

City of Takoma Park News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Takoma Park City Council Passes Voting & Elections Charter Amendment

May 14, 2013 The City of Takoma Park Council, in a 6 to 1 vote, has adopted an amendment to the City Charter which significantly updates Takoma Park's voting and election laws. The Charter Amendment Resolution, written in an effort to make City elections and voting more accessible for Takoma Park residents, contains several substantive revisions to the City Charter which include (but are not limited to):

- Reducing the minimum voting age in Takoma Park municipal elections to 16 on the date of the election.
- Reducing the residency requirements for voting from 30 days to 21 days before an election.
- Allowing convicted felons on probation or parole to register and vote in City elections.
- Establishing early voting for every City election.
- Providing for same-day voter registration in City elections.

The amendment was passed during its second reading. A well attended initial public hearing was held on April 8. A week later, on April 15, a first reading occurred and was voted on by the Council.

The Charter Amendment, legally required for proposals put forth by the Takoma Park City Council, will become effective on July 2, 2013 unless petitioned to referendum by the voters. If a valid Petition for Referendum is submitted on or before the 40th day after adoption (June 22) then the Charter Amendment will go to referendum and a referendum election will be held.

Takoma Park stands to be the only municipality in the United States to allow youth voting at this time. This amendment, rooted in the idea that broad community participation in elections should be encouraged, builds upon Takoma Park's already innovative election laws which include instant runoff voting and non-U.S. citizen voting. Non-U.S. citizen resident voting was approved in 1992 and instant runoff voting has been in place since 2006. Takoma Park elections are non-partisan.

The adopted Charter Amendment Resolution is available at:

<http://cityclerk-takomapark.s3.amazonaws.com/resolutions/2013/car201301.pdf>

Video interviews and excerpts of public testimony regarding the Charter Amendment are available upon request.



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