



Request for City Council Action

Date: May 16, 2008

To: City Council

Subject: Resolution endorsing and supporting Kids Voting Minneapolis

Recommended Action: Recommend passage of a resolution endorsing and supporting Kids Voting Minneapolis.

Presenter in Committee: Cindy Reichert, Director of Elections

Kids Voting Minneapolis is a community-based, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to prepare Minneapolis' 50,000 K-12 students to be educated, informed voters.

Part of a national network of independent affiliates, Kids Voting Minneapolis combines civic learning in the classroom, family dialogue, and an authentic voting experience to prepare the next generation of citizens.

Kids Voting Minneapolis provides a K-12 civic learning curriculum at no cost to all schools in Minneapolis (public, private, alternative, charter, and home schools). Students learn about the right to vote, democracy and the importance of civic participation. On Election Day, students experience first-hand an authentic voting experience by accompanying their parents to their neighborhood polling place. Students cast a Kids Voting ballot, voting on many of the same candidates and issues that adults do. Results are tallied, posted at www.kidsvotingminneapolis.org, and reported to the media.

The Minneapolis Elections Office supports Kids Voting Minneapolis and is recommending that the City Council pass the attached resolution.

Resolution of the City of Minneapolis

Endorsing and supporting Kids Voting Minneapolis.

Whereas, with the ratification of the 26th amendment in 1971 lowering the voting age to 18, there was great hope and enthusiasm for the younger generation of this nation sharing a great voice in American democracy; and

Whereas, the great expectations have been met with declining political participation among youth; and

Whereas, in 1998 fewer than one in five 18-to-24-year-olds chose to vote; and

Whereas, in February 1999 "A Survey of Youth Attitudes Nationwide," commissioned by the National Association of Secretaries of State, found that young people aged 18-24 were dropping out of the electoral process for a number of reasons: they felt ignored by politicians, they felt their vote really didn't count, and they said they didn't get the kind of information they needed to vote; and

Whereas, that study found that young people lack interest, trust and knowledge when it comes to American government; and

Whereas, in 2004, 47% of 18-24 year olds voted; and

Whereas, in Minnesota in 2004, nearly 200,000 18-24 year olds did not vote; and

Whereas, internationally the United States ranks 139th out of 172 democracies in their rate of voter participation; and

Whereas, Kids Voting Minneapolis, through its K-12, grade specific, learn-by-doing classroom lessons and activities and teacher training, prepares students for a lifetime of voting and civic participation in our democracy; and

Whereas, Kids Voting Minneapolis students are taught about the rights, responsibilities and privileges of voting and the importance of becoming an informed voter; and

Whereas, on Election Day students go to the official polls with their parents to vote on a specially-designed Kids Voting Minneapolis ballot containing many of the same candidates and issues that the official adult ballot contains; and

Whereas, research has confirmed the impact of the Kids Voting program on voting patterns and civic participation. In communities with Kids Voting programs, the voting rate for registered 18-year-olds is 14% higher than their non-participating peers and adult voter turnout increases by as much as 5%; and

Whereas, Minneapolis businesses, civic groups, governmental entities and hundreds of community volunteers have added their support to Kids Voting Minneapolis;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the City Council of the City of Minneapolis;

That the City Council does hereby endorse and support Kids Voting Minneapolis. Support includes educating election judges about Kids Voting Minneapolis, delivering Kids Voting materials to and from polling places on Election Day, and coordinating election day activities to ensure a smooth process for kids and adult voters.