

February 27, 2025

TO: House Committee on Rules
FROM: Grace Fortson, Our Children Oregon
SUBJECT: Support for HB 3012

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Pham, and Members of the Committee,

I went to high school in Washington State. My district had a Civics requirement for graduation at the time which has since become state policy, just as it has in Oregon. As an enthusiastic history student, debate competitor, and Model United Nations delegate, I was excited to learn about contemporary civic engagement. While the class served as an important learning opportunity for myself and peers, the class fell a bit flat as many of us were unable to enact what we were learning for at least a couple years.

As an educator, I can say from experience that giving students the opportunity to act on what they are learning in class is a fantastic way to increase engagement and information retention. HB 3012 gives students that opportunity for engagement, specifically in hyper-local elections that directly impact them. School boards have a massive impact on the realities that shape student's social and educational experience.

When I was a high school student, my school board did little to nothing to address the blatant displays of racism that were rampant during my senior year. Vandalism, attempted arson, and cyberhacking were all methods of displaying racist views. Instead of listening to the students and teachers who

were concerned about the cultural impact of these attacks, the School Board chose to ignore these issues. If Board members were accountable directly to the students they serve, perhaps our district's response could have been better than the lack of action that was taken. Students deserve a voice in the systems that govern them and the schools they are required to attend. **I urge strong support of HB 3012.**

Thank you,

Grace Fortson, Policy and Advocacy Manager , Our Children Oregon

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