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## Teen voting heads to Statehouse

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The campaign, led by CRLS seniors Paul Heintz and Jesse Baer, amended the original request, which would have given 16-year-olds the right to vote. Organizers also went to the School Committee first, where they garnered five votes for approval last week. Sullivan, as chair of the School Committee, voted against the petition because, he said, he had not yet made up his mind and wanted more time to think about it.

Heintz said he's not sure what happens now in terms of when and how the home-rule petition will be filed in the Legislature. He said reps. Alice Wolf, Jan-en Barrios, Tim Toomey and Paul Demakis have all voiced their support for lowering the voting age. After the petition is filed, it moves through the Legislature like a bill and even if it passes both the House and Senate, the governor may veto it.

Demakis said yesterday the fact the order passed with an 8-1 majority is significant because it shows strong support on the local level, but lawmakers might be wary of a move to lower voting age in one community because of the precedent it would set.

Nonetheless, Heintz said, when Sullivan's gavel banged Monday night, Cambridge teens made history. No other campaign to lower the voting age has gotten this far, he said, although activists in Michigan and Washington, D.C. have tried.

From the mayor's dais this week, Sullivan said he was swayed by the students' quest. Their eagerness to participate in democracy by voting was patriotic, Sullivan said. History has shown voting amendments having to do with race, gender, and now age, the mayor said, "the time has come."

Sullivan referred to the remarks of School Committee member Fred Fantini, who spoke fervently in favor of the measure.

"All the impacts of Sept. 11 were not bad," said Sullivan. "Because of 9/11, patriotism is back."

Maher, casting the sole "no" vote, said he didn't believe the City Council was the right forum for the issue.

"Don't for one minute believe that if you don't participate by voting that you don't have an impact," said Maher, who recalled his years on the School Committee, when he met with students regularly and said their opinions influenced how the committee acted.

Emma Lange, a member of the student School Committee, chided the council for not going far enough. She wants the voting age lowered to 16. At last week's School Committee meeting, she asked the members not to vote "yes" for the plan to give 17-year-olds the vote. Everyone should get the chance to vote while still in high school, and 17-year-old seniors, depending on their birthday, would not get the chance until after graduation, she said.



STAFF PHOTO BY LEIGH HORNBECK

**Annery Miranda, a sophomore at CRLS, said she represented the Latino population when she spoke in favor of lowering the voting age to 17.**

Heintz said the work on the campaign was two-pronged. Part of the work was lobbying the councilors. The other was organizing within the high school and building a coalition from the Black Student Union and the Mayor's Youth Council, among other student groups at CRLS. Heintz and his peers also kept teen voting at the top of people's minds by hosting a voter registration drive and teaming teens with candidates during the council races last fall.

The Youth Action Coalition also endorsed city candidates based, in part, on their opinions about getting students involved in politics. YAC

endorsed Anthony Galluccio, E. Denise Simmons, Henrietta Davis, Reeves, Brian Murphy, Ethridge King, Jacob Horowitz and Steve Iskovitz.

Galluccio said he hoped Cambridge would once again set a trend, as it did with a "living wage" for city employees and a responsible employer ordinance that required contractors with the city to pay for worker's compensation insurance and pay prevailing wages.

Cambridge is viewed "in an unusual fashion outside our fair city," Murphy noted, but with their vote, the councilors said to the students, "we have faith in you," Galluccio said.