



STATE OF DELAWARE
STATE COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
Margaret M. O'Neill Bldg., Third Floor, Suite 1
410 Federal Street
Dover, Delaware 19901
302-739-3621


The Honorable John Carney,
Governor

John McNeal, Director
SCPD

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 24, 2023

TO: All Members of the Delaware State Senate
and House of Representatives

FROM: Mr. Benjamin Shrader, Chairperson 
State Council for Persons with Disabilities

RE: HB 96 (Lower the Eligible Age to Vote in School Board Races from 18
to 16 years old)

The State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) has reviewed HB 96 that would change the minimum voting age to 16 for school board elections (but not for referendums).

SCPD has the following observations:

- Common Cause of Delaware is supporting the bill and emphasizes the importance of getting young people in the habit of voting and civic participation. Also supporting the bill are some school board members from Christina and Red Clay school districts, who see value in creating a more diverse and representative electorate, as younger people tend to have different perspectives and priorities than older generations.
- Opposing the bill is the Delaware School Boards Association, claiming it is unconstitutional. Supporters argue that the 26th amendment says that states

cannot prohibit citizens 18 or older from voting but does not preclude allowing people younger than 18 to vote.

- However, it is worth noting that Delaware already allows 17-year-olds to vote in primaries, if they will turn 18 by the date of the general election. Some other states have already lowered the voting age to 16 for all elections.

SCPD endorses this legislation as it could also provide an opportunity for students with disabilities to bring their perspective and raise awareness about the challenges they face in school, as well as get them in the habit of voting.

Thank you for your consideration and please contact SCPD if you have any questions or comments regarding our position or observations on the proposed legislation.

cc: Ms. Laura Waterland, Esq.
Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens
Developmental Disabilities Council

HB 96 Age to Vote at School Boards 4-24-23