

Submitter: Kala Lynn
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HJR20

Given young adults a chance to exercise their right to vote and have a say in the decisions that impact their lives. At the age of 16, young people are already contributing to society in various ways, such as paying taxes and working in the labor force. It is only fair that they are allowed to vote and have a say in how their tax dollars are spent and how policies affect their future. In Oregon, we value equality and meritocracy, and the ballot serves as an equalizer when it comes to voting. Regardless of age, everyone should have an equal opportunity to engage in our democracy. Given that it is obvious that youth have significantly influenced political movements and trends, I am surprised that this view is so divisive. It is time to acknowledge their contributions and include them as participants in our democracy. Lowering the voting age to 16 also encourages the habit of voting and supports young people's journey of informed participation. Studies have shown that 16-year-olds have equivalent levels of civic competence to 18-year-olds, and extending voting rights to young people increases their participation in elections. Please pass HJR 20 on this committee.