

March 3, 2025

TO: House Committee on Rules

FROM: Ali King on behalf of Our Children Oregon's 2025 Children's Agenda

SUBJECT: Support for HB 3012

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Pham, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ali King and I am the Policy and Advocacy Director for Our Children Oregon (OCO), a statewide organization that advances equitable policies, data and research, and whole-child advocacy. The Children's Agenda, convened annually by OCO, brings together more than 135 organizations statewide to create a holistic legislative agenda dedicated to improving the wellbeing of Oregon's children, youth, and families. **HB 3012 is included in the 2025 Children's Agenda and has strong and broad support from our partner organizations across Oregon.**

As a coalition of child and family advocates, educators, administrators, parents, and policy experts, we have seen firsthand how deeply concerned students are about their future. At age 16, students can drive, pay taxes, and work without any restriction on hours. Expanding school board elections to include 16 and 17-year-olds will give students a voice in their education and deeper engagement and involvement in their school.

Letting students engage in the decision making for the policies that directly impact them is an investment in their success and in the success of Oregon's classrooms.

Research shows that while teenagers may be less mature than in areas of “hot cognition,” like responding quickly in emotionally heightened circumstances, they perform similarly to adults in areas of “cold cognition,” which are longer term, more deliberate decisions.¹

By passing this bill, we will work toward fostering a future of civically engaged young Oregonians who are empowered to use their voices, as well as local school boards who are accountable to the needs of students.

We urge you to pass HB 3012 to empower youth voices.

Sincerely,

Our Children Oregon

Next Up Action Fund

Center for Childhood Safety and Wellbeing

Latino Network

Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries

Oregon Association of Student Councils

Oregon Environmental Council

Oregon School Nurses' Association

Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force

Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon

Prevent Child Abuse Oregon

Southern Oregon Success

Urban League of Portland

View the [2025 Children's Agenda](#)

¹ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6551607/>