

Submitter:

Eli Cox

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3012

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

My name is Eli Cox, I live in Eugene, and have spent almost the past decade working to prevent violence and abuse in rural Oregon. 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.

Having worked in child advocacy centers and domestic and sexual violence advocacy organizations, I have seen first hand the tactics people doing harm use by telling youth no one will believe them and that what they have to say doesn't matter. Opportunities to affirm young adults knowledge and wisdom and have it actually count are paramount to preventing violence and abuse long term in our communities. Also for myself, having grown up in a small town in Oregon and attending my local public school all 12 years, I can only imagine what this bill would have done for me and my friends if we were back in High School. We would joke about how at the age of 14 our school put us through training to get our tractors license and trusted us to drive combines around all the roads in our counties but yet if we had any input on our school experience or even changing some lunch options we were thoroughly "too young" to know what we were talking about.

Please shift norms that will have a positive impact on young people and pass the Student Voice and Democracy Act out of committee.

Thank you,
Eli Cox