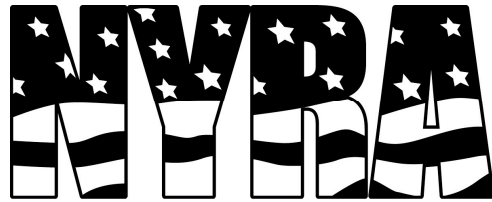


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# News Release

## Berkeley Teens Sit-In, Protest to Lower Voting Age

**Berkeley, Calif., February 26, 2004:** Dozens of teens will protest the voting age during California's primary election Tuesday, in the largest demonstration of its kind since 1971.

Protestors will picket outside a polling station starting at 7 AM on March 2, while a smaller group will walk into the polling station and demand a ballot, much like Susan B. Anthony and her fellow suffragists famously did in Rochester, New York in 1872. They are prepared to face arrest if it comes to it. The protest will occur in Berkeley at the senior center at 1901 Hearst Street on the corner of Martin Luther King and Hearst.

The National Youth Rights Association has pledged its full support to the protestors, led by 17-year-old NYRA-Berkeley chapter leader, Robert Reynolds. This sit-in, the first of its kind in the United States, could spark a nationwide protest movement over lowering the voting age.

California Senator John Vasconcellos (D-San Jose) plans to introduce legislation, which will lower the State's voting age. He will hold a press conference on March 6. This debate is not new for California or for the nation.

Alaska, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Texas, and Maine have considered lowering their voting ages. In addition, campaigns are underway in Florida, Hawaii, North Dakota, New York and Maryland to lower the voting age.

Constitutional law experts agree: the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which gave 18-year-olds the right to vote nationwide, still leaves open the possibility for states to lower it further. NYRA is considering a legal challenge to the voting age in California after the sit-in is over.

Around the world voting rights are being bestowed upon younger people; the German parliament has proposed to abolish the voting age. While in the United Kingdom, the Labour government is hearing debate on legislation to lower the voting age to 16.

### About NYRA

The National Youth Rights Association is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, and with some 3,600 members, is the largest youth-rights organization in the United States. Its mission is to promote awareness of the legal and civil rights of young people in the United States, and has done so through since its founding in 1998.

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