

Submitter: James Smith  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: Support HB 3012

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

My name is James Smith, and I live in Clackamas County. 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.

I believe that 16 and 17 year olds should be allowed to vote in school board elections because students go through a variety of the same issues they've spoken out on repeatedly in various districts in all the ways they are provided, without any signs from the school board that they will take any real action on them. I knew many of my peers throughout middle and high school in 2 different districts that had multiple cases of bullying and harassment from students as well as sexual harassment from teachers, their complaints emphasise the fact these issues are rarely taken seriously despite how advertised they are as issues our institutions care about. I know my own issues during school that led me to drop out 3 years before graduating would likely have been resolved if students like myself (who are not nearly done with their education at the school they are representing) were given a voice of their own rather than some understaffed student counselors with little resources to actually help the hundreds of students that each are given to help. The school board should be a committee to help students, not the first step to higher government positions.

Once again, please vote to pass the Student Voice and Democracy Act out of committee.

Thank you,

James Smith