

I would also like to say again, although it has already been said here, that the majority of the Committee rejected the idea that it follows as the night the day that if you lower the voting age, you have to lower the age of majority. It is true that in the State of Kentucky when they did lower the voting age they also lowered the age of majority. However, this was not true in all the states that lowered the voting age. Most of them still kept the age for the purchase of alcoholic beverages at twenty-one.

Let me also say that in Maryland at the moment there are ages for certain legal documents or for the discussion of adult status that have no relationship to what our present voting age is. As you are well aware, the age for marriage without parental consent is below twenty-one.

The Committee rejected the idea that one had necessarily to be tied to the other. The Committee also felt that the age of nineteen was a meaningful level at which it should be established.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Cardin.

DELEGATE CARDIN: I would like to, if I may, correct one statement.

Males cannot marry in the State of Maryland under the age of twenty-one without parental consent. I believe that only females can.

Also, I would like to add that of the four states that have lowered the voting age, three have lowered the age of majority. This is not an accident.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does any other delegate desire to speak in opposition?

Delegate Key.

DELEGATE KEY: I am on the floor because I am a little confused. I would like to have these delegates think of a few questions that are running around in my little mind.

We speak of experience and responsibility at age twenty-one as though it is magical. We speak of college students, but we admit they are dependent persons who are still seeking wisdom and the necessary qualifications for their chosen profession.

When we talk about lowering the voting age, I would like to know how many young people the Committee heard from who were independently caring for themselves by working. How many did you hear from who are married at age eighteen and nineteen and who have to care for their families?

How many who do have to, for example, go to hospitals where they have to wait with their lives in jeopardy while their parents, whom they no longer live with, have to come and sign for them to be treated?

I have been studying education for the past three months. Our present Constitution says the General Assembly shall by law establish throughout the State a thorough and efficient system of free public schools. If this thorough and efficient system of free public education is to prepare our youth to care for themselves, to act as responsible citizens, to take on the full responsibility of adulthood, if this is the purpose of the free and efficient system of education which we now have in this State, then I say to you it ends at age eighteen, grade twelve.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

*(Call for the question.)*

The Clerk will ring the quorum bell.

The question arises on the adoption of Amendment 2 to substitute the age twenty for the age nineteen.

A vote Aye is a vote in favor of the amendment, in favor of age twenty.

A vote No is a vote against the amendment in favor of age nineteen.

For what purpose does Delegate Mitchell rise?

DELEGATE MITCHELL: Mr. President, I rise to support the majority report and to oppose the amendment, and I would like to state my reasons.

THE CHAIRMAN: Speak.

DELEGATE MITCHELL: Mr. President and fellow Delegates, it seems to me as we listened to the arguments against lowering the voting age to nineteen that we are hearing the same arguments in the history of the struggle for universal suffrage that were used and presented in the early days when the people who did not own property sought the right to vote. Indeed, in 1831 after James Monroe had been President of the U. S. for eight years, he wrote about the danger that if the right of suffrage were extended to the local population without any qualification as to property, the mass of poor, which would be by far the most numerous, would elect persons, and would be instruments in the hands of leaders who would overthrow the government.