

Submitter: Jessica McBride
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3012

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

My name is Jessica McBride, and I live in Beaverton. 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 thereby strengthening our democracy.

I am a former teacher and I sit on my local school district's budget committee. I know how much influence school board members have on students in our schools. Allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in these elections would help ensure that board members are accountable to the students.

Students across Oregon are struggling with mental health, often feeling like their concerns aren't taken seriously or that they have little power to change things. Giving 16- and 17-year-olds the power to help choose the elected leaders overseeing their education, would make a big difference.

Finally, turnout among 18-25 year olds has been consistently lower than other age demographics. People are more likely to vote if they have voted in the previous election, so it stands to reason that if 16- and 17-year-olds learn how to participate, they will continue to engage with our democracy.

I urge you to pass the Student Voice and Democracy Act out of the House Committee on Rules.

Thank you,
Jessica McBride