



## **City of Hyattsville Public Hearing**

Monday, January 5, 2015

7:45 PM

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Hyattsville, Maryland will hold a public hearing on a proposed amendment to the City Charter, Section C4-1, "Qualifications of voters". The proposed Charter Amendment lowers the minimum voting age for City elections to sixteen (16) years of age.

The hearing is open to the public and public testimony is encouraged.

The regular City Council Meeting of January 5 will take place following the conclusion of the public hearing. It is anticipated that during the meeting, the Council will vote on a motion to direct that a referendum occur at the regular municipal election in 2015 in which the City would seek an advisory opinion of the voters on whether the eligible age to vote in City elections should be lowered from eighteen (18) years of age to sixteen (16) years of age.

If you are unable to attend the hearing, written comments may be directed to Laura Reams, City Clerk at 4310 Gallatin Street, Hyattsville, MD 20781; or at [lreams@hyattsville.org](mailto:lreams@hyattsville.org).

### ***AGENDA***

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Public Comment** (begin at 7:45 p.m.) (Limit 2 minutes per speaker)
- 3. Motion to Adjourn**

**Please note: There will be a scheduled 10 minute recess at the conclusion of the public hearing, after which the regular Council Meeting of January 5, 2015 will begin.**

**CHARTER AMENDMENT RESOLUTION 2014-04**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HYATTSVILLE, MARYLAND**, adopted pursuant to the authority of Article XI-E of the Constitution of Maryland and Title 4, Subtitle 3 of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland (2013 Edition, as amended), to amend the Charter of the said City, said Charter being a part of the public local laws of Maryland (1963 Edition, as amended), which Article contains in whole or in part the Charter of the City of Hyattsville, Maryland, whereby the Mayor and City Council lower the voting age to 16 years old for City elections.

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and City Council believe it is important to allow as many City residents as possible to vote in City elections; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council deem it advisable to lower the voting age to 16 years of age.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Hyattsville, Maryland, in regular session assembled:

Section 1: That Section C4-1 of the Charter of the City of Hyattsville, Maryland, be amended as follows:

**§ C4-1. Qualifications of voters. [Amended 2-24-71; 5-1-72]**

Every person who is a citizen of the United States, is at least ~~eighteen (18)~~ **SIXTEEN (16)** years of age, resides in the State of Maryland, resides within the corporate limits of the City and is registered in accordance with the provisions of this Charter shall be a qualified voter of the City. Every qualified voter of the City shall be entitled to vote at any or all City elections.

Section 2: That the date of the adoption of this Resolution is \_\_\_\_\_, and that the amendment to the Charter of the City of Hyattsville hereby proposed by this enactment shall be and become effective on [50 days], unless a proper petition for a referendum hereon shall be filed by [40 days], and a fair summary of the Amendment shall be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the City not less than four (4) times at weekly intervals by [40 days].

Section 3: That as soon as the Charter Amendment hereby enacted becomes effective, either as herein provided or following a referendum, the Clerk shall send separately to the Department of Legislative Services, the following information concerning the Charter Amendment: (1) the complete text of this Resolution; (2) the date of referendum election, if any, held with respect thereto; (3) the number of votes cast for and against this Resolution by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Hyattsville or in a referendum; and (4) the effective date of the Charter Amendment.

Section 4: That the Clerk be, and he/she is specifically enjoined and instructed to carry out the provisions of Sections 2 and 3, and as evidence of compliance herewith the said Clerk

shall cause to be affixed to the Minutes of this meeting (1) an appropriate certificate of publication of the newspaper in which the fair summary of the Amendment shall have been published; and (2) records of mailing referred to in Section 3, and shall further complete and execute a Certificate of Compliance.

**INTRODUCED** by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Hyattsville, Maryland, at a Regular Meeting on \_\_\_\_\_, 2014, at which meeting copies were available to the public for inspection.

**ADOPTED** by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Hyattsville, Maryland, at a Regular Meeting on \_\_\_\_\_, 2014, at which meeting copies were available to the public for inspection.

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Laura Reams, City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marc Tartaro, Mayor

{} indicate deletions  
CAPS/**BOLD** indicate additions

**EFFECTIVE DATE:**

**RESOLUTION 2015-01**

**A Resolution of the City Council of Hyattsville, Maryland whereby the City Council directs that a referendum occur at the regular municipal election in 2015 in which the City will seek an advisory opinion of the voters on whether the eligible age to vote in City elections should be lowered from eighteen (18) years of age to sixteen (16) years of age.**

**WHEREAS**, Section C2-10(c) of the Charter for the City sets forth procedures for a Council directed referendum on issues of concern to the City Council; and

**WHEREAS**, Section C4-1 of the Charter for the City sets eighteen (18) years of age as the minimum age to vote in City elections, together with the other criteria, and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council has debated lowering the minimum voting age in City elections to sixteen (16) years and has determined to request the opinion of the qualified voters of the City in the upcoming regular election in 2015; and

**WHEREAS**, two thirds (2/3) of the City Council has voted to place this question on the ballot for the regular 2015 election;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the City Council of the City of Hyattsville that the City Board of Supervisors of Elections is hereby directed to add the following question to the ballot for the election to be held on the first Tuesday in May, 2015 as an advisory referendum question:

(ADVISORY)

“Should the minimum age to vote in City elections be lowered from eighteen (18) years of age to sixteen (16) years of age?”

