

**SENATE . . . . . No. 317**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*Eileen M. Donoghue*

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act allowing citizens seventeen (17) years of age to vote in the City of Lowell municipal elections.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Eileen M. Donoghue</i>	<i>First Middlesex</i>
<i>Kevin J. Murphy</i>	<i>18th Middlesex</i>

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By Ms. Donoghue, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 317) of Eileen M. Donoghue and Kevin J. Murphy (with the approval of the mayor and city council) for legislation to allow citizens seventeen (17) years of age to vote in the City of Lowell municipal elections. Election Laws. [Local Approval Received.]

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen**

\_\_\_\_\_

An Act allowing citizens seventeen (17) years of age to vote in the City of Lowell municipal elections.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1           SECTION 1. Notwithstanding section 1 of chapter 51 of the General Laws, or any other  
2 general or special law to the contrary, every citizen seventeen years of age, not being a person  
3 under guardianship or incarcerated in a correctional facility due to a felony conviction, and not  
4 being temporarily or permanently disqualified by law because of corrupt practices in respect to  
5 elections, who is a resident in the City of Lowell where he or she claims the right to vote at the  
6 time he or she registers, and who has complied with the requirements of this chapter, may have  
7 his or her name entered on a separate list of persons designated to vote therein in any elections of  
8 candidates for municipal office in the City of Lowell.

9           SECTION 2. Any such qualified residents of the City of Lowell who are seventeen (17)  
10 years of age on the date of any elections of candidates for municipal office in the City of Lowell  
11 who chose to register to vote in the City of Lowell local elections shall be designated “Special  
12 Registered Minors.”

13           SECTION 3. Qualified residents of the City of Lowell who are seventeen (17) years of  
14 age shall be registered by completing a “Special Registered Minors Registration Form.” Such  
15 form shall be created, maintained, and disseminated by the City of Lowell Election and Census  
16 Commission Department. The “Special Registered Minors Registration Form” shall require the  
17 applicant to provide his or her full name, former name if applicable, current address, address  
18 where the applicant receives mail, date of birth, identification number in the form of a  
19 Massachusetts Driver’s license number or the last four digits of the applicant’s social security

20 number, and party enrollment or designation. The applicant may provide a telephone number.  
21 The applicant must sign a “Special Registered Minors Registration Form” and affirm that the  
22 information provided is true and accurate upon penalty of perjury. If the applicant is unable to  
23 sign the “Special Registered Minors Registration Form,” a person helping the applicant will  
24 provide his or her name and address on the form. The assister may also provide a telephone  
25 number.

26 SECTION 4. “Special Registered Minors” shall have their names placed on a separate  
27 election roll list compiled and maintained by the City of Lowell Election and Census  
28 Commission, separate and apart from the regular elector roll.

29 SECTION 5. Any such “Special Registered Minors” will, on the applicable local  
30 Election Day, be granted a specially prepared ballot that shall contain only those local elections  
31 for which “Special Registered Minors” are entitled to vote pursuant to this chapter.

32 SECTION 6. When a “Special Registered Minor” becomes eighteen (18) years of age,  
33 his or her name will immediately be stricken from the City of Lowell’s separate election roll list  
34 compiled in accordance with section 4. Said former “Special Registered Minor” shall be barred  
35 from voting in any state, local or federal election unless he or she registers to vote as required by  
36 section 1 of chapter 51 of the General Laws.

37 SECTION 7. The City of Lowell, by and through its Election and Census Commission,  
38 shall send notice, by mail, to “Special Registered Minors” when they become eighteen (18) years  
39 of age informing them of their removal from the City of Lowell’s separate election roll list  
40 compiled in accordance with section 4. Said notice will also provide instructions regarding how  
41 to qualify and register as an official voter of Massachusetts.

42 SECTION 8. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the provisions  
43 of chapters 50 through 54 of the General Laws shall apply to “Special Registered Minors” so far  
44 as applicable.

45 SECTION 9. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to qualify a “Special Registered  
46 Minor” any rights, privileges, or titles provided to voters as so referenced under section 1 of  
47 chapter 51 of the General Laws, the Massachusetts Constitution, or the Federal Constitution of  
48 the United States.

49 SECTION 10. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to grant a “Special Registered  
50 Minor” any right or claim to run or otherwise qualify as a candidate to become any elected  
51 official in any local, state, or federal election.

52 SECTION 11. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to grant any “Special  
53 Registered Minor” the right to vote in any election for any office or candidate other than an  
54 office or candidate for the Lowell City Council, the Lowell School Committee, or any other body

55 politic in Lowell for which a “Special Registered Minor” becomes qualified to vote after the  
56 passage of this act. Nothing in this act shall be construed to enable any “Special Registered  
57 Minor” to vote for any state ballot initiative, regional school committee election, or any other  
58 regional, state, or federal election.

59 SECTION 12. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to grant any “Special  
60 Registered Minor” enrolled in a public school in Lowell the right to excuse oneself without  
61 permission from school authorities to vote or otherwise participate in an election during school  
62 hours. Participation is defined as skipping school without permission on an applicable election  
63 day to vote, hold, sponsor or attend any election-related event or meeting, distribute campaign  
64 literature, transport voters or other “Special Registered Minors” to polling locations, or otherwise  
65 participate in said election during school hours.

66 SECTION 13. The provisions of this act shall take effect upon its passage by the voters  
67 of the City of Lowell.

68 SECTION 14. The exact question as it would appear on the ballot in the next general  
69 election of the City of Lowell is:

70 Do you approve of a law summarized below, on which a vote was taken by the Senate  
71 and the House of Representatives on \_\_\_\_\_?

72 Summary:

73 This proposed law would lower the voting age for all local municipal elections in the City  
74 of Lowell to citizens seventeen (17) years of age who register as “Special Registered Minors.”  
75 Potential “Special Registered Minors” must still comply with all other state and city electoral  
76 requirements before having their name entered on a separate designated election roll list  
77 compiled and maintained by the City of Lowell.

78 “Special Registered Minors” are only permitted to vote in any local municipal election  
79 and only for such positions pertaining to the governance of the City of Lowell. Nothing in this  
80 law would grant “Special Registered Minors” any rights to vote in any other regional, state, or  
81 federal election.

82 When a “Special Registered Minor” becomes eighteen (18) years of age, his or her name  
83 will be stricken from the City of Lowell’s designated elector roll list for such “Special Registered  
84 Minors.” He or she will be unable to vote in any election unless he or she registers to vote as  
85 required by Massachusetts General Laws, c. 51, s.1.

86 A YES VOTE would lower the voting age in all local municipal elections in the City of  
87 Lowell to all qualified citizens seventeen (17) years of age or older.

88           A NO VOTE would make no change in the voting age for local municipal elections in the  
89   City of Lowell.