

House Republican Press Release

May 4, 2007  
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**REP. O'NEILL CO-AUTHORS LEGISLATION TO ENCOURAGE  
VOTER PARTICIPATION**



*Proposed Constitutional Amendment Would Allow  
17-year Olds To Vote In Primaries*

On Thursday, May 3, the state House of Representatives approved legislation coauthored by State Rep. Arthur J. O'Neill that would allow 17 year-olds to vote in primaries, provided they turn 18 by the time of the corresponding general election. The legislation would allow voters to approve an amendment to the State Constitution to implement the measures. House Joint Resolution 11 now moves to the State Senate for consideration.

As Ranking Member (House Republican Leader) of the Legislature's Judiciary Committee, Rep. O'Neill worked to craft the proposed constitutional amendment. The resolution passed by a large majority in the House. If it passes the State Senate this year, it must also be approved in the 2009 Legislative Session to be placed on the ballot in 2010. If a majority of those voting in that general election approve the amendment, it will become part of the state constitution.

"Amending the State Constitution represents a significant change to Connecticut's law," said Rep. O'Neill. "This approval by the House of Representatives is the first step toward enacting measures that may encourage more young people to become involved in the electoral process. Nine other states have introduced these provisions and it would be a positive move for Connecticut to also do so, as we continue to see difficulties in motivating young voters to participate."