

Submitter: Sarah LeCompte

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3012

Re: HB 3012 Student Voice and Democracy

To: House Committee on Rules

I find admirable intention behind this bill to involve young people in the democratic process, but share a concern about how this might play out in smaller rural communities where some political and religious organizations have an outsized presence and voice.

There is potential for these organizations to unduly influence, pressure, or direct impressionable family members and young church and organization members on how to vote. I am in eastern Oregon; this happens here. It makes it difficult to keep a fair playing field for well-qualified candidates seeking a school board position. Adding younger voters increases this impediment to electing school board members with the needed skills and a genuine concern for community and education rather than a specific political agenda or organizational affiliation.

There are other ways for 16-17 year-olds to participate. They can learn about the election process and express views through working on campaigns and endorsing preferred candidates and issues. They can learn more about the voting process through volunteering as election monitors with County Clerk's offices.