

**JANEEN SOLLMAN**  
**STATE SENATOR**  
**DISTRICT 15**



**OREGON STATE SENATE**

March 3, 2025

TO: House Committee on Rules

RE: Support for HB 3012

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

As a former School Board member for the Hillsboro School District, I understand how the ripple effect of one board member's vote and their actions can directly impact our classrooms. A school board is not only essential for school systems to function properly, but also has the responsibility of appropriately representing the interests of all students and their need and right to thrive in school. I love seeing growing student representation on our school boards, it was something I advocated for years on the school board in Hillsboro. These student representatives have been so very impressive and fun to watch their growth in the programs across Oregon. Our youth are actively watching and listening to the choices we make that affect their future and are voicing their perspective. Having high school students voice their position with their vote is powerful and can increase political and civic engagement.

I have worked with many students as high school interns and policy advocates, helping pass incredible policy for the state of Oregon. Their perspective, energy and know-how has been very important in policy work.

Our students are doing AMAZING things! They are building robots and crushing it at robotic events, achieving high marks at regional, state, and national civics competitions, building, designing, and marketing houses, catering events through culinary programs, running small businesses in locally supported programs. Students inspire me each and every day!

Lowering the voting age to 16 or 17 for school board elections would NOT be a novel approach. In the United States this is done in Berkeley and Oakland, California. It is also done for **all elections** in Brattleboro, Vermont and in several cities in Maryland. Additionally, on the global front, other countries have a voting age under 18: Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Ecuador, Malta, Greece, and Indonesia among many others.

Currently, a student's main avenue for influencing decisions made by elected officials, is limited to making public comments at school board meetings. This bill will allow them to be more directly engaged and hold their representatives accountable with their vote.

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The demographic of school board members also does not always match with the demographic of the students they represent. Allowing students to participate in elections could help increase school board member diversity and lead to a more reflective representation of our communities. With this policy, Oregon will be bridging the youth/adult divide while also working towards improving our education system. I strongly urge your support of HB 3012. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janeen Sollman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Janeen Sollman  
Senate District 15