

TO: The Honorable Senator Craig Hickman  
Representative Laura Supica  
Members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

DATE: May 2, 2025

RE: LD 1446 – RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to  
Lower the Voting Age to 16

---

Good morning, Senator Hickman and Representative Supica,

My name is Emilia Toth. I'm 22 years old, a resident of Portland, and a staff member with the League of Women Voters Maine. I have worked very closely with the group of young people that worked hard to bring this bill before you today, and I am testifying in favor of LD 1446.

I'm extremely lucky to be able to say that I'm willing and able to vote as someone in her early twenties, as so many other people my age do not exercise their right to vote. A big reason for this is that we're constantly dealing with drastic life shifts that begin the moment we turn eighteen. Whether it's moving away to attend school, joining the workforce full time, or establishing a new life from the ground up, our lives change the moment we turn eighteen and are deemed adults, with a multitude of new rights and responsibilities.

When I turned eighteen, I moved from Tennessee to New Hampshire to attend college. I was a thousand miles away from home, living on my own for the first time, and trying to establish what I wanted my college career to look like. I didn't like my major, was struggling with the decisions, responsibilities, and difficult feelings that come with moving out, and trying to figure out whether or not I should transfer to a new place and start over once again. Voting was the last thing on my mind. I didn't receive a great civics education in Tennessee, and I now lived in an entirely new place. I didn't know the first thing about registering to vote or voting in my new town, or if it was even an option for an out of state student. I didn't start voting until I moved to Maine and started doing advocacy work with Maine Students Vote and Democracy Maine. I am so fortunate to have had the guidance of such a wonderful team who helped me to understand my right to vote as a full time, residential college student in this state, and I voted in my first election in 2022. However, not everyone has a strong support system, and I often wonder how long it would've taken me to vote if I didn't have the support I did.

When I think back to when I was sixteen, I remember wishing I could vote more than anything. There were things I wanted to change, on both the state, but particularly local level. I was passionate, educated on the issues I care about, and able to make decisions entirely for myself. I was also working, paying taxes, driving, and serving my community through volunteer work. I was highly involved in my community and in a comfortable and stable chapter of my life that would've allowed voting to be a priority and within my capacity. Giving sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds the right to vote allows them to expand their civic knowledge and experience on a smaller, more comfortable scale, before they're thrown out into the real world and asked to find their own way, while also taking the time to make decisions about the state of democracy. With practice, young people can learn what it means to be a voter before they endure extreme life changes, making it second nature.

Previously, I had very little knowledge on this topic and had never considered it as an option. Since working with the League of Women Voters on the study to lower to voting age to sixteen and helping to organize such a wonderful, bright, and passionate group of young people, I firmly believe that we should allow our sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds the right to vote in state and local elections. It gives me hope to think that these wonderful teenagers could have the power and practice to make our communities a better place. After all, the younger generations are going to be the ones to change the world.

Before I close, I would like to remind you that young people are not a monolith. Young people are not representative of just one political party. In fact, my work with college voter registration has informed me that more and more young people are registering as independent voters. Voting is a right for everyone, regardless of political affiliation, and the same applies when discussing whether we should lower the voting age.

I have complete faith in our young people, and I believe, with the right guidance, practice, and education, they are going to change the world for the better. I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1446.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,  
Emilia Toth  
Portland, ME  
May 2, 2025