

Submitter: Devon Lawson-McCourt
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB3206

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson and Kropf, and members of the Committee.

As the current Sophomore Class President at my high school, I am writing to express my strong support for HB3206. This bill seeks to allow 16 and 17-year-olds to vote in School Board elections, and I believe this is an important step in recognizing the voices of young people in our community.

As a student leader, I have seen firsthand how decisions made by the School Board can directly impact the lives of students. From funding for extracurricular activities to policies around student safety, the School Board plays a crucial role in shaping our educational experience. It only makes sense that students should have a say in who represents us and makes these decisions.

While I am thrilled that this bill is being considered, I also believe that it should go further. I wish that it included municipal elections as well, as local government decisions can have a significant impact on our community. Nevertheless, I think that this bill is a great start, and I hope that it will be passed into law.

I also urge our lawmakers to prioritize HJR 20, which seeks to propose a constitutional amendment to the Oregon constitution to lower the voting age to 16. While HB3206 is an important step, HJR 20 would allow young people to have a say in all elections, not just School Board elections. However, I understand that this may be a more difficult proposition to pass, and we should not let perfect be the enemy of good. It is important that we pass both of these bills, in case the People of Oregon vote against HJR 20 when it is proposed as a ballot measure in the 2024 election.

In conclusion, I urge our lawmakers to pass HB3206 and to continue to advocate for the voting rights of young people in Oregon. As student leaders, we have a lot to contribute to our communities, and allowing us to vote is an important step in recognizing our voices and contributions. Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this bill.

I urge for the full passage and implementation of this bill.