

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 28, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

Thank you for your continued commitment to protect the right to vote for all Americans. As your Administration works to protect the voting rights of the American people, we urge you to prioritize safeguarding the voting rights of young people and stand ready to work with you to expand existing federal protections.

While young people are among the most civically engaged members of society, they tend to vote in lower numbers. This is not due to a lack of interest or commitment to their communities but rather the consequence of the arbitrary barriers that too many young people face in exercising their right to vote. Some of the most common barriers include burdensome voter ID and proof of residency requirements, inconvenient or limited early and Election Day polling sites, and intimidation by election officials.

Youth voter suppression not only undercuts participation in our democracy in the short term by introducing these obstacles to new voters, but also damages the long-term health of our democracy by discouraging the development of a culture of democratic engagement among young people. Additionally, youth voter suppression tactics tend to target young voters of color, creating overlapping burdens that hinder access to the ballot box.

The Twenty-sixth Amendment was adopted to bring young people into the electoral process and promote widespread civic engagement. Ratified in 1971, the Twenty-sixth Amendment establishes that “[t]he right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.” It is important to underscore that, like the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Amendments, the Twenty-sixth Amendment not only prohibits outright denial of the right to vote but also any actions that abridge the right to vote.

As your Administration works to expand and enforce the protections provided under law to safeguard every American’s right to vote, we urge you to maintain a focus on young voters and work to enforce and protect the rights enshrined in the Twenty-sixth Amendment. Since we know that voting is habit-forming, by protecting the voting rights of young Americans we can ensure that more Americans will start a life-long habit of voting as soon as possible.

Section 2 of the Twenty-sixth Amendment grants Congress the power to enforce the amendment by appropriate legislation. During the 116th Congress, we introduced H.R. 8053, the Protect the

Youth Vote Act, legislation that would strengthen federal protections guaranteed by the Twenty-sixth Amendment. We stand ready to work alongside your Administration to advance this bill and protect the voting rights of young Americans.

Thank you again for your efforts to protect voting rights, and we look forward to working with you to protect the voting rights of young Americans.

Sincerely,



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress