

Submitter: Brenda Slee
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HJR20

I am in full support of HJR 20 and will use this testimony piece to address the comments of Ricki Young, as I do not want my legislature to be fooled by misinformation. His argument is completely flawed and fails to consider a number of key points.

Just because someone is younger does not automatically mean they are less knowledgeable or informed about government and politics. In fact, many young people are incredibly passionate and engaged in political issues, and have a deep understanding of the challenges facing our society.

The idea that younger voters are more easily persuaded is simply untrue. There is no evidence to suggest that 16-year-olds are any more susceptible to manipulation or propaganda than older adults. If anything, young people are often more skeptical of the status quo and are more likely to question authority.

The fact that the human brain is not fully developed until the mid-twenties is not a valid argument against lowering the voting age. The prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for decision-making and impulse control, is one of the last areas of the brain to fully develop. Voting relies on cold cognition, and that has been developed. Oregon young adults are more than capable of looking through the voter's pamphlet and educating themselves on the issues and candidates. However, this does not mean that young people are incapable of making informed decisions or understanding complex issues.

Lastly, the suggestion that this is a power grab by liberals is simply ridiculous. Allowing 16-year-olds to vote would be a step towards greater democracy and representation, not an attempt to consolidate power. And let's not forget that many of the founding principles of our country were based on the idea of giving people a voice and a say in their government, regardless of their age or social status. The scientific research says "it should be older" is very much outdated and has been a tactic of the Republican Party to allow Congressional members to build a base off of to say we should raise the age to 21 or 25. I respect scientific integrity, but it's bullshit when you are looking at research older than my great-grandpa.

I think it's clear that his arguments against lowering the voting age are based on misinformation and unfounded assumptions. It's time to trust in the intelligence and passion of young people and to give them the opportunity to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives and their future.