

LR26CA

Bill History

Introduced by: Sen. Tyson Larson

Heard by: Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Bill Summary

LR26CA is a proposed constitutional amendment that would lower age of eligibility to 18 for all political offices at the state level. If LR26CA is passed by the Legislature, it would then be placed on a general election ballot for consideration by voters.

Talking Points from Testifiers

For LR26CA

- If 18-year-olds are old enough to exercise their right to vote or serve in the military, they should have the right to serve in the Legislature or any other office. Current statute limits a voter's right to elect the person they consider to be the best and most qualified candidate for the job if that person is young.
- Seventeen other states allow those who are 18 to run for the state legislature. Individuals who already hold the right to vote and feel qualified and motivated to serve should be allowed to make their case to the voters.
- The idea that 18-year-olds are somehow intellectually inferior to other adults is not accurate. There's not much developmental difference between an 18- and a 21-year-old. You can be just as wise or foolish at 18 as you can be at 65.

Against LR26CA

- At 18 most young people have never lived on their own, managed a household budget or perhaps even completed their own income tax returns. Depending on their family situation, they may not have even held a part-time job.
 - The age of majority in Nebraska is 19. What would happen if an 18-year-old senator tripped on the Capitol steps and cut open his head? You'd have to call his parents for permission to take him to the hospital.
 - Being young involves not having a well-developed sense of impulse control. The life they live is very different; they learn through experience. The issues before the Legislature are far too important to be addressed through trial and error.
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Further Research

Nebraska Legislature: nebraskalegislature.gov
Unicameral Update: update.legislature.ne.gov

For more information on student programs offered by the Legislature, visit:

<http://nebraskalegislature.gov/education>