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PANEL OK'S CAPUTO/VAINIERI HUTTLE/FISHER BILL **TO INCREASE VOTING BY YOUNG PEOPLE**

Measure Would Ensure Graduating High Schoolers Receive Voter Registration Forms

(TRENTON) – Legislation Assembly members Ralph R. Caputo, Valerie Vainieri Huttle and Douglas Fisher sponsored that would require all New Jersey schools to provide voter registration materials to graduating high school students was released today by an Assembly committee.

Caputo, a former educator, said the law would increase the likelihood that the voter registration materials are received by young people.

“With so many key issues society, whether it be global conflicts, environmental worries, economic fears or health care concerns, it’s more important than ever that young people have their voices heard,” said Caputo (D-Essex). “There’s no better time to emphasize the role of being a citizen and the importance of voting than when a teen-ager is entering the world after receiving their high school diploma.”

Under the bill (A-2752), each public school board and officials in private schools would provide a voter registration form and a summary of voter registration eligibility requirements to each graduating high school pupil.

The material would be nonpartisan and conform to state election laws.

“Young adults entering the world after high school need to recognize that voting is more than just a constitutional right, but their societal responsibility,” said Vainieri Huttle (D-Bergen). “Teenagers who recognize the importance of voting will undoubtedly become adults who take that responsibility seriously.”

If enacted into law, the measure would apply to the first school year following its passage.

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“The easier we make it for a young person to receive a voter registration form, the more likely they will be to take the step to becoming an informed voter,” said Fisher (D-Cumberland). “We shouldn’t leave it to campus drives to register first-time voters when we can put a voter registration form in their hands before they step out of their high school for the last time.”

The Assembly Education Committee released the measure 12-0. It now heads to the Assembly Speaker, who decides if and when to post it for a floor vote.