

Submitter: Mason Sloan
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3012

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mason Sloan, and I am a resident of Bull Mountain. I am submitting testimony in support of HB 3012, which proposes allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in school board elections.

This bill is common sense. Adults vote legislators in who determine the state laws they live by, so why not allow students to vote for the politicians who control the most important thing in our adolescent lives?

A positive effect this would have on schools is civic engagement. This would make high schoolers more civically engaged and informed on local policy, through research and critical examination of candidates. Those who would be able to vote if this bill passes would learn to research policy and candidates before voting in larger elections, preparing them to learn how to vote in their adult years.

This idea is not radical or unprecedented. Cities like Berkeley, Oakland, and Newark have lowered the voting age, and it has worked out for them.

Some opponents of this bill argue that because young people's brains are not fully developed, they should not have the right to vote on politicians who work on the policies most important to their lives- their members of their school board. This argument is a slippery slope. Some adults are not well informed or engaged, but they keep the ability to vote.

Expanding access to voting has been a long standing tradition in our democratic country, and this bill could be the next step in maintaining this legacy.

I urge you to vote yes on this bill, and expand our great American democracy!