



*The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

February 18, 2026

To: [\*\*Senator Kayse Jama\*\*](#), Chair, [\*\*Senator Bruce Starr\*\*](#), Vice Chair Senate Rules Committee

And Members of the [\*\*Senate Rules Committee\*\*](#)

Re: [\*\*SB 1574 – First Time Voters Act – Support\*\*](#)

As an 18-year-old member of the League of Women Voters of Oregon Youth Council, I support SB 1574, which would permit 17-year-olds who will be 18 by the date of the consecutive general election to participate in primary elections. The League believes that elections should be conducted in a manner that encourages voter participation, and this bill will increase that participation. In addition, the League believes that schools have a crucial role in preparing students to be informed and engaged citizens.

I support this legislation because 17-year-olds receive civic education in schools, and have a strong understanding of the democratic process— the same as their 18-year-old classmates. In Oregon, all high school students are required to take 0.5 credits of a U.S. Civics course to graduate, ensuring all high schoolers are learning about the principles of our democracy and our rights as voters.

By allowing eligible students to vote in primary elections when they are 17, you are more likely to engage these students while they are getting this civics education, giving them the ability to connect their in-class instruction to active participation in the real world. The lessons they learn about voting and civic engagement will no longer just be notes on a page about a right they will have in the future— it will be real-life engagement they can participate in on primary election day, helping them to begin building the habit of voting as early as possible.

The mandatory civics education that students are already receiving would provide a natural and convenient way to inform students about their ability to vote in primary elections. Information about primaries and how to exercise their right to vote can be incorporated into existing course material.

In summary, extending the right to vote in primary elections to 17-year-olds who will be 18 by the general election— and informing them about this new right through existing civics curriculum— reaches many young students before they graduate, helping them to build their habits of democratic participation while they still have the support of their schools to educate them about the effects of their participation and encourage them to engage.

We urge your support for **SB 1574**.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

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