

March 16, 2017

TO: House Committee on Rules

FR: Charlie Fisher, State Director, Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG)

RE: Support of House Bill 2948

OSPIRG supports HB 2948

OSPIRG is a statewide, citizen-based organization that represents thousands of everyday Oregonians.

OSPIRG supports HB 2948 as an important step in increasing voter access and participation. First, it catches people who get their driver's license at 16 in the automatic registration that happens at the DMV. Right now, approximately 20,000 16 year-olds around the state go to the DMV to get their license for the first time, but aren't being pre-registered to vote. They won't have another qualifying interaction with the DMV until they are 24, leaving thousands of youth behind.

Additionally, pre-registration has been shown to increase turnout among people who are pre-registered once they become voting age. Evidence shows that voting is very much a habit. Getting someone to vote a first time often turns them into life-long voters. Engaging young people at an earlier age can increase voter turnout, and by doing so, improve the quality of vibrancy of Oregon's democracy.

We urge you to support HB 2948.

Sincerely,

Charlie Fisher
OSPIRG State Director