

**To: House Rules Committee**  
**From: Kate Titus, Common Cause Oregon**  
**Re: Student Voice & Democracy Act (HB 3012)**  
**Date: March 3, 2025**

### **Common Cause**

Common Cause is a nonpartisan organization that works for open, honest, accountable government. We are 1.5 million Americans – including roughly 30,000 Oregonians – working together to realize the unfinished promise of democracy.

### **Support for the Student Voice & Democracy Act**

In these polarized times – no matter where each of us stands politically – we may have moments where we doubt the reasoning skills of some of our fellow voters. It's easy to convince ourselves that *we ourselves* are smart voters, while some others may not be fully equipped for this responsibility.

Of course, there was a time when people argued that women weren't capable to vote... and a long and continuing history of excluding voters based on race... and at the country's founding, a belief that only a small group of white property owners were sufficiently capable to vote. But as we've come to believe more fully in the democracy we profess, we've gradually expanded the franchise.

True democracy involves broadly shared decision-making. To borrow a phrase from the disability rights movement: "Nothing about us without us." The more inclusive we can be, the more representative we are, the better and more equitable our decisions. That benefits all of us.

Common Cause stands on the side of democracy. The organization helped pass the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment, that lowered the voting age to 18. Now science indicates that by 16 years of age, our "cold" cognition has generally matured to adult levels. There's no reason to deny this population a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. Common Cause Oregon – as part of the Student Voice and Democracy Act Coalition – supports HB 3012 to allow 16 and 17-year-olds to vote in local school board elections.