

Vote16USA Fact Sheet

Our Mission

Vote16USA is a national initiative, organized by Generation Citizen, that aims to support efforts to extend voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds on the local level, help start new local campaigns, and elevate the issue's prominence on a national level.

Why Extend Voting Rights to 16- and 17-Year-Olds for Local Elections?

- Extending voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds on the local level can increase voter turnout and strengthen our democracy in the long run, as voting is habitual and statistics show that age 16 is a better time than 18 to acquire the habit of voting.
- The most reliable way for citizens to influence the government is through their votes. Letting 16- and 17-year-olds vote in local elections would ensure local politicians to listen to their voices and address their concerns.
- This can drive demand for better civic education in schools. The combination of a lower voting age and better civic education can create a virtuous cycle that dramatically boosts civic engagement.

Where has it been done? What campaigns are underway?

Previous Successes

- Takoma Park, Hyattsville, and Greenbelt, MD lowered their local voting ages to 16 in 2013, 2015, and 2018 respectively. The impacts have been universally positive.
- Many countries in Europe and South America let those under 18 vote on various levels.

Current and Recent Campaigns

- San Francisco put this question on the ballot in 2016, as Prop F. The youth-led campaign earned more than 172,000 votes to finish with 48%, a tremendous success for an issue on the ballot for the first time.
- A similar 2016 ballot measure in Berkeley, CA sought to lower the voting age to 16 for school board elections only, and won with 70% of the vote.
- The Washington, D.C. City Council will likely consider a bill to lower its voting age in 2018.
- We are having beginning-stage conversations with other cities around the country.

Success in the Press

Since we launched Vote16USA, the policy idea has been featured in over 75 media outlets, drawing national attention to local leaders. Outlets include the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Vox*, *The Atlantic*, *The Economist*, *Rolling Stone*, and many local publications.

How we can help move this forward in your city

- Provide background research, materials, talking points, draft legislation, etc.
- Facilitate connections with those working on the issue in other cities.
- Connect student leaders with our Youth Advisory Board.
- Help coordinate media strategy, draft op-eds, etc.