

Submitter: Michelle DePass
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 Michelle DePass, I'm the mom of two, and serve as the Vice Chair of the Portland Public Schools Board of Education, and I'm an engaged resident of Portland who cares about our future. I am testifying 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.

Allowing 16 and 17 year olds to vote encourages participation in democracy, and democratic processes at a time when civic engagement is more important than ever;

HB 3012 allows youth to have a say in the leaders who represent them on school boards encouraging buy-in to their education

And allows every elected school board member in Oregon to demonstrate our values around listening to student voice.

Things have changed since I was 16 years old - we are now in the information age, and youth are exposed to information at a much quicker pace; news is streaming in through their social media accounts and devices. Teens have more anxiety as a result, and one thing we can do to relieve that anxiety is to empower them to have some say over their education by empowering them to vote for school board members.

So again, I urge a vote in the positive direction. I urge a vote that will give Oregon 16 and 17 year olds who are registered to vote, the chance to weigh-in on the leaders who govern their school districts.

Thank you,
Michelle DePass
Portland, 97212