

RE: Support HB 3012
House Committee on Rules

February 28, 2025

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

My name is Zave, and I'm a student at Portland State University. 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.

As a recent graduate myself, I know that students across the country are facing the brunt of some of our nation's most serious crises.; from gun violence and community safety, to attacks on queer and trans youth and book bans. These issues, among so many others, play out in our schools and affect the everyday lives of the student body. 16 and 17-year-olds are able to drive, able to work, and able to understand the complex issues we are facing, they deserve to have a say in how their schools respond to these challenges.

Thus, I urge you to pass the Student Voice and Democracy Act to give 16 and 17-year-olds the autonomy they deserve.

Thank you,

Zave Payne