



Dear Chair Ginny Burdick and members of the Senate Committee on Rules

SJR 22 – STRONGLY OPPOSE allowing 16 year olds the privilege of voting.

Perhaps this bill would be more appropriately reviewed by the education committee where it can be evaluated under child development and the function of the brain. There is a difference between wisdom and knowledge. It is a faulty assumption in society that knowledge is wisdom. Knowledge and information is readily available, but wisdom takes some experience and maturity, and it is well established that brains continue to develop through early 20s and wisdom continues throughout life. For example: you can teach a 12 year old to drive a car, but you aren't going to give him the car keys because you know they don't have the wisdom to apply what they learned in context. Sixteen year olds are still learning to drive with knowledge and information, but the lack of wisdom costs in fender-benders. Legally, it has been decided that they don't have the wisdom to make decisions regarding smoking and owning a gun. Their level of knowledge is not of a basic GED level and wisdom lags further behind. They may have knowledge and instruction to hold a job and pay taxes, but they are in training gathering experience that accumulates into wisdom. Taking civics in school gives them the information to go out into the world and see how to apply it, but in no way does it give them the wisdom to apply that information in context until they experience real life on their own. One might say that 18 year olds haven't had enough experience either, but we definitely know that 16 year olds haven't gained the wisdom to make their own life decisions, so they definitely don't have the experience wisdom demands to vote on initiatives and determine who is best qualified to run our cities, state and country.

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