

Emanuel Pariser
Waterville
LD 1446

May 1, 2025

To: The Honorable Senator Craig Hickman
The Honorable Representative Laura Supica
Committee on Veteran and Legal Affairs
From: Emanuel Pariser, Waterville Resident

RE: LD 1446 Testimony supporting LD 1446, "RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Lower the Voting Age to 16 Years of Age

Date of Hearing: May 2, 2025

Chair Hickman, Chair Supica, and Members of the Committee on Veteran and Legal Affairs

I would like to voice my Support of LD 1446 for the following reasons:

1. I am a lifelong Maine educator, and have developed a great deal of appreciation for what our young people are capable of if given the opportunity.
2. I have seen 16 year olds working at the polls helping other voters cast their ballots, and I have seen them take part in mock elections as well as voter registration drives. They have all the capacities that an 18 year old has to think critically, make decisions, contribute to the community and yet they are not allowed to vote.
3. Students have pointed out to me that we allow 16 year olds to drive cars, have jobs, pay taxes and yet they are not allowed to participate in one of the most sacred aspects of our democracy – voting. Some students have pointed out that this amounts to "taxation without representation."
4. Civic education in Maine and around the country needs to be enhanced by student engagement. 18 – 25 year olds are the least dependable voters. We could change that by making students' first vote one when they are in school and supported by the school. Research indicates that if a person votes the first time they have a chance to vote, chances are much greater that they will become a life-long and dependable voter, and unfortunately the obverse is true as well.
5. Some argue that this is a left leaning proposal. Take a look at the Maine Mock Elections from this past fall. They predicted accurately what took place nationally and in Maine. All grade levels in the high schools undertaking the Mock Elections was allowed to vote. Trump won the youth vote. This resolution is about strengthening democracy, not one side or the other!
6. Finally, the elections we really have the most say in are our local and state wide elections. This small change in the Constitution would help students see the power of their votes for things that matter to them – like the local school board, the local town council, their local representative and senator. There is nothing more powerful at creating an engaged and dependable voter than to see the difference their vote makes in elections which are often won by 10 or 20 votes.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on LD 1446. Please support it!

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