

Submitter: Nicole Chaisson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3012

I strongly oppose the proposal to let children vote in Oregon school board elections. While engaging young people in civics is valuable, voting requires a level of maturity, experience, and understanding that kids—by definition—haven't yet developed. School boards make complex decisions about budgets, curricula, and personnel that affect entire communities, not just students. Allowing kids to vote risks skewing outcomes toward short-term, self-interested preferences over long-term community needs.

Data backs this up: studies like those from the National Institutes of Health show adolescents' decision-making is heavily influenced by emotion and peer pressure, not fully maturing until around age 25. Handing them electoral power could undermine the stability of our schools, which rely on informed, balanced governance. Parents, educators, and taxpayers—who bear the responsibility and consequences—should retain this authority.

Kids can participate through student councils or public forums, but voting should remain an adult privilege. Let's prepare them for democracy, not thrust them into it prematurely.

Nicole Chaisson
The Dalles