



Craig V. Hickman  
Senator, District 14

THE MAINE SENATE  
132nd Legislature

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Augusta, Maine 04333

*Testimony of Senator Craig V. Hickman introducing*  
**LD 1446, "RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Lower  
the Voting Age to 16 Years of Age,"**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs*  
May 2, 2025

Representative Supica and honorable colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Craig Hickman, and I am proud to represent Senate District 14, twelve municipalities in southern Kennebec County including my beloved hometown of Winthrop. Thank you for the opportunity to introduce LD 1446, "RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Lower the Voting Age to 16 Years of Age."

This bill would propose an amendment to the Maine Constitution to lower the voting age from 18 to 16 for state elections. It would also make our Constitution more inclusive by changing the word "servicemen" to "service members" in Article 2, Section 1. This amendment would be submitted to the voters for approval in a referendum.

LD 1446 was brought to me by a young constituent who is here in the audience today. I'll share some highlights of the bill that he and his team put together in a moment, but I wanted to start by sharing my response to a constituent who wondered if I had "lost my mind" for sponsoring this bill.

"16-year-olds already vote in several local jurisdictions in other states. The committee heard the same bill two years ago and it failed passage. It's very hard to get two-thirds of the Maine Legislature to vote to send a constitutional amendment to the people for ratification at the ballot box.

"But when young people who are my constituents want to engage in the political process by having their voices heard in front of their elected officials, I see no reason not to offer them that opportunity and submit the legislation that they have requested of their State Senator."

I am proud to use our democratic processes to increase access to and participation in our democratic process. Thank you to Carter for bringing me this bill, and thank you to all the youth who are here advocating for it.

Here are some additional reasons to support this legislation:

- This is not a new issue. Since 2003, 22 other states have talked about this issue and seen a bill presented to their legislature, including Maine in 2021.

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- This year, the desire to bring this bill back to the Maine State legislature came from the work of nearly 30 high school and college students who are passionate about voting rights and civil service.
- Young people are not a monolithic group. They represent a diverse voting body, every bit as unique as older generations.
- Sixteen-year-olds already take on adult responsibilities. They can drive, work, and most already pay taxes via their part-time or summer jobs. Research shows that voting at 16 encourages stronger lifelong voting habits, greater political trust, and more open-minded political engagement.
- Expanding suffrage to 16- and 17-year-olds will empower them to learn how to vote sooner when they still have the support of their core networks. Once they turn 18, many will move out, go to college or trade schools, join the military, etc. This can be a chaotic time that hinders participation because they are preoccupied with these big changes.
- Cognitive science proves that 16-year-olds are just as mature as 18-year-olds. Studies have shown that the part of the brain that makes rational, deliberative decisions, like voting, is fully developed by 16.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to introduce this bill. I am happy to answer any questions you may have. I also invite you to direct questions to the young advocates who are joining us today.

Craig V. Hickman  
State Senator, District 14