

March 12, 2021

Chair and Majority Leader Wagner, Vice Chair Girod, and members of the committee,

My name is Farrah Chaichi. I'm a lifelong Washington county resident, except the time I spent in college, where I minored in political science. In 2003 I participated in a student walkout to protest war with Iraq. But even prior to that major event I was politically active, and frustrated. I realized how cruel it is to put the pressure and knowledge of the real world on high school students' shoulders yet leave them powerless to decisions of elders. Quite honestly the people before them and before myself have failed in making decisions to shape a world we can all thrive in. The people who are going to live longer with consequences of decisions being made today deserve to have a voice, particularly as we see an increase in the approach to climate catastrophe.

I am aware of negative responses to this proposal. But more democratic participation should not be seen as a threat to the system. If increasing democracy is a threat to the system then the system is the problem, not giving a voice to the people. I hope you pass this referral.

Thank you,

Farrah Chaichi