

I find it concerning that all the opposition testimony is using fearmongering tactics to try and deny young people their right to vote. It is clear that they are out of touch with the education system, as they have not been a part of it for decades. The fact is, 15, 16, and 17-year-olds already have the right to medical consent, and 17-year-olds can enlist in the military. The argument that they are not mature enough to vote goes to show how uneducated they are on the matter.

The scientific research they cited has nothing to do with voting, and it is clear they are grasping at straws to try and make their point. The truth is, young people have a vested interest in the decisions that are made by our government. They are the ones who will inherit the consequences of our actions, and it is their future that is at stake.

The fact that they would deny them a voice is not only disrespectful, but it is also undemocratic. The time has come for us to recognize the intelligence and capabilities of our young people and grant them the right to vote. It's also important to note that many 16 and 17-year-olds are already legally recognized as adults in certain situations. For example, they have the right to consent to medical treatment, including mental health treatment, without their parents' permission. They can also be tried as adults in criminal court in some cases. To go further, they can be emancipated, drive, pay taxes, work up to 44 hours per week, and dual enroll in community college. Hell, even 17-year-olds can join the military.

So why can't they have a say in the democratic process? Many 16 and 17-year-olds are already politically engaged and informed. They are paying attention to the issues that affect their futures and the world they will inherit. They should have a voice in shaping the policies and decisions that will impact them directly.

As for concerns about "Marxist indoctrination" in schools, that is a baseless and fear-mongering claim. Our education system is focused on providing students with critical thinking skills and a well-rounded understanding of history, civics, and current events. We should have faith in our young people to make informed decisions based on the facts presented to them. It's important to note that in Oregon, civics education is required starting in 5th grade and continuing through 12th grade. This includes teaching about the voting process and the responsibilities of citizenship. Some schools even offer advanced placement political science classes. Therefore, suggesting that it's inappropriate to give children the responsibility of choosing our leaders is not accurate. In fact, it's important to educate young people about their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and research shows that when young people are engaged and educated about issues, they are more likely to turn out and vote. It's important to stay up to date on education legislation and research before making claims or suggestions. So, I think it's safe to say that our children are more than ready to take on the awesome responsibility of choosing our leaders. It's time to trust our young people and empower them to make a difference.

It is clear that their argument is based on fear and misinformation. Their argument that this proposal is a ridiculous attempt to solidify power with the Democrat Party is a baseless and partisan claim. Lowering the voting age to 16 would give a voice to a group of people who have

been historically marginalized and ignored in the political process. It is about empowering young people to participate in democracy, regardless of their political affiliation. The argument against lowering the voting age to 16 is unfounded and disrespectful to the intelligence and agency of our youth.

We should be empowering them to be active participants in our democracy, not dismissing them based on ageist stereotypes. The time for change is now, and we should embrace the opportunity to expand our electorate and make our democracy, not dismiss them based on ageist stereotypes. The time for change is now, and we should embrace the opportunity to expand our electorate and make our democracy more representative of all citizens. I hope this committee sees through the lies, bullshit, and misinformation that has been placed before them by the opposition.

And let's remember, while it is true that the brain is not fully developed until the mid to late 20s, voting decisions rely on cold cognition and 15-year-olds have excelled in cold cognition according to studies done back in 2018.

I support HJR 20.