

Court File No.:CV-21-00673219-0000

ONTARIO
SUPERIOR COURT OF JUSTICE

B E T W E E N:

**Amelia Penney-Crocker, Parker Boot-Quackenbush, Khadijat Folasayo Dairo,
Catherine He, Tharan D'Silva, Katie Yu, Diego Christiansen-Barker, Lachlan
Brown, Zoey Ann Purves, Jacob Colatosti, Milan Rozotto-Lagos, Oswaldo Paz
Flores, Lauren Handley and Justice for Children and Youth**

Applicants

and

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IN RIGHT OF CANADA

Respondent

AFFIDAVIT OF DIEGO CHRISTIANSEN-BARKER

I, DIEGO CHRISTIANSEN-BARKER, of the City of Campbell River, in the Province of British Columbia, student MAKE OATH AND SAY AS FOLLOWS:

1. I am currently 17 and attending Carihi Secondary School in Campbell River, BC. I started to get involved with youth politics when I was 14. I joined the BC Youth Council which also led me to joining the Vote16 BC campaign. In both these organizations I saw first hand the maturity and ability that youth have. Additionally, I was involved with the Royal Canadian Air Cadet program where I also got to see a dedication to citizenship

from many of my fellow youth. Over my 3 years of on and off work with Vote16 BC I have been able to thoroughly research and understand the impacts and benefits of lowering the voting age. Doing so not only with my own experience but also through factual evidence. From this I feel strongly that the voting age should be lowered.

2. I am personally passionate about lowering the voting age because it is giving more people a voice and a chance to participate in our democracy, especially youth, is important to me. I believe fighting for more people in Canada to have a say in how our country and government is run is both democratic and Canadian, which are two values that are important to me. In addition, Canadian law feels inconsistent with age based requirements. This is best illustrated with the following example; at 16 you can marry or give consent to an MP, but you cannot vote for them. Adding to that you can also join the reserves, donate blood and organs, be sentenced as an adult in criminal court, leave home, emancipate, drive, and do many other things depending on your province before you can vote. Which feels wrong to me and I want to correct this by lowering the voting age.
3. The benefits of lowering the voting age is primarily to give more young people a voice that people listen to and if they don't they will have to deal with the impact of that decision. It will also stop taxation without representation of youth, something that I feel very strongly is morally wrong. It can also have impacts on the state of our democracy. In Austrian elections it was shown that 16-17 year olds had a higher turnout than 18-21 year olds. A result that is further backed up by the rationale that before youth turn 18, in a general sense, they are more likely to vote because they are in a stable environment. What I mean by stable environment is that they generally have a consistent routine, home, and lifestyle as compared to between the ages of 18-21 year olds who are moving

away from home, are dealing with the new stress of university or a full time job, etc. This increase in voter turnout at a younger age will contribute to an increase in turnout at older ages based on the evidence supporting habitual voting.

4. To address some of the concerns about lowering the voting age that I have encountered.

Firstly, people argue that youth will vote based on their parents. I cannot speak in absolutes and say that there will never be external influences on voting with youth.

However, to use this as an argument to not lower the voting age is weak because it assumes that once you turn a certain age that these influences will go away. Whether you are 15, 20, 30 or 90 people around you or historical voting in your area can affect how you vote. This is a separate issue that I feel does not relate to lowering the voting age.

Secondly, the argument that youth aren't mature enough to vote. Again this assumes that maturity and age are directly related and they are not. Even if we are going to assume maturity and age are related then the government's view on this is already inconsistent with the voting age in my opinion. Since, as I said above, you can give consent or marry your MP but you can't vote for them. So currently, according to the government, you are mature enough to marry and give consent but not to vote or do any of the other numerous things you can do before 18. Additionally, people argue that youth do not know enough to vote. This continues the trend of the belief that not being influenced, maturity, and political knowledge all come at a certain age. All these things are not directly related to age and many other factors have a much bigger role in these issues. Finally, people argue that youth will be apathetic and lower overall turnout. While turnout of the younger age demographics is and has been low this shouldn't be a barrier to prevent lowering the

voting age. In order to increase voter turnout among younger generations we need to increase political knowledge and engagement not restrict it.

5. Finally, I want to talk about my own experience working with youth. I have seen the incredible ability of hundreds of educated, mature, and responsible youth, all of whom are denied a voice simply because of the abstract idea of age. To go further the government is inconsistent in their use of age as a limiting factor and does not always follow the facts. The vast majority of youth I know, even those who are not as mature as most are generally far more politically aware then the majority of adults I know. Youth are powerful, youth are strong, and youth deserve a voice.


AFFIRMED REMOTELY BY Diego
Christiansen-Barker at the City of Campbell
River, in the Province of British Columbia
before me at the City of Toronto, in the
Province of Ontario on the 30th of November,
2021, in accordance with O. Reg. 431/20,
Administering Oath or Declaration
Remotely.

DocuSigned by:

E284F022720A4C8

Commissioner for Taking Affidavits

Mary Birdsell
LSO#: 38108V

DocuSigned by:

27FA45C1AF8F4B6

Diego Christiansen-Barker