

## House Republican Press Release

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### Minors Issues Addressed By General Assembly



#### Capitol Commentary By State Rep. Mary Ann Carson

The Legislature considered several bills to address minors issues this year, including their ability to vote in political primaries and to work in certain establishments.

The State Senate gave final legislative approval to House Joint Resolution 21. This resolution proposes an amendment to the state constitution to allow seventeen-year-old persons who will be 18 at the next regular election to vote in primaries related to such election.

Under the resolution, such an individual must apply and otherwise qualify for admission as an elector. He or she may then vote in the primary held to determine nominees for a state or municipal election. The ballot designation to be used when the proposed amendment is presented at the general election is: "Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to permit any person who will have attained the age of eighteen years on or before the day of a regular election to vote in the primary for such regular election?"

Because the resolution did pass by at least three-fourths of the membership of each house of the General Assembly, it will be placed on the November 2008 general election ballot. If a majority of those voting in the general election approves the amendment, it will become part of the state constitution

Senate Bill 216, An Act Concerning Minors In The Workplace, received final legislative approval on May 6. Under a law that expired in September 2007, minors were allowed to work under certain conditions as baggers, cashiers, or stock clerks in retail businesses under certain work-hour restrictions.

SB 216 permits them to work under the same conditions as the previous law: only when school is not in session for at least five consecutive days, except that they may work in retail food stores on any Saturday; for up to eight hours a day or 40 hours a week; and between 7 a. m. and 7 p. m., except that from July 1 to the first Monday in September, they may work until 9 p. m.

The bill also retroactively makes lawful the employment of 15-year-olds in retail after the sunset date if the employer met the applicable work day and hour restrictions before the provision expired. It specifically exempts employers from the criminal and civil penalties that exist for such violations.

Proponents of the legislation noted it benefits minors in allowing them to obtain employment and their employers to hire and retain young people for certain positions that may be more costly or difficult to fill. Advocates also noted that providing the employment opportunities for 15-year-olds can help build discipline as well as a foundation to take on additional adult responsibilities as they begin to prepare for higher education and embark on careers.

I again look forward to providing details of additional bills that moved through the process in the weeks to come.

*Editors Note: State Representative Mary Ann Carson represents Kent, New Fairfield, New Milford and Sherman in the Connecticut General Assembly.*