



MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT
A.411-A (Kavanagh)/S.4483 (Stavisky)
May 27, 2009

Title

An act to amend the public officers law and the New York city charter, in relation to allowing certain individuals to become members of community boards in the city of New York.

Summary

This bill would amend section 3 of the public officers law to include community boards among other governmental bodies, such as youth commissions and recreation commissions, which have a minimum age requirement of sixteen years old; whereas the current age requirement for community board members is eighteen years old. The bill also would amend subdivision A of section 2800 of the New York city charter to allow for a maximum of two members of community boards to be sixteen or seventeen years of age.

Statement of Support

Citizens Union supports A.411-A/S.4483-A because it will increase the youth representation on community boards and encourage younger citizens to more actively participate in the civic life of their respective communities. As community boards deal with many issues of interest to youth in the community, allowing sixteen and seventeen year olds to be members will help community boards to be better able to understand and represent the needs of younger citizens.

Citizens Union also supports creating more opportunities for youth to become engaged in local politics. This bill will create opportunities for youth to not only understand the roles of community boards in city government, but be active participants in local decision-making. By allowing youth to engage in issues such as land use, the city budget, and other important issues through community boards, they will be exposed to many of the crucial policy issues in New York City and will hopefully become and remain more informed and active members of the community as they get older.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Citizens Union urges the Legislature to pass A.411-A/S.4483-A. Citizens Union appreciates the opportunity to share its views and welcomes the opportunity to work with the Legislature to encourage youth civic participation and allow for increased public representation on governmental bodies.