

Hello and thank you to the Chair and Co-chair, Ginny Burdick and Ted Ferrioli, and to the other Members of the Senate Rules Committee.

My name is Claire Devine and I am a Junior at Jesuit High School in Portland. I stand before you today because of The Bus Project, a grassroots based organization aiming to increase youth involvement in the democratic process. In the few years I have been involved with them, I have already been impacted by legislation they have worked to get passed, and it is because of The Bus Project that I was able to preregister to vote the day after I turned 17. Now I hope to be a part of the movement to expand voter access even further.

According to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center of voting statistics among 35 developed countries and members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United States ranks 31st in terms of voter turnout relative to eligible voters. The study, conducted in 2012 when we had a national voter turnout percentage of 84.3% of registered voters and only 53.6% of eligible voters, pales in comparison to the statistics for the 2016 election, with only 55% of registered voters participating and no data on eligible voters.

Similarly, only 65% of our citizens of voting age are registered compared to 91% in Canada and the UK, 96% in Sweden, and nearly 99% in Japan. However, by working at the state level to improve voter access and education, we can reverse these shocking trends.

In Oregon, during the 2016 election, our state hit record high voter turnout numbers--around 2 million--after the passing of the Motor Voter Bill in December 2015 and the passing of ORS 247.016 allowing 17 year-olds to preregister. Because of this, I was able to hold a voter registration drive at my high school and we registered over 40 kids in the Junior and Senior classes. In doing so, I was also able to engage in some very constructive, stimulating conversations with my peers about the election and our country's political processes. In the same way, not only are bills such as these proven to increase voter turnout and democratic involvement, but they also prompt civic engagement and interest among youth.

While ORS 247.016 was a vastly important bill in the history of Oregon's voter access record, allowing 16 year-olds to preregister is the next logical step in this progression. Because many 16 year-olds are already going to the DMV to get their license, allowing the preregistration process to take place at this time not only increases access for youth who would not otherwise have the time or resources to make this step in the next year, but teens could be notified of their preregistration status at the DMV, thus clearing up some of the questions surrounding the Motor Voter registration where many people were not aware whether or not they were registered. In addition, preregistration for 16 year-olds would prompt an increase in civic education and discussion at high schools in Oregon, making for more informed voters. This is supported by the fact that 16 is the compulsory school attendance age limit in all cases in Oregon. Even more so, preregistration at this age effective way to register non-college bound students, whose

registration rates are 18% lower than their college bound counterparts. This is especially important in Oregon, which has one of the lowest high school graduation rates in the country.

By further involving youth in the voting process, thus increasing voter access and education, Oregon can continue to lead the nation on the path forward. Because preregistration for 16 year-olds has already been implemented at little to no cost to other states, and reaping enormous benefits, I strongly encourage my Senators to consider passing Senate Bill 802.

Thank you everyone for your time and for taking my words into consideration during your decision-making.