

February 19, 2023  
Support for HJR 20 - Youth Vote Bill

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropft, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HJR 20, the Youth Vote Act. My name is Sophie Goodwin-Rice and I am a graduate of Newport High School and Willamette University, currently living in Portland.

I'm now 23 years old and have had the opportunity to vote in several elections, but I can vividly remember the frustration and anger I felt as a teenager as decisions about *my* future were being made by a voting population that largely misunderstood or ignored what was at stake for young people. I see these sentiments echoed today on the faces of my younger peers and leaders in movements for climate action and social justice, teenagers who devote more time and energy to civic engagement than the vast majority of adults I know. Our society largely underestimates the abilities of teenagers, yet we entitle them to drive, pay taxes, be tried as adults in the criminal justice system, be legally emancipated, and enter legal contracts. Why draw the line at electoral representation? Nobody knows what's better for the future than someone who is going to live through it -- and it's a teenager's right to have a say in the kind of society they want to take part in.

For the future of my generation, and those who come after us, please vote YES on HJR 20 and give 16 and 17 year olds the chance to vote that I didn't have.

Thank you,

Sophie Goodwin-Rice  
Portland