

Dear Chair Burdick and Committee,

My name is Sonja Grabel and I am a resident of Beaverton, OR.

Please accept my written testimony in opposition of SB 383. I am unable to testify in person due to scheduling conflicts.

I am opposed to SB 383 and puzzled as to why this bill is even being considered. The legal age in the U.S. is 18. We have made the age even higher in some instances (alcohol, tobacco, and considering now raising the age for firearms.) Why would we even be considering lowering the legal age to vote?

Brain research tells us that the prefrontal cortex in teens is not fully developed. In fact, it isn't until the early 20s that development is complete. What science suggests that we should be lowering the legal age to vote? What problem does this bill solve?

Would a 16-year-old in Oregon be able to vote in National elections while 16-year-olds in other states would not? If so, this would not be equitable for the 16 and 17 year-olds across the nation. If not, this will cause confusion and unnecessary complications on ballots. Would 16 & 17 year olds need a special ballot for elections that cover national, state, and local elections? How would this be managed? Surely, it will increase costs and complicate the entire system.

I personally think we should have just one legal age that covers all matters: military, voting, contracts, marriage, alcohol, tobacco, firearms, etc. If I were to choose, I'd make that age 20, since it is past the teen years and makes more sense than the arbitrary "18" and "21" we have now. But, alas, that isn't for me to decide.

I vividly remember being a working teen. I started working at the age of 15. I remember being resentful that I needed to pay taxes and I couldn't vote. I thought it was "taxation without representation." The answer to this problem is to simply not apply taxes to working teens. Start taxation at the voting age - 18. That is a smarter way to handle this problem.

We have some very real and serious issues facing Oregon and the nation at this time. It is a complete waste of time and resources to be addressing this non-issue.

Please oppose this bill.

Sincerely,
Sonja Grabel