

Phone Bank Script for EMPOWER Act (HD1132)

INTRO	Hi, my name is <i>[say your name]</i> and I am a constituent in Representative <i>[_____]</i> 's district. I am calling to urge Representative <i>[_____]</i> to support HD1132, the Empower Act , which would give cities and towns the option to set the local voting age at 16 or 17 for municipal elections.
TARGET	Is there somebody in your office who I can talk with about this bill?
	<i>[If the person is available now, continue. If not, ask if they'd be able to communicate your message to the appropriate staff person. Assuming they say yes, continue with PERSONAL TOUCH].</i>
ASK	[When you're on the phone with the right person, repeat Intro above]
PERSONAL TOUCH	This issue matters to me because: <i>[SAY ONE OR TWO SPECIFIC REASONS HERE! Some ideas are below]:</i>
(example)	<i>GENERAL : I know that democracy works best when more people participate, and right now we struggle with low voter turnout in local elections. Some cities and towns are interested in helping young people establish the habit of voting and become lifelong voters by setting the local voting age at 16 or 17 for their municipal elections. This bill would give cities and towns the freedom to make the choice to implement that policy locally if they wish to do so.</i>
(example)	<i>FOR STUDENTS: As a young person, I know that I have a stake in the decisions that my elected officials make on the local level, and I wish to advocate for [CITY/TOWN] to set the municipal voting age at 16 for our local elections. This bill would let me do that.</i>
(example)	<i>FOR REPS WHO HAVE SUPPORTED OTHER PRO-VOTING MEASURES (RVC, AVR, etc): I know that you/Representative[_____] has been a strong champion of measures to increase voter turnout and improve our elections, and I really appreciate your commitment to this issue. Similarly, the EMPOWER Act allows cities to implement another innovation that can lead to increased voter turnout in the long run.</i>
	<i>FOR REPS WHO SUPPORTED THE CIVICS BILL: I know that Representative[_____] was a strong champion of the civics education bill that passed last year. I really appreciate their commitment to making sure MA students are informed and engaged citizens. This bill would let cities deepen that commitment, if they choose to.</i>
DETAILS ABOUT THE BILL:	This bill simply allows cities and towns to make this change for their local elections without going through the home rule petition process.

	<p>The bill would not force any cities or towns to make the change. And people who want to see a lower voting age in their cities would still have to advocate for it on the local level. By doing this advocacy, young people will learn even more about the civic process.</p>
<p>RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS:</p>	<p>Have cities been demanding this? In recent years, 5 cities and towns have approved 16/17 year old voting on the local level and sent home rule petitions to the state legislature asking permission to implement it. More are in the works, in cities including Northampton, Somerville, Boston, and more.</p> <p>On reasons cities would want to lower the voting age in the first place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Voting is a habit. 16 is a better time than 18 to establish that habit. In cities that lower their local voting age to 16, young people will be more likely to establish the habit and become lifelong voters. 2) Encourage civic learning. Massachusetts just passed the most robust legislation on civics education in the nation, requiring school to teach civics and American history, including through hands on projects. Students learn best when class material is relevant to life outside the classroom, and there is no better way to make civics relevant than by inviting young people into the voting booth. 3) 16- and 17-year-olds have a stake in the game and cities can make sure their voices are heard in local policy-making by allowing them to vote in local elections. <p>On other bills related to this topic: There are other bills also introduced that would lower the voting age for all local elections, or similar things. I'm only calling about this specific bill, which does not mandate a change but simply gives cities and towns the option to do so.</p>
<p>THE ASK:</p>	<p>Can we count on you/Representative[_____] to co-sponsor this bill?</p> <p>Can I send you an email with more information? What is the correct email address?</p>