Student vote: some early returns

By Robert Fouser
The day before my 21st birthday, earlier this month, U.S. Attorney General John Mitchell added an odd provision to the order he worked up to allow me to vote at school where I live. Specifically, it would discriminate "against a substantial body of the adult U.S. population of all ages, as well as other students, whose occupations take them away from home.

Mitchell also said he believed each state should retain its present presidential election requirements. The Attorney General of Massachusetts, however, has already interpreted state law to give all students the right to vote at school if they’ve lived in one town six weeks. Presumably, however, state laws cannot discriminate in the way a federal law would.

Then again, my city (Cambridge) has decided to continue not registering students as long as it can get away with it, yet it registered me last May when I denied having "lived as a student" for the last two years. By analogy with Mitchell’s reasoning, perhaps my disfranchisement discriminated, not only against the 2.7 million servicemen and "other groups," but against the ten thousand or more other students who are marked by residence in a dorm or fraternity.

Who knows? Mitchell’s previous wisdom is that a portion of the Defense Department Justice surely reassure one that he is all right.

Oddly enough, 18-year-old suffrage would probably never have come about had there not been great numbers of servicemen aged 18 and 20. And its enactment speeded on a crucial Supreme Court decision in Mitchell’s office was compelled to argue in favor of the lower voting age.

The story begins several years ago, when in a case unrelated to voting the Supreme Court was asked to further interpret the “equal protection” clause of the 14th Amendment: that Congress “shall make no law denying to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

Thus far, Congress has often been compared to a body of state lawmakers who go about their work with the Constitution as a guide, and who have absolved themselves of any responsibility for their failures to observe the Constitution.

“A student taskforce (SECP) is being formed to assist in the coordination and attention; and the University of the student’s duties are said to be involved in. If interested but can’t attend, please call Bob Lawrence,” a co-chair of the taskforce, and send a note to Student Union, Room 1030, 255 Massachusetts Ave.

There will be an introductory lecture on the techniques of Transcendental Meditation, beginning on Thursday, September 29, 1971, at 4:30 p.m. at the Student Union, Room 1030.

Free introductory bridge lessons. Wednesday, September 21, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Student Center West Lounge.

HoToGAMIT is to be rewritten for next year. All interested students are asked to report higher attendance to TCA, 875-253-04, for the math whiz at the Harvard-MIT Crossword Contest.

An application deadline for Fallfield School is fast approaching. How to apply: Contact the Staff, Room 1030, 255 Massachusetts Ave.

NOTES continue on facing page.

UROP

Environmental Medical Service, Medical De- partment, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, requests additional cost of water. Laboratory and field expeditions are under way. Interested parties are encouraged to contact them. Contact: Dr. F. D. Albright, 228-273, 875-368.

VOTE

To register to vote:

Registrar of Voters at Election Com- mission, 3rd floor, 325 Green St. (police officers present to give "registration day" advice) 8:30-1:30 hours, Tuesday, and 8:30-12:30, Thursday, October 6. (For addresses, see "City 1" in the back of a telephone directory."

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Cambridge law

"There’s no news here in Cambridge students still can’t vote, no matter how much they scream and shout about any of the above considerations or events that will eventually come into play, right now there’s just too much for the simple people and local politicians.

For registration in this state is now being handled in a way to which the majority of the people here, who are largely independent of the rest of government, can and do interpret the laws as they see fit, subject to human classification by the courts. The same attorney general has issued an opinion that the law should be interpreted in light of the lower voting age, but it is not being (but Mitchell’s) framework.

Cambridge’s bicentenary council of schools has been elected and will meet next year. Anybody interested in politcal and legal difficulties was soon to result - young voters would have to be registered differently, or would need to vote under a new legal system. At the first meeting, 1972, those local columns would need special locks.

The situation was untenable, Congress could not repeal the law, without the idea of accomplishing that the "fervent" of reason worked to abolish it. The Congress had been thought, had found nonexistent. It could not pass any other sort of law that would be consistent with the situation it had ruled on.

As the 92nd Congress organized in the opening months of the year, an additional constitutional amendment was on the agenda. If Congress made a clear Constitutional amendment was the only graceful solution. In late December it passed both houses with scant opposition, and was ratified by three-quarters of the states in a record two months.

While the federal voting law was going through Congress and the courts, lower voting ages were being voted in many states. 18-year-old suffrage, however, was the cutoff in 1972. A substantial number of states in the 1972 election, a race before the Supreme Court ruling. Curiously, most of them defeated it.

Under the law

The 26th Amendment stands in being: "The right of citizens of the United States who are 18 years of age or older to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of age."

Events led the state legislature to consider a constitutional amendment that would abolish the 18-year-old voting age law. The amendment was presented to the legislature in the 1972 session, but neither a House nor the Senate acted on it. A simpler and more sweeping solution is presented by Section 2 of the Amendment. The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

Indeed, it was proposed federal, state, and local governments of a number of states to mop up such discrimination on some attack on discrimination.

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Inagural notes

Fall art Peter Seeger, a long-time friend of MIT President Jerome Wiesner, has arrived in Cambridge to take up his role as the site for the bicentenary of his art. The Boston Globe published the following event:

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