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## **DURHAM STUDENT WINS STATEWIDE YOUTH VOTER REGISTRATION POSTER CONTEST**

**Alexis Pena, a sophomore at Jordan High School in Durham, has been awarded first prize in a statewide youth voter registration contest sponsored by the NC State Board of Elections, Democracy North Carolina, the North Carolina Civic Education Consortium, Kids Voting NC and the North Carolina Center for Voter Education.**

“The winning poster really captured the spirit of youth voters,” State Board of Elections liaison Veronica Degraffenreid explains. “It was fresh, bright and energetic – the very same qualities youthful citizens bring to the electoral process. We see early registration as setting the stage for a lifetime of civic engagement and the Board is delighted to be spreading the word about North Carolina’s new youth pre-registration law.”

The winning entry will be used this fall on the Board of Elections’ website and posted in high schools across the state as a reminder that 16- and 17-year olds can now pre-register to vote. Pre-registrants will become automatically registered when they reach the eligible age to vote.

In addition, Degraffenreid hopes the poster will remind 18-year olds of their right to vote in the upcoming November election. To make sure the message gets across, Degraffenreid will be working with local boards of election during Citizens Awareness Month in September to set up pre-registration and registration drives at high schools. “All county boards will be required to coordinate with their local school systems to mount at least one voter registration drive before the November election,”

Degraffenreid explains. “That’s how serious we are about encouraging North Carolina’s youth to register. This is the gateway to it all: voting, signing petitions, serving as precinct judges, running for office one day – it all starts with voter registration.”

Second prize in the poster contest went to a collaborative effort by Jessica Gaylord, Liza Figueroa and LaDonte Evans of Terry Sanford High School in Fayetteville. Third prize was awarded to Gamalier Padilla of Massey Hill Classical High School in Fayetteville.

For a look at the winning poster and more information on the youth pre-registration law, please visit [www.democracy-nc.org](http://www.democracy-nc.org). For more information on SBOE or county boards of elections' plans in September, please contact Veronica W. Degraffenreid of the NC State Board of Elections at (919) 715-1830 or [veronica.degraffenreid@ncsbe.gov](mailto:veronica.degraffenreid@ncsbe.gov).