

RE: Support HB 3012  
House Committee on Rules

2/27/25

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

My name is Marae Tidwell, and I live in Gresham, OR. 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.

We have an opportunity to strengthen our democracy by giving students a voice in the decisions that directly impact their education. Students care deeply about their education yet don't have a say in ensuring school boards are responsive to the needs of all students. The Student Voice and Democracy Act will amplify the voices of thousands of students and keep decision-makers accountable.

Though I am engaged in politics now, I have not always been engaged nor felt comfortable to actively participate. I am now 25 years old and with the help of Next Up Youth Action, a lead organization of this bill, I have been more encouraged to take part in politics, ask questions and use my voice. I feel if I were able to get an earlier introduction to politics in an accessible and relatable way at a young age, I would be much more involved in politics today.

For the betterment of our future as a whole, I think we should be in support of our youth having the agency and voice to advocate for themselves, their needs and their community, starting with their school boards and who represents them there. I ask that you please pass HB3012 to allow 16 & 17 year olds the right to vote in their school board elections and directly empower youth voices.

Thank you,  
Marae Tidwell