

## RESOLUTION

Be it resolved that the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners creates the following:

### POLICY REGARDING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

**WHEREAS**, Neighborhood Councils should be open to youth to experience civic engagement in the City of Los Angeles;

**WHEREAS** a majority of Neighborhood Councils encourage youth participation, including forty (40) Neighborhood Councils with youth board seats, forty-one (41) with a minimum voting age between 16 and 18, thirteen (13) with a minimum voting age of less than 16, and many that include youth in advisory, appointed, and other roles;

**WHEREAS** research shows that a) voting is habitual and if started at a young age can create lifelong voters<sup>1</sup>, b) American adolescents (sixteen and seventeen-year-olds) notions of citizenship are approximately the same as those apparent in young American adults who are allowed to vote<sup>2,3</sup> and c) youth voters have a “trickle-up effect” as student-initiated political discussions at home lead to increased parental civic engagement and voter turnout<sup>4</sup>.

**WHEREAS** the Mayor of Los Angeles has encouraged City Departments to integrate opportunities for youth into their existing hiring and other programs through Executive Directive #9;

**WHEREAS** the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners seek to increase voter involvement in Neighborhood Councils, and when less than one-third ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ) of Neighborhood Councils, thirty-two (32) have set their minimum voting age at 18 years

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<sup>1</sup> David Campbell, “Vote Early, Vote Often: The Role of Schools in Creating Civic Norms,” *Education Next*, vol. 5, no. 3, (2005) <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ763299> (accessed November 17, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Hart, D. & Atkins, R. (2011) American Sixteen- and Seventeen-Year-Olds Are Ready to Vote. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Volume 633, No. 1, Page 201-222). <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0002716210382395>

<sup>3</sup> Yosef Bhatti and Kasper M. Hansen, “Leaving the nest and the social act of voting: Turnout among first-time voters”, *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, vol. 22, no. 4, (2012) [http://www.promoteourvote.com/uploads/9/2/2/7/9227685/leaving\\_the\\_nest\\_and\\_the\\_social\\_act\\_of\\_voting.pdf](http://www.promoteourvote.com/uploads/9/2/2/7/9227685/leaving_the_nest_and_the_social_act_of_voting.pdf) (accessed November 17, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Michael McDevitt and Spiro Kiouisis, *Experiments in Political Socialization: Kids Voting USA as a Model for Civic Education Reform* (Medford, MA: The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2006), 9, <http://civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP49McDevitt.pdf> (accessed November 17, 2015).

of age, it creates a situation where youth in those thirty-two (32) Neighborhood Councils cannot participate based solely on where they are stakeholders.

**NOW THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED** that the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners establishes this policy for youth participation in Neighborhood Councils:

**POLICY NUMBER: 2016-03**

**NOW THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED** that the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners establishes this policy for youth participation in Neighborhood Councils:

1. The voting age for all Neighborhood Council elections shall be set to a minimum level of 16-years-old to create consistent youth participation in elections/selections across the entire system. Neighborhood councils are free to set a lower minimum age for their elections/selections.

It is also recommended and advised that all Neighborhood Councils revise their bylaws to:

1. Involve youth in Committee work including committees that work on engagement with local schools, art and scholarship programs, community and youth outreach programs, etc.
2. Create an **Advisory** role, whereby their participation is noted in the minutes, but they would have no formal vote on the board nor count towards quorum.
3. Create an **Appointed** role, whereby a youth participant is appointed to the Board on a yearly or multi-year term. In this role, the appointee would count towards quorum and have the full voting privileges and status of other Boardmembers—with the sole caveat that they have to be 18 or older to vote on funding motions.
4. Create an **Elected** role, whereby a youth Board seat is created as an elected position and whereby youth are allowed to participate in the Board as a duly elected official. In this role, the Board member would count towards quorum and have the full voting privileges and status of other Boardmembers—with the sole caveat that they have to be 18 or older to vote on funding motions.
5. Hire youth over the summer for local projects such as neighborhood clean ups, community events, and office work.

**Moved by:**

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**Member, Board of Neighborhood Commissioners**

**Seconded by:**

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**Member, Board of Neighborhood Commissioners**

**Witnesses by:**

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**Staff, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment**

**VOTES:**

**AYES:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAYS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_