

As a former student of public education in Oregon, I strongly support this bill that lowers the voting age for school district elections to 16 & 17.

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Such a bill would have incredibly beneficial impacts on the students of Oregon. I was an active member of student advocacy during my time in high school, with the majority of those moments of advocacy being born from failures of the district administration to address persistent problems in the community. I cannot express how many times my peers and I felt powerless irrespective of all the vocal support that we received from education professionals all over Oregon.

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This bill would change that. Not only would there be more accountability for administrators, but because research shows that people who vote early tend to continue to vote in life, it would serve as a gateway for more students to participate in larger elections. I ended up serving as an advisor to the Oregon State Board of Education to try and make a direct impact on policy, but the threshold for students to do that shouldn't be that difficult to reach. This bill would improve the well-being of students, representation in district policy, and the overall quality of Oregon education.

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It's for these reasons that I strongly support SB 776.