

Submitter: Danielle Davenport
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HJR20

As a college student and young Oregonian, I strongly support HJR 20, a constitutional amendment to lower the voting age to 16 in Oregon elections. Our democracy is facing unprecedented attacks, and our country is grappling with great, imminent challenges. It is critical that we ensure those whose futures are most impacted and who will be responsible for resolving these issues for years to come are empowered to take action and have a voice today.

We young Oregonians, especially, have a lot riding on the future of our country. We should have a direct voice in choosing the legislators who will shape it. American teenagers aged sixteen and seventeen are active citizens, employees, taxpayers, and students. We must include children in the fundamental civic act of voting because they will soon be the citizens charged with safeguarding the principles of our representative democracy.

It's time for our state to participate in this dialogue. Early applications of a lower voting age in other US cities and states' primaries have been encouraging, with favorable effects on voter turnout and young people's involvement in politics. Young people are affected by government decisions about education, the environment, war, and peace for a longer period of time than any other age group.

The ability to vote and the right to influence one's own future have been demonstrated by 16-year-olds in many nations and localities. The democratic tradition of expanding voting rights in Oregon should continue. We appreciate Senator Dembrow, Representative Hoa Nguyen, and Representative Nosse for spearheading this effort.

It is time to acknowledge that, while bearing a disproportionate amount of the burden of decisions now and in the future, 16 and 17-year-olds have no vote in who will best represent their beliefs and goals. Any effort to represent young people's interests at the local, state, and federal levels is crucial. Give young people a voice in the political process and provide them the tools they need to become involved, active citizens. Support HJR 20.