

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 219

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 17, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT

District 31 (Hudson)

SYNOPSIS

Encourages young people to participate in elections and vote.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/17/2021)

1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** encouraging young people to participate in
2 elections.

3
4 **WHEREAS**, Voting is a fundamental right that generations of United
5 States citizens have struggled to win and to protect, and it is a right
6 that many people in other countries are still fighting for today; and

7 **WHEREAS**, Despite the excitement that young Americans show
8 through their civic activism, the vast majority of them have yet to
9 fully exercise their voting power, a collective power that is
10 continually below that of voters in other age groups; and

11 **WHEREAS**, While voters between the ages of 18 to 24 make up a
12 sizeable proportion of the U.S. electorate, this group consistently
13 neglects to make their voices heard at the polls to their full
14 potential; and

15 **WHEREAS**, The voter turnout of those between 18 and 24 years of age
16 peaked in 2008 when 44 percent turned out to vote, but fell just a
17 few years later in 2014 to only 19 percent, and was just 36 percent
18 in the 2018 elections; and

19 **WHEREAS**, Meanwhile, voters who are aged 65 and above consistently
20 have comparatively higher voter turnouts, ranging from 59 percent
21 in 2014 to 66 percent in 2018; and

22 **WHEREAS**, Voter turnout by 18- to 24-year-olds in New Jersey
23 increased from 11 percent in the 2014 midterm election to 33
24 percent in the 2018 election, while voter turnout by voters 65 years
25 old or older was 49 percent and 57 percent, respectively; and

26 **WHEREAS**, To realize their full voting strength as a collective, this
27 State should support and encourage young voters to learn about
28 important issues, to educate themselves about candidates, and to
29 then vote in all elections, including general, municipal, school
30 board, special, and primary elections; and

31 **WHEREAS**, Encouraging young voters to register to vote, to increase
32 their participation in all elections, and to take action through voter
33 education programs, volunteering as poll workers, and encouraging
34 their peers to also be engaged is of paramount importance for the
35 health and strength of this State and for American democracy; now,
36 therefore,

37
38 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
39 *State of New Jersey:*

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41 1. The Governor and the Legislature hereby encourage 18- to
42 24-year-olds to participate in elections.

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44 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
45 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or the
46 Secretary of the Senate to the New Jersey Association of State

1 Colleges and Universities, the Independent Colleges and
2 Universities for New Jersey, and the New Jersey School Boards
3 Association.

4

5 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

9

10 This resolution encourages young people 18 to 24 years of age to
11 participate in elections.

12 Voting is a fundamental right that generations of United States
13 citizens have struggled to win and to protect, and it is a right that
14 many people in other countries are still fighting for today. Despite
15 the excitement that young Americans show through their civic
16 activism, the vast majority of them have yet to fully exercise their
17 voting power, a collective power that is continually below that of
18 voters in other age groups. While voters between the ages of 18 to
19 24 make up a sizeable proportion of the U.S. electorate, this group
20 consistently neglects to make their voices heard at the polls to their
21 full potential. The voter turnout of those between 18 and 24 years of
22 age peaked in 2008 when 44 percent turned out to vote, but fell just
23 a few years later in 2014 to only 19 percent, and was just 36 percent
24 in the 2018 elections. Meanwhile, voters who are aged 65 and
25 above consistently have comparatively higher voter turnouts,
26 ranging from 59 percent in 2014 to 66 percent in 2018.

27 Voter turnout by 18- to 24-year-olds in New Jersey increased
28 from 11 percent in the 2014 midterm election to 33 percent in the
29 2018 election, while voter turnout by voters 65 years old or older
30 was 49 percent and 57 percent, respectively. To realize their full
31 voting strength as a collective, this State should support and
32 encourage young voters to learn about important issues, to educate
33 themselves about candidates, and to then vote in all elections,
34 including general, municipal, school board, special, and primary
35 elections. Encouraging young voters to register to vote, to increase
36 their participation in all elections, and to take action through voter
37 education programs, volunteering as poll workers, and encouraging
38 their peers to register to also be engaged is of paramount
39 importance for the health and strength of this State and for
40 American democracy.