

Resolution Formalizing In-School Registration for High School Seniors

WHEREAS, voting is one of the most important elements of good citizenship in a democracy, but voting is impossible without registration as a voter.

WHEREAS, a high percentage of younger citizens fail to vote in most elections, with failure to be registered to vote being one of the key reasons for such low participation numbers.

WHEREAS, the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School has led to a high level of political activism among high school students, including students from our own T. C. Williams High School.

WHEREAS, an activist student group from T. C. Williams was honored at our Blue Alexandria Dinner, and their spokesperson called on Democrats to take five specific actions, one of which was to tie high school graduation to becoming registered to vote, with voter registration being done at the school itself.

WHEREAS, virtually all graduating seniors are already 18 years of age or will be 18 prior to the following November's general election and are eligible to register by virtue of age.

WHEREAS, Virginia Governors since 2014 have proclaimed high school student voter registration week, but this remains a voluntary effort.

WHEREAS the Alexandria Democratic Committee is supportive of efforts to make voter registration easier, including this initiative by activist students, while recognizing that there are technical issues that must be accommodated including exceptions for non-citizen students, as well as legal requirements for training of persons soliciting and collecting voter registration forms.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alexandria School Board, in conjunction with school administration, is called upon to incorporate voter registration into the curriculum for high school seniors, and to have adequate numbers of faculty members trained and qualified to solicit and collect voter registrations from all seniors who are qualified to be voters; and to ensure that every senior is given a formal opportunity to register, either by staff, faculty, or through an organized peer-to-peer program. There should be virtually no additional cost to implement such an in-school voter registration.

BE IT RESOLVED that copies of this resolution shall be presented to the administrations of each private high school in Alexandria, with the suggestion that they also initiate such a program and put it in their strategic plan.

BE IT RESOLVED that our representatives to the Virginia General Assembly are called upon to introduce and actively pursue legislation that would make in-school voter registration a requirement statewide.

BE IT RESOLVED The Alexandria Democratic Committee, together with our representatives of the Eight District Committee, and the State Democratic Committee, is directed to work towards getting all other city and county Democratic Committee's in the Commonwealth to adopt similar resolutions, with the ultimate goal that this policy position becomes a part of the platform of the Democratic Party of Virginia by 2019 or earlier, and the policy of the State of Virginia.