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2ND FRANKLIN DISTRICT
ATHOL, ERVING, GILL, GREENFIELD,
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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

Committees on:
Revenue
Election Laws
Labor and Workforce Development

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ANDREWS PARTNERS WITH LOCAL STUDENT TO SUPPORT YOUTH VOTER AND CIVIC EDUCATION BILLS



Gill, Massachusetts – It was over ice cream in Gill, that Denise Andrews, Second Franklin District State Representative met with Jacob Levin, a youth voter registration activist and community leader from Gill to discuss three youth voter bills coming before the legislature. At seventeen years old, Jake is about to enter his senior year at Pioneer Valley Regional School and is the Western Mass Coordinator for the Help Students Vote Coalition. He is hard at work circulating a petition in the community and recruiting support to help pass three youth voter bills.

Jake is one of a number of active leaders from across the state working to draw the attention of legislators to the importance of engaging young people about their civic responsibilities and need to establish a comprehensive on campus student voter registration system.

Just a couple weeks before Jake and Representative Andrews met, another group of teen organizers from Lowell visited the State House to testify before the Committee on Elections Laws regarding a local petition to lower the voting age in Lowell's municipal elections; a

proposal that has the support of the Lowell City Council, City Manager, Superintendent of Police, High School Headmaster and the entire Lowell legislative delegation. At that hearing, the message from teens was clear – lowering the voting age in municipal elections would create positive civic habits in young citizens, and would motivate students to become more involved in their communities

At seventeen, young people still live in the community and have the opportunity for their first voting experience to be in person rather than by absentee ballot. “I agree with the notion that the earlier the habit of voting is formed, the more likely that voter will continue the practice throughout his or her life,” shared Andrews.

Jake Levin is interested in a different, but similar statewide youth voter bill to the one proposed for Lowell. A bill that would allow any citizen across the Commonwealth being seventeen or older to have his or her name added to the list of voters in that community, and be able to vote in any election for officers in that city or town.

Jake plans to travel to Boston on Wednesday, June 15 to present testimony on the three pending bills relative to young voters and civic education. The second bill, “An Act Relative to Pre-Registration of Voters” or Senate Bill 302, proposes that any citizen who is otherwise qualified may pre-register on or after that person’s sixteenth birthday and may vote in any election occurring on or after that person’s eighteenth birthday. In essence, an updated “motor voter” bill, it would improve the efficiency of voter registration by allowing pre-voter registration at the Registry of Motor Vehicles when an eligible resident applies for a motor vehicle license. The voter would be placed on the list of voters and be automatically eligible to vote the day he or she turns eighteen.

Jake will also lend his voice to calls to amend another bill being heard by the Committee on Election Laws. Senate Bill 299, filed by Sen. Cynthia Creem would allow public high schools to designate a location in the school where students may pick up voter registration forms and allow the school website to link to the voter registration webpage operated by the Secretary of State’s office. In support of this bill, a cross generational movement of voter registration advocates including high school, college student leaders and young professionals are pushing an amendment that would mandate all public high schools and public colleges establish a first in the nation on campus student voter registration civic education and civic engagement system. School administrators would be able to work with voter registration advocate organizations to establish a system subject to the individual campus culture and logistics.

The Help Students Vote Coalition is working on a similar effort in New York state and U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-Illinois) filed a federal version of the Massachusetts bill originally filed by student activists in 2007. The coalition asked Governor Patrick to publicly support the pending youth bills by testifying in person at the state house scheduled on Wednesday, June 15, 2:00pm hearing or by sending a representative.

Anyone interested in working with Jacob Levin to advocate for these worthwhile historic legislative efforts or to help engage youth in democratic activities please contact him at jlevin2012@gmail.com. Any resident of the Second Franklin District that interested in sharing perspective on the youth voter and civic engagement bills are asked to contact Representative Andrews's office by either postal mail to State House Room 443, Boston, Mass 02133 or by email to yourvoice@deniseandrews.org, please put "Youth Voter and Civic Education" in the subject line.

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