



## **Model: High School Voter Registration Bill**

Section 1. Short title: This Act shall be known as the ‘High School Voter Registration Act.’

Section 2. Legislative Declaration: The (*legislature/general assembly*) hereby finds that:

- (1) In order to promote and encourage voter registration of all eligible electors in the state, registration should be made as convenient as possible;
- (2) If 18-year-old citizens in the United States registered at the same rate as the general U.S. population, an additional 830,000 18-year-old voters would have been eligible to vote in the 2008 election.
- (3) In 2008, the registration rate for 18 year olds was 22% lower, and the voting rate was 21% lower, than the general voting-eligible population.
- (4) Reversing this trend and encouraging people of all ages to register to vote and participate in their government is crucial to the continued viability of a democratic government and to ensuring a robust political debate.

Section 3. Therefore, the purpose of this bill is to encourage voter registration by providing convenient registration opportunities for qualified high school students.

Section 4. Section (#) is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

- (a) The (*election clerk/appropriate official*) shall:
  - 1) Contact each public high school in the (*appropriate jurisdiction*); and
  - 2) Determine the number of high school students who are 18 or will reach the age of 18<sup>1</sup> during the academic year; and
  - 3) Distribute to each high school a sufficient number of voter registration forms for distribution to every high school student who is or will become 18 during the academic year; and
  - 4) Ensure that each public high school has a sufficient supply of voter registration forms so that they are always available to qualified students; and
  - 5) Participate in voter-education programs created by the high schools to promote participation in elections by encouraging voter registration and voter turnout.
- (b) Each public high school shall:
  - 1) Include a by-mail voter registration form in each senior registration packet; and
  - 2) Collect and forward completed voter registration forms to the (*election clerk/appropriate official*).
- (c) Each public high school shall conduct, at least once per school year and, at a minimum, eight weeks preceding a November election, a voter-education program during school hours, for all students in grade 12 and all other students 18 years of age, which program will include:
  - 1) How to register to vote.

---

<sup>1</sup> In states that permit pre-registration of 16 and/or 17 year olds, the language of this clause should be amended accordingly.



- 2) The proper operation of voting machines.
- 3) When and where to vote.
- 4) The process of voting, including voter identification requirements, if applicable, and the use of absentee ballots.
- 5) The importance of voting.
- 6) Provide the opportunity for eligible students to complete and hand in, either to the appropriate school officials or to an (*elections clerk/appropriate official*), applications for voter registration.
- (d) Upon request, similar access to voter registration applications and a voter-education program shall be made available to nonpublic high schools.
- (e) A student who is eligible to register to vote may not be excluded from the voter-education program.

Section 5. If any public school employee refuses to implement or interferes with the implementation of this Act, their actions shall be reported to the (*chief election clerk/appropriate official*), who will transmit such report to the (*Superintendent of Schools/Board of Education*).

Section 6. The (*chief election clerk/appropriate official*) shall report on progress made toward establishing the voter-education program, including any findings, recommendations, and/or proposed additional implementing legislation to the (*general assembly/legislature*) no later than three months after the effective date of this Act, and annually thereafter.

Section 7. The (*chief law enforcement official of state*) may bring a civil action in an appropriate court for such declaratory or injunctive relief as is necessary to carry out this Act.

Section 8. Private Right of Action.

- (1) A person who is aggrieved by a violation of this Act may provide written notice of the violation to the chief election official of the State.
- (2) If the violation is not corrected within 90 days after receipt of a notice under paragraph (1), or within 20 days after receipt of the notice if the violation occurred within 120 days before the date of an election, the aggrieved person may bring a civil action in an appropriate court for declaratory or injunctive relief with respect to the violation.
- (3) If the violation occurred within 30 days before the date of an election, the aggrieved person need not provide notice to the chief election official of the State under paragraph (1) before bringing a civil action under paragraph (2).
- (4) Attorney's Fees. In a civil action under this section the court may allow the prevailing party, other than the (*state*), reasonable attorney fees, including litigation expenses and costs.

Section 9. This Act shall take effect on (*date*).

Section 10. Severability. If any provision of this Act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this Act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Act are severable.