

Submitter: Pat Krikorian
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HJR20

I am opposed to HJR 20, HB 3206 and HB 2694 for the same reasons. Kids under the age of 18 are not mature enough to participate in elections. There are many studies that say that 16 and 17 year olds would not be competent voters because their brains, specifically the prefrontal cortex “is still undergoing major reconstruction and development during the teenage years.” The prefrontal cortex is the part that allow us to make reasonable decisions. Studies show that this part of the brain does not fully develop until age 25. A fully developed frontal cortex allows us to make good decisions using sound judgment and demonstrate an awareness of long term consequences.

Life experience is something else that teens lack. They have no precept for foreign policy, financial markets, economic stability or opportunity. So they have no foundation to base their decisions. Critical thinking skills are not taught in school. Civics is not taught in school either. Oregon is one of 8 states that have no civics requirements. So without mature thinking skills, life experience, and the ability to think critically topped with a poor understanding of civics, teens are susceptible to indoctrination from multiple sources. The voting age was lowered to 18 in large part due to the Vietnam War draft. There was a saying among supporters of the lowering of the age of majority and voting from 21 years, “old enough to fight, old enough to vote.” However, based on medical evidence, even voting at age 18 is too young.

Thank you,

Pat Krikorian
Jackson County