attempting to vote, the individual shall be asked
for identification when voting for the first time starting at the first
election held after January 1, 2004 at which candidates are seeking

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.
federal office or thereafter. This requirement shall not apply to any
individual entitled to vote by absentee ballot under the “Uniformed
and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act” (42 U.S.C. 1973ff-1 et
seq.) or to any individual who is provided the right to vote other than
in person under section 3 of Pub.L.98-435, the “Voting Accessibility
for the Elderly and Handicapped Act,” or any other voter entitled to
vote otherwise than in person under any other federal law. This
requirement shall also not apply to any individual who registers to vote
by appearing in person at any voter registration agency or to any
individual whose voter registration form is delivered to the county
commissioner of registration or to the Attorney General, as the case
may be, through a third party by means other than by mail delivery.
Once registered, the registrant shall not be required to register
again in such district as long as he or she resides therein, except when
required to do so by the commissioner, because of the loss of or some
defect in his or her registration record.

The registrant, when registered as provided in this Title, shall be
eligible to vote at any election to be held subsequent to such
registration, if he or she shall be a citizen of the United States of the
age of 18 years , except as provided pursuant to section 1 of P.L. . , c.
(C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), and shall have been
a resident of the State for at least 30 days and of the county at least 30
days, when the same is held, subject to any change in his qualifications
which may later disqualify him. No registrant shall lose the right to
vote, and no registrant's name shall be removed from the registry list
of the county in which the person is registered, solely on grounds of
the person's failure to vote in one or more elections.
(cf: P.L.2015, c.222, s.1)

3. This act shall take effect on January 1st next following the
date of enactment.

STATEMENT

This bill, designated as the “New Voter Empowerment Act,” permits
any registered voter who is 17 years of age prior to the date on which a
primary election for the general election is held to vote in that primary
election if the registered voter attains 18 years of age on or before the day
of the next succeeding general election.

Current law permits a person who is at least 17 years of age to register
to vote if the person will be at least 18 at the time of the election.
However, the person is designated in the Statewide Voter Registration
System as temporarily ineligible to vote until that person’s 18th birthday.
This bill would permit that person to vote in a primary election
notwithstanding that the person is not yet 18 years of age, as long as the
person attains 18 years of age on or before the next general election.