

RE: Support for Our Future, Our Vote - HJR 20  
House Committee on Rules

**February 23, 2023**

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

My name is Devin Ruiz and I live in Portland. I am writing to testify in strong support of HJR 20, which will lower the voting age from 18 years old to 16.

It's evident that civic habits are more likely to stick when developed at a younger age. Research suggests that allowing 16 and 17-year-olds to vote can improve voter turnout, spur civic engagement, and encourage effective civics education.

As someone who works directly with high schoolers and has since 2017, I can tell you how important it is to trust young people to cast their vote on decisions that impact their lives. The younger people vote, the more likely they are to become habitual voters and deeply engaged in civic work in their communities. It will increase access to democracy while ensuring that young people are heard and represented in our state. Oregon is the most accessible state to vote in and it is crucial that we continue to expand and invision what is possible for equitable voting rights.

that the vast separation between 16 and 17 year olds is one of the central reasons Oregon is failing its Black and brown youth. Lawmakers are elected in the Oregon, without the say of so it is not surprising that they are not attune to what is happening on the ground.

Please pass HJR 20 out of the committee.

Thank you,

**Devin Ruiz**