

Submitter: Jean Hart
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HJR20

I oppose HJR 20 allowing 16 year olds to vote.

I have not forgotten what it was like to be 16. That age generally involves rebellion, going along with the crowd to be accepted, pretending to be someone you aren't, questioning and challenging everything you have learned up to that point. It comes with a lack of long term understanding of consequences for your actions. You make mistakes that you later regret, and some that cost you more than you would have been willing to pay if you had understood the consequences, like starting smoking and then being unable to quit. Or like doing drugs and ending up in jail. Or like reckless driving and someone getting injured or killed by your actions. The transition from childhood to adulthood is not the time when you should be making decisions that will affect not only yourself, but everyone in your entire state or country.

Even though I could not yet vote, I was politically involved when I was 16. That is the age to learn how to write letters to your representatives, how to lawfully protest, how to intelligently debate, how to listen to others, how to express yourself without hurting others. It is the age to learn from past history so you don't repeat mistakes of the past. It is the age to learn what kind of adult you want to be, but are not yet. As an adult now, I am horrified by the things I espoused in my idealistic, but not yet realistic, youth.

The thought of being ruled by persons who are not even old enough to die for their country or to understand the long term consequences of their votes should give pause to everyone. At the age of 16, most persons are still being provided for by others often without understanding what kinds of sacrifices are entailed. They often resist doing "chores" to help out around the house. In other words, they want all the goodies without all the responsibilities. They would vote for their own benefits without consideration of where the monies come from. I have watched young people in my own family respond in horror when they finally get a job and see how much money comes out of their pay in the form of taxes. That is a real eye opener, as it should be!

Please kill this resolution in committee. Don't even put it up for a vote of the people. In addition to my thoughts above, the problems it would cause for County Clerks would lead to massive election disruptions.

Jean Hart