

Submitter: Jayme A
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 Jayme, 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 critical voice in their education and thereby strengthening our democracy.

As a mother of three to current and graduated high school students, I know students are capable of making decisions on who is representing them. There are so many things that occur within schools that school board members frankly aren't aware of. I have seen my children and their friends constantly looking for ways to be involved in their communities and have their voices heard, only to be shut down and silenced by school board members. It is shocking to think that students are one of the few groups of people who don't get to have any decision making power over who represents them. As a parent and person who cares deeply for students to have equitable educational environments, I trust 16 and 17 year olds to vote for their school boards and become habitual voters in the future.

With the new civics credits requirements for graduation, students will be educated and prepared to vote in school board elections and beyond. It is my understanding that the purpose of public schools was to prepare people to vote, this is the perfect way for students to apply their learning directly. I remember being in school and thinking so many of the things I was learning weren't even applying to the real world, yet the new civics education standards do that and this bill would allow students to feel like their education is applying to their daily lives and ideally make them feel more interest to be involved in their communities long-term.

I urge you to vote yes on HB 3012 and continue to be a leader in our country of enfranchising voters across the state of Oregon. 16 and 17 year olds are ready to vote for their school board members.

Thank you,
Jayme