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OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS & MEDIA CONTENT

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For Immediate Release

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Pittsburgh Public Schools Response to Concerns Related to Voter Registration of Eligible Students

PITTSBURGH, September 25, 2024 – A Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) parent recently posted videos on TikTok expressing concerns about her daughter's voter registration experience at a PPS program. The parent alleges that her daughter was pressured to register as a Democrat and that a staff member shared negative comments about former President Donald Trump. The parent subsequently visited the school to address her concerns, recording her interaction with a staff member without their knowledge, and later posted this video to TikTok.

Act 35 of 2018, which includes the Assessment of Civic Knowledge – Pillar 3: Action, supports student voter registration within schools. In accordance with Act 35, PPS supports student voter registration as part of its civic engagement initiatives. Schools are responsible for informing students about voter registration opportunities and offering necessary assistance, which may include one-on-one support. Furthermore, a Consent Decree permits public schools to function as registration agencies, particularly in providing services to persons with disabilities (94-CV-7671, E.D. Pa.).

To support this initiative, each high school has a Youth Voting Engagement Advisor who receives a stipend to guide students in civic engagement and voter registration activities. The Advisor, featured in the video without consent, identified 19 eligible students for the upcoming November 5th election. According to the Advisor, the student was invited to step out of class to discuss voter registration, agreed, and completed the registration process. The staff member, who also serves as a Minority Inspector of Elections, affirms that no political opinions were shared, nor was there any attempt to influence the student's party affiliation. There is no evidence to support the parent's allegations.

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