

MOTION

10. Endorsing the Vote16BC Campaign to Lower the Voting Age to 16 across British Columbia (Previously Motion B.3)

At the Council meeting on June 8, 2021, due to time constraints, Council did not consider the motion below and as such the motion was placed on the Council agenda of June 22, 2021, as Unfinished Business. Subsequently on June 22, 2021, the motion was referred to the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting on June 23, 2021, in order to hear from speakers, followed by debate and decision.

MOVED by Councillor Boyle

WHEREAS

1. Youth have a strong interest in the future of local communities, and decisions made at a local level stand to have a significant impact on whether they continue to be able to call that community home, as well as the health and safety of that community over their lifetime. Youth have the most at stake in political decisions being made right now, and deserve a say in what lies ahead;
2. Empowering young people to participate in democratic processes fosters ongoing and active civic participation. Studies show that if first time voters have social and educational support — which are more likely to be available when you live with parents/guardians and attend school — they are more likely to vote again. New research also shows that younger voters create a “trickle up” effect, where parents and other adults in their lives are more likely to vote when youth do;
3. Many youth are on the front lines during the pandemic, and will bear the brunt of economic, social and environmental consequences, from lost jobs to family stress, mental health, unstable education, a housing crisis, and uncertain futures. As fully participating members of society, they deserve to have a say in the decisions made around BC's recovery and forever-changed post-pandemic future;
4. In 2019, the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) endorsed a resolution calling on the province to revise the minimum voting age in local government elections to 16 years of age;
5. The campaign to lower the voting age to 16 has been endorsed by 20 non-profits, unions, and labour councils, including BC Teachers Federation, BCGEU, and Sustainabiliteens. It has also been endorsed at conventions of both the BC NDP and the BC Green Party; and
6. Several jurisdictions worldwide, including Austria, Argentina, and Scotland, have lowered the voting age to 16.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Vancouver City Council formally endorses the Vote16BC campaign to lower the voting age to 16 in British Columbia.

- B. THAT Council requests the Mayor to write a letter to the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs informing them of this endorsement.

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