

RE: Support HB 3012  
House Committee on Rules

2/11/2025

Chair Bowman, Vice Chair Drazan, Vice Chair Pham, and members of the House Committee on Rules,

My name is Araya Ouaneisouk, and I live in Happy Valley. I am writing to testify in strong support of the Student Voice and Democracy Act, HB 3012, which will allow registered 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in local school board elections, giving students a voice in their education and strengthening our democracy.

We have an opportunity to strengthen our democracy by giving students a voice in the decisions that directly impact their education. Students care deeply about their education yet don't have a say in ensuring school boards are responsive to the needs of all students. The Student Voice and Democracy Act will amplify the voices of thousands of students and keep decision-makers accountable.

I believe diverse experiences and perspectives should be valued in our schools and communities. So many of our student issues don't get proper student representation. For example, the implementation of Yondr Pouches and enforcement of a "phone-free environment" undermines the perspective of immigrant students and their families. This is especially important as the terrorizing presence of immigration enforcement (ICE) has led to concerns about communication among families. We need a school board that takes into account the perspective and interests of the students they directly represent.

I urge you to pass HB 3012 to allow 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote in school board elections and empower them to have a direct say in their lives.

Thank you,  
Araya Ouaneisouk