



## **Resolution No 16-030 in Support of AB 2571 and ACA 7**

**WHEREAS** voting is the cornerstone of California's democracy, yet in the most recent 2014 midterm elections, only 36 % of eligible voters actually cast a ballot, which marked a 72-year low. Only 20% of 18-29 year olds voted in the 2014 midterms, the lowest youth turnout rate ever recorded.

**WHEREAS** California has taken some important steps to address the challenge of low civic engagement and voter turnout (e.g., automatic voter registration for anyone with a California Driver's License and pre-registration for 16- and 17-year-olds to vote), it is clearly not enough.

**WHEREAS** in 1999, the Berkeley School Board passed a resolution supporting State Senator Richard Polanco's efforts to establish a Cesar Chavez state holiday; and

**WHEREAS** two municipalities in the United States allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote: Takoma Park and Hyattsville, Maryland. The results from these cities are very encouraging. For instance, after Takoma Park lowered its voting age for the 2013 election, turnout among 16- and 17-year-olds was higher than any other age group.

**WHEREAS** the international evidence is just as compelling. In Norway, more than 20 municipalities lowered their voting age to 16 on a trial basis for the 2011 election. The result was that turnout of 16- and 17-year-olds was much higher than first-time voters ages 18-21. Other countries such as Brazil, Ecuador, Argentina, Nicaragua, Germany, Scotland, Hungary and Austria all have gone forward with letting 16- and 17-year-olds vote in local, state, and/or national elections.

**WHEREAS** AB 2517, authored by Assembly Member Tony Thurmond, and ACA 7, authored by Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez, would each enable 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in school board elections. These bills will increase voter turnout (especially among young voters), give young adults the ability to truly influence the direction of their local schools,

increase civic engagement among young adults, and provide a strong incentive to improve civics education.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Berkeley Unified School District urges the California Legislature and the Governor to approve AB 2517 and ACA 7.

**APPROVED AND ADOPTED**, this 23rd day of March, 2016.

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Judy Appel, Clerk  
Board of Education