**INTRODUCED** by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Hyattsville at a Regular Meeting on \_\_\_\_\_, at which meeting copies were available to the public for inspection, and

**DRAFT**

**December 4, 2014**

**PASSED** by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Hyattsville, Maryland, at a Regular Meeting on \_\_\_\_\_, at which meeting copies were available to the public for inspection.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Laura Reams, City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marc Tartaro, Mayor

**COMMENTS RECEIVED BY THE CITY VIA EMAIL (as of December 23, 2014)**

Randall Kovar

Sat 12/13/2014 8:34 AM

Inbox

**To:**

Laura Reams;

You replied on 12/15/2014 9:29 AM.

Attn: Laura Reams,.....Even though I do not live in your city, I still want the city's voting age to remain at 18. I am one of many, many people that are opposed to have your city's voting age lowered to 16. I very strongly urge the city councilmembers to absolutely not lowering the voting age to 16 . 18 is sufficient enough by most people's standards/beliefs. Please e-mail me back at [email address redacted] as soon as possible. Thank you.—Randall S. Kovar

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November 24, 2014

Mayor Marc Tartaro and the Hyattsville City Council  
4310 Gallatin Street  
Hyattsville, MD 20781

Dear Mayor Tartaro and members of the Council;

The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE) was founded at the University of Maryland in 2001 and is now at Tufts University in Massachusetts. It is a nationally recognized, non-partisan research organization that studies youth voting, youth civic and political participation and civic education.

**CIRCLE supports the idea of allowing 16- and 17 year-olds to vote in municipal elections in Hyattsville** for several research-based reasons:

- 16 and 17-year-olds are *not too young to vote*. A study found that **16-year-olds' political knowledge is about the same as 21-year-olds'** and quite close to the average for all adults.<sup>1</sup>
- Research shows that **voting is habitual**, so promoting the turnout of 16 and 17-year-olds should increase participation for decades to come.<sup>2</sup>
- **Norms related to political participation in high school have a lasting impact** – high school students continue to have a higher turnout rate, by seven percentage points, even in their mid- thirties, if they went to schools where a majority of students believe they should vote. Therefore, if you provide high school students an opportunity to vote, they will.<sup>3</sup>
- Just getting high school students to preregister while they are in school has a positive effect on voting behaviors after they turn 18. **Being able to actually vote while they are still in high school should positively affect voting.**<sup>4</sup>
- In recent elections that were open to youth under 18 (Chicago's 2014 primary and Takoma Park's 2013 general election), they **actually voted at higher rates than older people did.**<sup>5</sup>
- Our analysis of our own national youth survey conducted after the 2012 election finds that **learning about voting in high school predicts actual voting once people reach age 18**. If students were eligible to vote while they were still in school, then teaching about voting would be more effective and more frequent.<sup>6</sup>

Not only do we know that allowing 16 and 17-year-olds to vote has a lasting, positive impact on political participation, we also know from research that young people often have distinct values, and therefore political voices, which is crucial for healthy democratic governance. We strongly believe that if 16 and 17-year-olds have a distinct political voice and are capable of voting, they should be allowed to do so. We sincerely hope that you will support this important bill. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter Levine".

Peter Levine, Ph.D.  
Director, CIRCLE  
Associate Dean for Research  
Lincoln Filene Professor

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Hart and Robert Atkins, "American Sixteen- and Seventeen-Year-Olds are Ready to Vote," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 63 (January 2011), pp. 201-221.

<sup>2</sup> Eric Plutzer, "Becoming a Habitual Voter: Inertia, Resources, and Growth," *The American Political Science Review* 96/1 (March 2002), pp. 41-56.

<sup>3</sup> David Campbell, "Vote early, vote often: The role of schools in creating civic norms," *Education Next*, 5/3 (2005), pp. 62-69.

<sup>4</sup> Michael McDonald and Matthew Thornburg, "Registering the youth through voter preregistration," *New York University Journal of Legislation and Public Policy*, 13/33 (2010), pp. 551-572.

<sup>5</sup> Rick Pearson, "17-year-olds voted at higher rate than parents in primary," *Chicago Tribune*, May 17, 2014; J.B. Wogan, "Takoma Park sees high turnout among teens after election reform," *Governing Magazine*, Nov. 7, 2013

<sup>6</sup> Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge, "All Together Now: Collaboration and Innovation for Youth Engagement" (October 2013), via <http://www.civicyouth.org/about-circle/commission-on-youth-voting-civic-knowledge/>