



Testimony in Support of HB 3012  
Gloria Ochoa-Sandoval, Unite Oregon  
March 3, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 3012. My name is Gloria Ochoa-Sandoval, and I am here on behalf of Unite Oregon and from a family of educators. Our organization is led by people of color, immigrants and refugees, rural communities, and people experiencing poverty. We work across Oregon to build a non-partisan unified intercultural movement for justice.

By the age of 16, many youth are working, paying taxes, driving, engaging in civic and political education, and by 17 they are able to proactively enlist to serve in our military. Additionally, by the age of 16, youth have fully developed cold cognition skills - the cognitive function that is used in voting. Cold cognition is making value-based informed decisions in low stress environments. To the contrary, they do not have strong hot cognitive abilities which is prefrontal cortex development - but this is not used in voting.

We believe they deserve and are prepared to vote for school board members that make policies that directly impact their education and futures. Allowing them to vote ensures that the individuals making decisions about their education are accountable to the students they serve.

As a former student of the Woodburn School district, I had the privilege of attending school where my father worked as an educator, and yet, we struggled to get proper representation for our students. Just last week, the school board reviewed a policy called "Reaffirming Safe and Welcoming Schools for All," a resolution that stated their "schools should be welcome places - and that all children, regardless of immigration status, have a right to free public education." Despite the overwhelming support from community members, especially students and parents, the board proceeded to vote in opposition of the resolution.

Empowering young people to engage in civic life early fosters lifelong participation in democracy and gives power to their voices. We urge your support for HB 3012 to create a more inclusive, representative, and equitable system for all students and families in Oregon.

Thank you.



Sincerely,

Gloria Ochoa-Sandoval  
Unite Oregon