

The Committee attempted to obtain information from other states where the voting age has been lowered, but unfortunately, the only study available was of a very limited scope, and it was decided that its validity could not be used to support or negate the Committee's position. The Committee could find little evidence to indicate that this was any more valid with respect to considerable numbers of young people than it actually was with respect to their already enfranchised elders.

To lower the age to nineteen would grant the vote to about 125,000. Our present Maryland population twenty-one years and over is slightly over 2 million, so that if the nineteen year olds were enfranchised, these people would form about six percent of the total electorate, assuming that this age group would register in the same proportion as the now enfranchised population.

The other elements in section 1 pertain to residency. The committee recommendation sets the residence requirements at six months in the state and three months in the house of delegates district. The present Constitution sets the time at one year in the State, or six months in the county or legislative district of Baltimore City.

These requirements are even older than the present Constitution, having been established in the Constitution of 1851. Residence requirements are needed to permit the voter to become familiar with the community and the political issues to be decided in each election. The Committee agrees with the commission that these requirements could be met with a state residence of six months and the district residence of three. The increase in the general level of education, coupled with the coverage given by communications media to political issues and campaigns assures the Committee of the probability of informed voting.

The last sentence of section 1 protects the right to vote of persons who move from one house of delegates district to another within three months of an election. Such persons are permitted to retain their status as qualified voters in the house of delegates district from which they moved.

It was the Committee's opinion that they would be more familiar with the issues in the area from which they moved, and such protection and continuation of their qualifications in the old district would, of course, extend only for one election.

Section 2 establishes the qualifications for voting in municipal elections. Up until

now municipalities have been free to establish whatever eligibility standards they desired. The courts have ruled that because municipal elections were not mentioned in the Constitution that they could not be made to comply with other elements that are currently in our Constitution.

The Committee felt that there were certain minimum standards that municipalities should be asked to observe. Those would be United States citizenship, primarily, but in addition, the Committee recognizes the fact that the 153 municipalities in this State, share little in common with each other, and they vary tremendously with respect to size, function, location, and so forth. For this reason, the Committee realized that some special needs must be met, and section 2 reflects these needs.

It is conceivable that a longer residence is necessary to become familiar with municipal affairs, since municipalities do not normally enjoy the same news value as do some of the larger subdivisions. For this reason, and because of the variations in present municipal requirements, the Committee agreed that municipalities could establish their own local residence requirements up to a maximum of a year. We recognize this residence could be as little as one day, but we felt that the municipalities should have the option of determining what best met their own situation. We denied the municipalities the right to set the voting age at what they want, hence the second exception.

Thirdly, some municipalities have large numbers of summer residents who outnumber the permanent population and who are indeed the economic lifeblood of some of these communities. Some of these communities have in the past extended the right to vote to non-resident property owners, and the Committee concluded that they should be permitted to continue doing so.

There was some question raised as to the constitutionality of this procedure, but legal precedence in other states, and at least concurrence by the Supreme Court, have convinced the majority of the Committee that this procedure is sanctioned by the courts and not likely at the moment to be subjected to successful challenge.

Section 2 would permit voting in presidential elections, and only for the President and Vice-President, by those persons who have moved to the State too recently to meet our other residence requirements. There is actually now on the books a law