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Since the enactment last year of the 26th Amendment to the United States Constitution, many thousands of 18-to-20-year-olds have cast their ballots in local and statewide elections across the country, and their impact has been significant. Their enthusiasm and idealism have already made a lasting mark on the American political process.

But there is still much to be done to bring these newly enfranchised citizens into full participation in the electoral process. In some sections of Massachusetts, for example, registration of young voters has been slow. There have been problems with local registrars about residency requirements for students. And, sadly, many students remain disillusioned with "the system." Instead of working and voting to change the system, they have chosen to ignore it.

One group which is attempting to change this situation -- to turn student apathy into student action -- is The Student Vote, a Washington based non-partisan foundation whose objective is to register as many young voters as possible during this national election year. The New England regional office of The Student Vote will be sponsoring a month-long Greater Boston registration drive February 25 through March 25, and in preparation for the drive a training session for organizers will be held on February 12 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Hotel Continental in Cambridge. You have received an invitation to participate in this meeting, and I urge you to do so. There are some 280,000 people in Greater Boston who have become eligible to vote since the 1968 national election. If these people are to be added to the rolls of registered voters in Massachusetts, The Student Vote needs your help.

I hope you will call The Student Vote office today (617-495-4878) and reserve your place at the training session on February 12.

Sincerely yours,

Edward W. Brooke
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The Student Vote

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If you live in Greater Boston, you'll probably be hearing and reading a lot about voter registration in the coming days. A major youth-oriented campaign is being planned. And if this paper you're reading was sent to you, you'll probably be asked to get involved, because you have been identified as someone who is either likely to be interested in voter registration or in a position to provide assistance (cash, goods, or volunteer services) to the drive. This abstract was prepared to give basic information people are likely to want before they get involved in the program.

The drive is being sponsored by The Student Vote, a Washington-based non-partisan foundation. Its objective is to register to vote as many people as possible who, because of their youth, were ineligible to vote in the 1968 general election, but will be eligible in 1972. There are about 25 million such people in the United States, including some 280,000 in the Greater Boston Area. The drive being planned will be completely non-partisan, with regard to issues of public concern as well as parties and candidates.

Student Vote is putting some resources (cash and staff assistance) into this drive; but the notion that it is "our" drive is absurd. It is your registration drive, and it will be what you and other interested citizens make it. This is why it is difficult at this stage to accurately spell out the entire program -- so much depends upon cooperation that hasn't been promised, some of it from people who haven't even been contacted yet.

But here is the plan. Our goal is simply to have as many 18-24 year-old citizens as possible register to vote during the month-long period of the drive, February 25 through March 25. We can't predict a number yet, because we aren't sure how much activity will be undertaken at the local level, and how much the Boston media will do to make the drive a success.

The Student Vote

A 4-hour series of workshops has been planned for Saturday, February 12, at the Crystal Ballroom of the Continental Hotel at 29 Garden St. in Cambridge. (Three blocks from Harvard Square.) Registration for the workshops begins at 9:30 A.M., and will cost \$3.00. The workshops will run from 10:00 A.M. through 3:00 P.M., with a one-hour break for a buffet lunch (included in the registration fee); We are cautiously estimating that about 250 people will attend. At the workshops, some 8,000 of the posters to be used in the campaign will be distributed, along with materials to help those in attendance do effective voter registration work in their communities. Brief presentations will be made on Massachusetts state and local laws governing voter registration, and professionals from Massachusetts organizations and Student Vote will conduct workshops on various techniques of organizing a local drive.

While coordination and support services will be provided on an area-wide basis, registration on a massive scale can only be accomplished on the local level. This is why we are attempting to establish at least one contact in each community. We also hope to be able to provide the major news media of the area with reports on the progress of the drive from summaries of each community's activities.

Pre-taped radio public service announcements have already been provided to some stations and we are hoping at least one major youth-oriented station will agree to undertake voter registration as a major promotion. Negotiations are also planned or underway to get free advertising in shopping areas, public transit, employees' lunchrooms, newspapers, television, and highway billboards.

Student Vote's national program consists of attempting to aid in organizing voter registration drives from college campuses, i.e., to utilize the talent, energy, and resources available to colleges to register non-students as well as students. The Greater Boston program will do the same thing, but will hopefully include high school students and teachers, housewives, businessmen and women, as well as college students.

The program is targeted at young people because they are the citizens least likely to be registered; they have had the least opportunity to do so. (Nationwide, about 30% of eligible persons under 25 are registered to vote, compared with 68% of the entire eligible citizenry.)

A nation such as this one, built upon principles of democracy, cannot long retain its legitimacy without the involvement of those people it has defined as citizens. This program is a step towards involvement.

If you're interested in getting involved, but haven't been contacted yet, don't wait. Contact us and come to the workshops. (See address & phone number, front page.)

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