

My name is Emma Walsh, and I am a junior at Portland High School. I am here today to speak in favor of the bill to lower the voting age—LD 1446.

Though I am only 16 years old, I have demonstrated extensive civic engagement and involvement. I work in my community, I volunteer, and I advocate for bills such as the one subject in this hearing today. In fact, many of my peers have community responsibilities, jobs, and volunteer through high school clubs and organizations. 16 and 17 year olds are already active members within the State of Maine and in their respective cities or towns—why not further their engagement through allowing them the right to vote?

Myself and many of my peers care deeply about political issues—more so than you may think—and would deeply value the opportunity to cast a vote and share our voice. Throughout the past few months, I have developed an acute awareness of the amount of decisions made that would directly affect 16 or 17 year olds currently, or in the next few years. All of which are decisions we have no say in. We want to be able to vote on matters that would impact not only my current life, but potentially my future. For this reason, I urge you to vote that LD 1446 ought to pass.