



# Howard County Council

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Christiana Rigby  
Councilmember

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District 3

February 2, 2024

Delegate Joe Vogel  
224 Lowe House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Delegate Vogel,

I am writing today to share my support for HB0373, enabling legislation that allows Counties to lower the voting age to sixteen for local Board of Education elections.

In Maryland, cities like Takoma Park, Hyattsville, Mount Rainier, Riverdale Park, Greenbelt, and Somerset, have already lowered voting ages. Takoma Park found great success after lowering the voting age. Originally, the public was concerned that younger voters would vote irrationally. However, voter data showed that parents partisan labels had a weak correlation with that of the youth voters.

When the minimum voting age is 18, voter turnout for 18- and 19-year-olds is relatively high; however, turnout drops significantly for voters in their early-to-mid-20's. Then the voter turnout rate does not regain its initial peak until voters are about 35 years old. After lowering the voting age, the drop-off in young adult turnout is reduced and overall voter turnout is increased. Enfranchised 16 and 17-year-olds' voter turnout falls at similar rates to the average population of 17 or higher, 18, and regularly turn out more than 18 to 21-year-olds.

The youth in Maryland deserves an opportunity to be represented. When local governments are making decisions, those decisions will have long-lasting impacts for our youth. They are the people who must suffer the consequences and repair past policy mistakes. I urge you to support enabling legislation that allows Counties to lower the voting age to sixteen in local elections.

Yours in service,

Christiana Rigby