

RE: Support HB 3012  
House Committee on Rules

**February 12, 2025**

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

My name is Sydney Chen, and I'm currently a high school sophomore. 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.

I believe that students having agency in the decisions that have the most direct impact on them is essential and conducive to school environments that actually prioritize the inputs of students. In the few years that our school has been open, our school's speech and debate team has received very limited support from both our administrators and district, but for me and my fellow teammates, has been a transformative life experience that we believe anyone in our school should be able to access. We want to be able to expand our team and attend more tournaments, but pushing for things like funding for activities that have had great impact for students seems difficult. Often, it seems that school board members overlook many student concerns simply because there isn't enough student input and that leaves many of us to feel like we only have opinions, not choices. Speech and debate is an activity that is empowering our future lawmakers and that's exactly why it's essential for students to advocate for resources for these types of activities.

The status quo must change if we value the voices of youth as much as we say we do. That's why I implore you to vote yes for HB 3012 so that our students can voice their opinions on the issues that are the most pressing to them. Thank you for your time!

Thank you,

Sydney Chen