

RE: Support HB 3012
House Committee on Rules

2/11

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

My name is Nicole Reksopuro, and I live in Happy Valley, Oregon. I approach this committee to provide input on an issue that speaks strongly to me— not just through the standpoint of a constituent, but as a student.

As someone who dedicates time listening in on school board hearings and directly speaking with school board members at Equity Advisory meetings, I know first hand that a school board that addresses not just the voices of faculty, but the needs of its students is necessary to adequately serve the community. Education is something unique to youth, however, without student voices being directly involved in the development of educational policy, to what extent are our school systems effective?

While an entire school day was lost due to poor air conditioning in Oregon heat, my school district decided to allocate well over \$300,000 to lock up students' cell phones. And besides addressing the clear misalignment in priorities, I want to point out the fact that these decisions directly affect students, yet we have no voice in the process.

Although I agree that school board members are entitled to their own judgments when it comes to deciding what's best for schools—as a firm advocate about youth involvement in policy, and as a student, it is time that youth are involved in the conversation about actions that directly affect our educational experience.

I ask you committee members to support the Student Voice and Democracy Act, also known as House Bill 3012 in order to let pre-registered students at the age of 16, to be included in school board elections. Not only will this give youth a seat at the table to provide input on educational policy, but encourages us to stay involved in decisions that directly affect us. Research has consistently shown that individuals who are engaged with voting at younger age, are way more

likely to stay civically active in the future. As a student, we care deeply about our education, but unfortunately we have no voice in the process.

The Student Voice and Democracy Act will amplify the voices of thousands of students and keep decision-makers accountable to serving their communities. I urge you committee members to vote YES on the bill on behalf of all youth in Oregon. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Nicole Reksopuro