



Oregon Senate  
Senate Rules Committee  
900 Court St. NE,  
Salem Oregon 97301

March 11, 2021

Dear Chair Wagner & Senate Rules Committee,

Participatory Budgeting Oregon is a non-profit organization with the mission of supporting more just and participatory budgeting. We envision Oregon as a multicultural and multiracial participatory democracy where all of the state's diverse peoples know their individual and collective power. We believe strongly in tapping the knowledge and expertise of underrepresented populations, especially youth, in designing more inclusive, just, and participatory mechanisms so that all voices are heard in democratic self-governance.

That is why on behalf of PB Oregon, I am writing to strongly support passage of SB 766 allowing individuals who are 16 and 17 to vote in school district elections. We support expanding all voting to this age group because their voices are critical to shape all public policy now. But SB 766 is a good step in that direction. It stands as a significant injustice that current law does not allow youth to vote in decisions that so directly affect their lives and education. This is deeply at variance with the core democratic values of our state and our country.

Beyond this moral rationale, SB766 makes an enormous amount of practical sense and will yield significant benefits by enlisting youth to invest in their schools, give them a real stake in public education and- by extension- broader civic life and voting. The civic learning for everyone that comes from youth exercising their power in decisions of real consequence can't be understated.

Please recommend adoption of SB766 and support its passage into law.

Sincerely,

Jim Labbe  
Board President