
**State Government & Tribal
Affairs Committee**

HJR 4225

Brief Description: Amending the Constitution to allow seventeen year olds to vote in a primary if they will be eighteen years old by the next general election.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, Loomis, Upthegrove, Liias and Hunt.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the State Constitution to allow 17-year-olds to vote at a primary election if they will be 18 years of age on or before the following general election.

Hearing Date: 1/30/08

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

Amendments to the State Constitution (Constitution) require a two-thirds majority approval in the Legislature and a simple majority approval by the people at the following general election. The original text of the 1889 Constitution defined electors as all persons of the age of 21 years or over who were citizens of the United States and had lived in the state one year in the county 90 days, and in the city, town, ward or precinct 30 days immediately preceding the election.

From 1896 until 1910, Article IV, section 1 required that electors be able to read and speak the English language. And from 1910 until 1974 it stated that there would be no denial of the elective franchise at any election on account of sex.

In 1971 the 26th Amendment to the United States Constitution lowered the federal and state voting age across the nation to age 18. However, while states are constitutionally prohibited from raising the state voting age beyond age 18, there is no restriction against a state lowering it. Since the adoption of Amendment 63 in 1974, Article VI, section 1 of the Constitution has entitled all persons who are 18 years of age or older, citizens of the United States, and who have lived in the state, county, and precinct for 30 days before the election to vote at all elections. Only those who

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do not meet the these qualifications or those who are convicted of a felony and have not had their civil rights restored or those declared mentally incompetent are disqualified from voting under Article VI, section 3.

Summary of Bill:

The State Constitution is amended to allow 17-year-olds to vote at a primary election if they will be 18 years of age on or before the following general election. If the Joint Resolution is approved by the Legislature, the constitutional amendment will be placed on the November general election ballot for approval by the people.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.