

Chair Garrett, Members of the Committee, For the record my name is Shawn Fleek, Voter Registration and Community Engagement Organizer. In the summer of 2012 I registered 2670 Oregon voters through work with the Oregon Bus Project, a record for a single organizer in a single year. Frankly, I never should have been that successful. While I was proud to engage young people from Portland to Bend to Eugene, and take the time to discuss with them the importance of voter registration, it was also disheartening how reliably young people in our state were totally unaware of their right and duty to do so. The state of voter registration among young people who are eligible is a blight on our democratic process. Older voters consistently make decisions about the future of our society, which our youth stand to inherit. There are 700,000 Oregonians who are eligible to vote but are not registered, a group which if registered could have total control over state elections but who are denied this right because of an archaic paper registration system, a poorly-implemented online voter registration system, and a generally inaccessible registration process which ties voter registration to a household instead of to a voter. It is for this reason that I submit testimony in favor of:

- HB 2988 to allow 16-year-olds to preregister, granting schools an opportunity to educate and involve Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors in civic engagement, and giving the Oregon DMV the opportunity to preregister all new drivers.
 - HB 2017 to improve the online voter registration system to be open to citizens of Oregon who lack Oregon state ID.
 - HB 3175 to improve access to voter registration on Oregon college and university campuses.
- Oregon can serve as a shining beacon of democratic openness and accessibility, or we can maintain the status quo, which effectively serves to disenfranchise young and lower-income Oregonians, and by extension people of color. Our situation is less than ideal, and while the bills presented do not perfect our voter registration system, every step toward greater accessibility should be supported by every legislator who views voting as the fundamental right at the core of American democracy. We urge you to vote yes on advancing this important package of reforms. Thank you for your time.