

Submitter: Austin Lawrence
On Behalf Of:
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Measure: HJR20

The young people of today are our future leaders, and it is essential that we give them a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. By allowing 16-year-olds to vote, we can help cultivate a culture of civic participation and responsibility at a younger age, which will ultimately lead to a more engaged and informed electorate.

Lowering the voting age will also help to address the problem of voter apathy and disengagement that has plagued our democratic institutions in recent years. By involving young people in the electoral process, we can reinvigorate our democracy and ensure that the voices of all citizens are heard.

Some may argue that 16-year-olds are not mature enough to make informed decisions at the ballot box. But I believe that this is a flawed and paternalistic argument. After all, 16-year-olds are legally allowed to work, pay taxes, dual enroll in community college, can make their own medical decisions, be charged criminally as adults, and emancipate themselves, and 17-year-olds can enlist in the military. If we trust them with these responsibilities, then we should also trust them with the responsibility of voting.

In addition to being a matter of fairness and democracy, lowering the voting age is also a matter of social justice. Young people, especially those from marginalized communities, often bear the brunt of policy decisions made by older generations. By giving them a say in the democratic process, we can help to level the playing field and ensure that everyone's voice is heard.