

On the SB 776 Bill to permit individual who is 16 or 17 years of age and registered to vote to cast ballot in school district elections, I speak in strong support.

Our society is changing. Students are more actively involved in politics, more intelligent, and have a stronger hunger to be impactful members of their communities. Within my city, the leading mayoral campaign was led entirely by high schoolers & recent graduates, propelling the victor to a near 20 point lead ahead of two opponents. It's clear this is no accident - young minds and fresh perspectives are valued in the community and if not, it creates a real incentive for schools, adults, and our government to begin involving our students in important community dialogues and build a sense of strong civic responsibility from a young age.

It is also important to recognize the true disconnect between school boards and students presently. There is no dialogue or connection without students making the first step, which many simply don't understand that they have the opportunity or ability to do so.

To vote against this bill is to shy away from the responsibility of educating & involving our children in our communities. We must tackle this responsibility head on and begin to provide the children of the future an ability to shape the leaders that decide their experience, rather than allow helicopter parenting to reign supreme.