

PHILIP B. SCOTT
GOVERNOR



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

May 27, 2023

The Honorable BetsyAnn Wrask
Clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Ms. Wrask:

Pursuant to Chapter II, Section 11 of the Vermont Constitution, I'm returning H.386, *An Act Relating to Approval of Amendments to the Charter of the Town of Brattleboro* without my signature because of my objections described below.

This bill is almost identical in language and purpose to a bill passed last year, H.361, *An Act Relating to Approval of Amendments to the Charter of the Town of Brattleboro*, which I vetoed in 2022 (see attached veto message). As I said last year, I believe it is important to encourage young Vermonters to have an interest in issues affecting their schools, their communities, their state and their country. However, I do not support lowering the voting age in Brattleboro, nor lowering the age to run for Town office and sign contracts on behalf of taxpayers.

As I specified last year, "given how inconsistent Vermont law already is on the age of adulthood, this proposal will only worsen the problem. For example, the Legislature has repeatedly raised the age of accountability to reduce the consequences when young adults commit criminal offenses. They have argued this approach is justified because these offenders are not mature enough to contemplate the full range of risks and impacts of their actions."

Adding to that inconsistency, just one month ago the Legislature passed, and I signed, H.148, *An act relating to the age of eligibility to marry*, or, "The Act to Ban Child Marriage," which raised the age of eligibility to marry to age 18. Proponents rightly argued, "all young people in Vermont deserve equal opportunities to enjoy their childhood...", they also pointed to undo influence by controlling parents.

Additionally, proponents of this bill have argued it represents the will of the voters. In fact, this is not the case. With H.386 the Legislature substantially changed and expanded the charter change, going against the intent of the voters (see attached Brattleboro sample ballot).

For all these reasons, I'm returning this legislation without my signature pursuant to Chapter II, Section 11 of the Vermont Constitution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip B. Scott", written over a horizontal line.

Philip B. Scott
Governor