



Testimony for LD 734: An Act to Promote Voter Registration for Students in Maine's High Schools

Public Hearing - March 11, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and honorable committee members. My name is Scott Turcotte and I am a political organizer with Community Organizing Alliance, which is a youth civic engagement nonprofit in Lewiston. My role is focused on fostering young people's civic engagement and understanding of their government, and I've had countless conversations with high school and middle school students about their role in our political systems.

I've learned that the next generation is passionate, insightful, and deeply concerned about the issues affecting their families and communities. I have also learned that almost all young people in our state feel deeply disconnected from their political systems, and largely believe that participation in our democracy is for other people, and not for them.

This feeling of disconnection and disenfranchisement is entirely understandable. Young people see a political system that does not represent their interests, that seems to prioritize the needs of the few over those of the many, and which is largely ignorant of and unresponsive to the priorities of young people. In most cases, the conversations I have with young people are the first opportunity they've had to consider themselves as political actors with a meaningful role to play in our democracy.

This bill would change that, not only by educating young people about our democracy and by registering students to vote, but by intentionally engaging with young people as valuable and empowered participants in our political process. If the goal of a high school education is to prepare students for participating in society, we must focus on students' political and social development in addition to their academic development. I believe this bill would do that, and ask you to support its passage.

Scott Turcotte, Program Manager, Community Organizing Alliance