

Evan Murray
Portland
LD 1446

To: The Honorable Craig Hickman and The Honorable Laura Supica, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veteran and Legal Affairs
Re: LD1446

I am writing to ask the committee to support LD1446. I work with young people who are interested in civic engagement, and I have absolutely no doubt that extending the franchise to 16-year-olds - just like they do in Scotland - would benefit not only the young people themselves, but the health of our democracy.

We currently expect people to vote for the first time just as they transition to adulthood, as they head off for whatever comes after high school. In many cases, that means they're expected to become voters while also trying to adjust to a huge life transition. Have you ever missed an election because you had just moved to a new town? Most people, even dedicated lifelong voters, have.

Allowing people to vote for the first time while they're still in a more structured environment will benefit all of us, because once people start voting, they usually continue to vote throughout their lives.

The people who oppose this change mainly mock and demean teenagers, because opposition is rooted in fear and lack of respect, not in rational objections. Support is based on recognizing young adults' full humanity and contributions to our society. They're looking at their world, and ahead to their future, and want their voices to be part of it. Democracy is only ever strengthened by bringing in more voices.

I ask you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1446.