

In the Year Two Thousand and Twenty

Upon the recommendation of the Northampton Mayor's Youth Commission, Councilor Michael Quinlan, Jr., Councilor Alex Jarrett, and Councilor William H. Dwight

R-20.031 A RESOLUTION
IN SUPPORT OF THE EMPOWER ACT

Be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Northampton, in City Council assembled, as follows:

WHEREAS, in 2018 the Northampton City Council passed Resolution R-18.097 to petition the Massachusetts Legislature to allow the City of Northampton to establish a minimum voting age for residents of Northampton of sixteen years for all municipal elections.

WHEREAS, the Northampton Mayor's Youth Commission, the Northampton City Council, the Mayor of Northampton, and the Northampton Charter Review Committee have unanimously supported the lowering of the voting age to 16.

WHEREAS, the EMPOWER Act would permit 16 and 17-year-olds to vote in municipal elections in those cities and towns whose legislative body has voted to accept it.

WHEREAS, lowering the voting age will create a more perfect democracy in our municipality, by empowering young people to be involved in the local political system.

WHEREAS, the issues voted on at the municipal level such as School Committee and municipal spending on climate change mitigation, as well as many others, directly affect young people.

WHEREAS, the 16 and 17-year-olds of Northampton have already shown their passion for civic engagement and electoral politics through organizing strikes, marches, and walkouts, and hosting elected officials and candidates for elected office at youth-led forums.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the sponsors call upon the Northampton City Council to petition the Massachusetts Legislature to pass Senate Bill 389 and House Bill 720, of the 191st session, "An Act ensuring municipal participation of the widest eligible range", otherwise known as the EMPOWER Act.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Administrative Assistant to the City Council shall cause a copy of this resolution to be sent to the state sponsors of the Act, Senator Harriette L. Chandler and Representatives Andres X. Vargas and Dylan A. Fernandes; Chairs of the Joint Committee on Election Laws, Senator Barry R. Finegold and Representative John J. Lawn, Jr.; State Representative Lindsay Sabadosa; State Senator Jo Comerford; House Speaker Robert DeLeo; Senate President Karen Spilka and Governor Charles Baker.