

Submitter: Karen Belleque  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure: HJR20

Lowering the voting age to 16 is not a joke or insanity - it's a serious proposal to increase youth engagement in our democracy. And let's not forget that 16-year-olds can work, pay taxes, and even be tried as adults in some cases, so they should have a say in who represents them in government. Secondly, it's not up to you or anyone else to decide whether or not 16-year-olds are mentally competent. That's a judgment best left to mental health professionals and individual assessments. But I will say that I've met plenty of 16-year-olds who are more informed and politically active than some adults I know. It's disingenuous to suggest that lowering the voting age will somehow destroy our state. In fact, it could lead to a more diverse and representative government that better reflects the needs and concerns of all Oregonians, including young people. And let's not forget that our natural resources won't mean much if we don't have a functioning democracy to protect them. So let's focus on making Oregon better for everyone, not just a select few.