

Submitter: Danny Salvarez
On Behalf Of: Junior Class Vice-President
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HJR20

As a 16-year-old myself, I strongly believe that young people like me deserve to have a voice in the decisions that affect our lives. We may be young, but we are not ignorant. We are well informed about the issues that matter to us, from climate change to housing to gun violence. And yet, we are often left out of the conversation when it comes to making policy decisions that will shape our future. Lowering the voting age would be a powerful way to give us a say in the issues that affect us. So many of the policies that politicians make every day have a direct impact on our lives. We want to have a say in those decisions, and we believe that our perspective and our voices should be heard. In fact, many cities across the country have already lowered the voting age to 16, and the results have been inspiring. Young people have turned out to vote in higher numbers than many adults, and they have brought new energy and ideas to the political process. As 16- and 17-year-olds, we also do many things that adults do. We pay taxes, we have jobs, we drive, and we can even be charged with adult sentences for serious crimes. If we are trusted to do all of these things, then surely we should be trusted to vote as well. Lowering the voting age would also have important benefits for our schools and our communities. If young people had the right to vote, they would be more motivated to learn how the political process works, and schools would be incentivized to include experiential civics education as a core part of their curriculum. As we are all a part of this community, we think that it is important for our voices to be heard. Oregon would be sending a clear message to young people that we are valued members of society and that our opinions matter by reducing the voting age. Thank you for considering this important legislation. I ask you to support HJR 20 and give young people like me the chance to have a say in the future of our state.