

HJR 20 Proposal to lower voting age from 18 to 16 in

HB 3206 Proposal to lower voting age from 18 to 16 in school district elections

In suggesting that we lower the voting age from 18 to 16, why not consider lowering it to 15? After all, at 15, our children are able to decide for themselves whether they want to have their penis or breasts surgically removed.

We've all heard the phrase "follow the science", so I have been wondering whether scientists had studied the adolescent brain to determine when it is fully developed. I reviewed information on the National Institutes of Health website. The NIH is an official agency of the U.S. Government. I found two interesting articles.

1. **Maturation of the adolescent brain:** <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3621648/>
 - a. This article describes adolescence as the time during which children become adults – intellectually, physically, hormonally, and socially.
 - b. It states: "individual's vulnerability toward making improper decisions because the brain's region-specific neurocircuitry remains under construction, thus making it difficult to think critically and rationally before making complex decisions.
 - c. Citing a study by the CDC, it also states: "It is well established that the brain undergoes a "rewiring" process that is not complete until approximately 25 years of age.
 - d. Further: "Because adolescents rely heavily on the emotional regions of their brains, it can be challenging to make what adults consider logical and appropriate decisions"
 - e. "The prefrontal cortex offers an individual the capacity to exercise good judgment when presented with difficult life situations. The prefrontal cortex, the part of the frontal lobes lying just behind the forehead, is responsible for cognitive analysis, abstract thought, and the moderation of correct behavior in social situations. The prefrontal cortex acquires information from all of the senses and orchestrates thoughts and actions in order to achieve specific goals. The prefrontal cortex is one of the last regions of the brain to reach maturation, which explains why some adolescents exhibit behavioral immaturity. There are several executive functions of the human prefrontal cortex that remain under construction during adolescence. The fact that brain development is not complete until near the age of 25 years refers specifically to the development of the prefrontal cortex.
2. **The Teen brain:** <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-7-things-to-know>
 - a. Though the brain may be done growing in size, it does not finish developing and maturing until the mid- to late 20s. The front part of the brain, called the prefrontal cortex, is one of the last brain regions to mature. This area is responsible for skills like planning, prioritizing, and controlling impulses. Because these skills are still developing, teens are more likely to engage in risky behaviors without considering the potential results of their decisions.

So, in conclusion, you would have to be a "Science Denier" in order to support this bill. If you agree with this bill, wouldn't it also be logical to lower the age to smoke from 18 to 16, to get a tattoo from 21 to 16, to drink alcohol from 21 to 16 and the age to smoke marijuana from 21 to 16?

None of this makes any sense. Leave the voting age at 18.

Sincerely,
Brad Dennis