

Submitter: Janet Rossey Alexander  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure: HJR20

I just have to respond to Jeff Lawrence's testimony.

I respectfully disagree with his position on lowering the voting age to 16. He seems to have a narrow and outdated view of our youth and their abilities to engage in public policy decisions.

First, he suggests that children spend their time in school being influenced by partisan teachers. But don't forget that these same teachers are educating our youth on civic engagement and political participation. They are teaching them about the importance of voting and being informed about the issues that affect their lives.

Second, he mentions peer pressure as a reason not to lower the voting age. But let's be clear, peer pressure exists at any age. The key is to educate our youth to think critically and make informed decisions. We should not deny them the opportunity to participate in our democracy because of potential peer pressure.

Third, he claims that lowering the voting age will politicize our children and drive division. But the truth is, our youth are already aware of the issues that divide us. They see the injustices and inequalities in our society and they want to make a difference. By allowing them to vote, we are empowering them to take a stand and work towards a more just and equitable society.

Finally, he argues that voting is an adult responsibility. But why should we deny our youth the right to have a say in the policies that affect their lives? They pay taxes, they drive cars, they work, they can be emancipated, they can be thrown in jail with adult charges, my son is dual enrolled in PCC, they can make medical decisions without parental consent and 17-year-olds can join the military. They are already making adult decisions in their daily lives, so why not give them a say in the decisions that affect their future? I can assure you, the lazy teenagers who stay in bed, don't have a job, and play video games all day long are not going to take the time out of their day to register to vote and fill out their ballot. The only young adults who will take the time to do so are the ones who actually care about the issues at hand and are educating themselves about them.

Lowering the voting age to 16 is not about politicizing our children or turning them into propaganda targets. It's about giving them a voice in our democracy and empowering them to be active and engaged citizens. Let's not deny them this

fundamental right and continue to perpetuate the notion that they are not capable of making informed decisions.