



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Pham,

My name is Willy Chotzen, and I am the State Representative for House District 46, encompassing much of Southeast Portland. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 3012.

I am testifying today as a parent and a former public school teacher. As a public school teacher, I facilitated our student council meetings, I trained students to be peer mediators and restorative justice facilitators, and I encouraged my students to write to their local leaders and use what they were learning in school to actually engage with their community. I had two major takeaways from that work. First, young people are far wiser, thoughtful, and mature than we often give them credit for. Secondly, when we empower young people and when we give them responsibility that is when we bring out their best.

If we want an active, engaged, and responsible set of Oregonians in the future, we can do that by encouraging them to learn civics and participate in democracy— not just in the classroom but at the ballot box. This is a powerful educational tool.

Additionally, I am here testifying and supporting this bill because better decisions are made when all voices are represented. It is worth celebrating that this body is more representative than it was 50 years ago. The decisions we make disproportionately impact young people, this is even more true for school boards. We cannot just empower young people to be engaged in democracy, but we can actually make better decisions by including the voices of those who understand the decisions school boards are making most closely.

I urge your support of this bill.

Representative Willy Chotzen

Willy Chotzen