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For immediate release

December 5, 2012

Alberta's election law updated to make it easier for students to vote

Edmonton, Alberta - Alberta's Legislature will finish its scheduled business with the third and final reading of the Election Accountability Amendment Act, or Bill 7, this week. The bill makes several changes to how Alberta's elections are run and includes a change to allow post-secondary students to cast their ballot either in the community where they study or where they lived prior to going to school.

"This is going to make voting much easier for students in the next election," said Raphael Jacob, VP External at the University of Calgary Students' Union and chair of the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS). "Past elections saw too many students turned away from the polls when they turned up to vote where they lived while going to school. This is going to fix that, and I hope we see even more students turn out to vote in the next election as a result."

"We were pleased that Minister Jonathan Denis addressed our concerns and took our recommendation in this legislation," added Duncan Wojtaszek, CAUS Executive Director. "We have been working towards this change since the 2008 election and it is great to see our recommendation be put into law."

The Election Accountability Amendment Act is a large bill addressing several aspects of elections beyond student voting and has not been without controversy. The bill has made headlines across Alberta as MLA's deal with the various provisions on campaign finance and new changes to municipal elections. The bill was based on the recommendations from the Chief Electoral Officer however his recommendation around student voting was rejected in favour of the proposal from CAUS. That recommendation has met with universal agreement from all parties in the legislature, even as other aspects of the bill have met opposition.

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The Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) represents the interests of students at the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary and the University of Lethbridge.

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Both Duncan and Raphael will be available via cell prior to and following the final reading of the bill and the end of the fall session of the Alberta Legislature.