

# PROMOTING THE YOUTH VOTE (HB 436/SB 515)



**Let's act now to foster a strong sense of civic duty by giving young Marylanders more opportunities to engage in democracy. By building on our existing programs, we can inspire generations of voters to get involved.**

**1**

## **Lower the age for pre-registration**

- Pre-registration allows people younger than 18 to vote as soon as they are eligible.
- Right now, Marylanders 16 and over can pre-register.
- By changing the age to 15.9, we can allow more young people who are obtaining their learner's permits to pre-register to vote.
- When a Marylander registers to vote, they will automatically start to receive election information. This gets them into the pipeline to civic participation.
- Registered voters are also eligible to serve as election judges on Election Day — and we need more election judges!
- This small change can contribute to creating the life-long habit of voting.

**2**

## **Giving student members on county Boards of Education voting rights**

- Many Boards of Education in Maryland have student members. But without voting rights, these student members are forced to watch as decisions are made on their behalf.
- Giving student members on county Boards of Education the right to vote in executive sessions will allow for a more representative school board.

**3**

## **Lower the voting age to 16 for school board elections**

- Studies have shown that voting is a habit that is best established early; the younger a person is allowed to vote, the more likely they are to sustain that habit throughout their life.
- Giving public high school students the opportunity to vote in school board elections as early as 16 gives them the opportunity to put their lessons about civic engagement into practice.
- This measure will also help to create school boards that are more sensitive to the needs of the students they serve.