

Submitter: Shania Rose
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment, or Topic: Support HB 3012

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

My name is Shania Rose, and I live in Gresham. 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.

As someone who works with K-8 students every day, I see that many students' needs are not being met. I have heard countless stories from the students I support who are not being represented by the members of their school districts. Many students don't have school board members who look like them or share the same values as they do. We must recognize that youth are our future and they should be able to voice their needs to elected officials that they choose. Many of the students I work with who would be eligible to vote if this bill passes are fully capable and invested in making clear decisions on who is representing them. Youth deserve champions who are prioritizing their needs, and allowing them to vote is the most reliable way for young people's voices to be heard in local policymaking.

16 and 17-year-olds are ready to vote. You all have an opportunity to empower youth voices and make sure they can have agency on who is making decisions for their daily lives. I urge you to pass HB 3012 out of committee.

Thank you,
Shania