

**John Long**

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**From:** Stephanie Galaitsi <stephanie.galaitsi@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 01, 2019 7:47 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk Contact  
**Subject:** In support of 16 and 17 year old voting

Dear Somerville,

I think that allowing 16 and 17 year olds to vote is a great initiative. Civic duty is all about participation, and if we can get teenagers excited about it earlier, that's excellent! I think it will also build feelings of responsibility for their community, and maturity. I strongly support it!

Stephanie

## John Long

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**From:** Katjana Ballantyne <Katjana@Katjana.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 04, 2019 7:00 PM  
**To:** John Long  
**Cc:** Nancy Trane  
**Subject:** Fwd: Voting at 16  
**Attachments:** Part 1.asc

John,

Would you forward to all Councilors?

thank you, Katjana

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:** Voting at 16  
**Date:** 2019-04-04 18:50  
**From:** Nancy Trane <[nancytrane@hotmail.com](mailto:nancytrane@hotmail.com)>  
**To:** Katjana Ballantyne <[Katjana@katjana.org](mailto:Katjana@katjana.org)>, "[stephanie@stephaniehirsch.org](mailto:stephanie@stephaniehirsch.org)"  
<[stephanie@stephaniehirsch.org](mailto:stephanie@stephaniehirsch.org)>, "[aldermanrossetti@gmail.com](mailto:aldermanrossetti@gmail.com)" <[aldermanrossetti@gmail.com](mailto:aldermanrossetti@gmail.com)>

Please do not vote to lower voting age to sixteen. I want every Somerville student to graduate as leaders not followers. A few more years will allow them time to broaden their horizons by continuing their education or working full time meeting people with different philosophies and political views. At sixteen still to vulnerable. I can only hope they learn that no matter how different their views there is always something they can learn from others. A few more years of unbiased education will allow them to become more independent thinkers. Somerville leads the way. "We walk the walk" and always have

Please forward to other board members that I missed thank you

Don't forward to home rule  
Nancy A Trane

Sent from my iPhone

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Kind regards,

Katjana Ballantyne  
President, Somerville City Council  
Councilor, Ward 7

**John Long**

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**From:** Miriam R <joy.in.the.dance@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 08, 2019 10:00 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk Contact  
**Subject:** Voting Rights Report Comment

Hello,

I am strongly in favor of reducing barriers to voting, including extending voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds and non-citizens. Generally all the recommendations of the voting rights task force look good to me.

Thank you,

Miriam Roberts

## John Long

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**From:** Brandon Klugman <bklugman@generationcitizen.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 11, 2019 1:18 PM  
**To:** City Clerk Contact  
**Subject:** Testimony on voting age  
**Attachments:** Somerville testimony on voting age.docx

Good afternoon,

I spoke at the hearing last week on the voting age, and wanted to submit a written copy of my comments as well.

Thanks,  
Brandon

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**Brandon Klugman, Vote16USA Campaign Manager**  
Generation Citizen  
cell: (952) 836-7172  
[www.generationcitizen.org](http://www.generationcitizen.org)  
[www.Vote16USA.org](http://www.Vote16USA.org)

Brandon Klugman  
Testimony on lowering voting age  
Somerville, MA  
April 4, 2019

Good afternoon. I am here today to speak in support of the proposed home rule petition to lower the voting age to 16 for municipal elections in Somerville. My name is Brandon Klugman and I work for Generation Citizen, a nonpartisan, nonprofit dedicated to ensuring that all students have access to action-oriented civics education that prepares them for lifelong, informed, engaged citizenship.

Generation Citizen will reach 6000 MA students with Action Civics programming this year, including a few classes in schools in Somerville. We also support youth-led efforts to extend voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds on the local level around the country through our Vote16USA initiative, which I lead.

As the Clean and Open Elections Task Force noted in its report, this move can help young people foster a lifelong commitment to civic engagement and participation. Indeed, research shows that voting is a habit and those who vote in the first election they are eligible for are likely to continue participating as habitual voters, while those who do not vote in that first election are likely to continue not participating, as habitual nonvoters, for several election cycles. Further, we know that age 16 is a better time than age 18 to establish that habit of voting. At 16, young people can vote while in high school and supported by peers, teachers, and parents.

The cities that have implemented 16-year-old voting in Maryland have seen overwhelmingly positive results. Not only have 16- and 17-year-olds voted at higher rates than older age groups, but city councilmembers have reported an increase in interest in city programming and services and more vibrant discussion around community issues. As one councilmember told me in reference to 16- and 17-year-old voters, "they're acting like residents, which is exactly what we want to see."

Several cities in Massachusetts have sent home rule petitions on this issue in recent years, and while none have passed in the state legislature, there is no better time to try and there's no better city than Somerville to lead the way. The issue of 16- and 17-year-old voting has become substantially more mainstream in MA and nationwide in recent months, due in large part to leadership from young people like those here today, from local elected officials like the Mayor and members of the council who support this initiative, and from champions like Rep. Ayanna Pressley, who proposed this at the federal level, and her six other colleagues from the MA Congressional delegation who supported that move.

I understand that this may sound like a bold idea, and some folks' gut reactions are negative. But I would encourage everyone to consider the evidence here. We can and should set each age line at what makes sense for that specific activity in question, on its own merits. For voting,

to ensure the strongest and healthiest democracy possible, 16 is the right age. I encourage the city council to approve this home rule petition and I look forward to seeing the continued vibrant participation of 16- and 17-year-olds and all young people in civic life.

In addition, I encourage the council to do all it can to support a bill in the state legislature (H.720) known as the EMPOWER Act, which would give cities and towns the option to lower the voting age on the local level without needing to go through the home rule petition process. This would give cities like Somerville the flexibility to discuss, debate, and potentially implement 16-year-old voting on the local level without having to worry about the hurdle posed by the home rule petition process.

Our website, [Vote16USA.org](http://Vote16USA.org), contains comprehensive information on the policy idea and the academic research on the topic. I am excited to see Somerville lead the way with this conversation and hope to see a home rule petition go forward in the near future.