

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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## COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Rep. Chris Lee, Chair

Rep. Joy SanBuenaventura, Vice Chair

Friday, February 1, 2019

2:00 pm

Room 325

## SUPPORT for HB 1280 – CON AM GRANTING 16 YR. OLDS THE RIGHT TO VOTE

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair SanBuenaventura and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai'i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the families of **ASHLEY GREY, DAISY KASITATI, JOEY O'MALLEY, JESSICA FORTSON AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIED UNDER THE "CARE AND CUSTODY" OF THE STATE** as well as the approximately 5,400 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars or under the "care and custody" of the Department of Public Safety on any given day. We are always mindful that more than 1,600 of Hawai'i's imprisoned people are serving their sentences abroad thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

HB 1280 lowers the right to vote in state and local elections to those who are sixteen years of age or older per the Hawaii Constitution. Constitutional law expert Michael Morley said states, for the most part, are empowered to define their own electorates. States have broader power than Congress to set the voting age for state and local elections, though Congress regulates federal offices, he added.

Community Alliance on Prisons supports this measure. Our youth are really smart! Witnessing the students in Parkland, Florida turn their horror into a national peaceful movement is truly a lesson in restorative justice. Our students in Hawai'i, who organized and led a huge march and rally made us all proud. Watching Greta Thunberg tell it like it is to a room full of elitists in Davos<sup>1</sup> that they all knew about climate change, but ignored it to get richer, demonstrates a commitment to the planet that not enough adults embrace. These youth have not only stepped up – they have taken the lead!

The right to vote is fundamental to vibrant democracy and democracy must be exercised to remain strong. Sixteen-year old youth have demonstrated that they will exercise their rights; now it's time to grant them the right to let their votes count as well. Let's start building good citizens while our youth are high-school age so that voting becomes the norm, not the exception.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

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<sup>1</sup> Teen activist tells Davos elite they're to blame for climate crisis, By Ivana Kottasova and Eliza Mackintosh, CNN, Fri January 25, 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/25/europe/greta-thunberg-davos-world-economic-forum-intl/index.html>

**Chair Lee**  
**Vice Chair San Buenaventura**  
**House Committee on Judiciary**

**Friday, February 1, 2019**  
**2:00 PM**

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1280 RELATING TO PROPOSING AN  
AMENDMENT TO THE HAWAII CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE II, SECTION 1, TO  
EXPAND THE RIGHT TO VOTE**

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Jun Shin. I am a freshman at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and a relatively new advocate in the legislature testifying in **strong support of HB1280 relating to proposing an amendment to the Hawaii constitution, Article II, Section 1, to expand the right to vote.**

As someone who was 16 just a couple years ago (I’m 19 now), I definitely supported this when I first got involved in advocacy around 2 years ago and still support it now. At the age of 16, my classmates and I were thinking about college. From the FASFA, to the SAT’s, to paying for college, these considerations were inherently political. Even looking at Hawai‘i in general, 16 year olds are legally in a position do a lot. Our current consent age is 16 years old. With proper permission, you can get married at 16. You can get a provisional licence, and doing taxes is not limited to age as well, so working 16 year olds can do their own individual taxes as well. With there being 16 year olds already taking on or having the potential to take on what can be perceived as “adult responsibilities”, my personal thought on this matter is, why not the vote?

It definitely needs to be taken into consideration that our state has very low voter turnout, and if we expand the pool of democracy to the future with better civic education, voter drives, and community outreach and organizing efforts, we could help in increasing our voter turnout while empowering our next generation of leaders to get involved, and encourage their friends and family to get involved as well. I **strongly support HB1280 and request for it to be passed through your committee.** The youth are our future, let’s include them at the decision making table.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin  
Environmental Justice Action Committee Chair  
Young Progressives Demanding Action (YPDA)  
1561 Kanunu St.  
Cell: 808-255-6663  
Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com



## **O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities (OCCLP)**

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Rep. Chris Lee, Chair

Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

DATE: Friday, February 1, 2019

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 325, State Capitol

RE: HB 1280 Proposing an Amendment to the Hawai`i Constitution, Article II, Section I, to Expand the Right to Vote

Aloha mai kakou Chair Lee, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

The O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities (OCCLP) of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i (DPH) hereby submits its testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 1280 Proposing an Amendment to the Hawai`i Constitution, Article II, Section I, To Expand the Right to Vote**

HB 1280 lowers the right to vote in state and local elections to those who are sixteen years of age or older per the Hawaii Constitution.

It is a core principle of the Democratic Party to maximize voter participation for all Americans. Our democracy suffers when nearly two thirds of our citizens do not or cannot participate. Democrats believe we must make it easier to vote, not harder.

We will bring our democracy into the 21st century by expanding early voting and vote-by-mail, implementing universal automatic voter registration and same day registration and making Election Day a national holiday. We will restore voter rights for those who have served their sentences. And we will continue to fight against discriminatory voter identification laws which disproportionately burden young voters, diverse communities, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, low-income families, people with disabilities, the elderly, and women. *Democratic Party of Hawai`i Platform (2018), p. 19, ln. 21-30.*

For the foregoing reasons, i.e., to maximize voter participation for all Americans, OCCLP supports HB 1280 and urges its passage out of the Committee on Judiciary.

Mahalo nui loa  
Me ka `oia`i`o

/s/ Melodie Aduja

Melodie Aduja  
Chair, O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities  
of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i  
Ph. (808) 258-8889  
Email: legislativepriorities@gmail.com

**HB-1280**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 7:15:51 PM

Testimony for JUD on 2/1/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ezra Levinson	Vote16 Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Ezra Levinson, and I am 14 years old. At the time of this hearing, I will be on my school campus as mandated by Hawaii Revised Statutes 302A-1132, et seq. This requirement is important, as it makes sure that students are educated and prepared to be a functioning citizen of Hawaii and the US; to stay informed, be a part of the legislative process, and someday vote.

However, this same mandate is the reason I cannot be present to testify in person today. In Hawaii's current legislative system, I cannot hold my legislators accountable at all. I virtually cannot testify before them, meet with them, or lobby them effectively. I cannot vote them into or out of office. I cannot vote on proposed constitutional amendments.

This seems fair at first glance, considering that it's just 4 short years until I'll be of voting age. However, a lot will happen in those four years. At 14, I have already reached legal working age. The thousands of Hawaii employees between 14 and 17 are affected just as much as anyone else (if not more) by minimum wage, income tax, workplace conduct laws, and a countless list of other things the Hawaii legislature has control over. They are, essentially, taxed without representation.

At 16 years old, I will reach Hawaii's minimum age to obtain a provisional driver's license. I will drive on roads paid for by taxes. I will operate a vehicle on my own. I will also, by that age, have taken almost all the social studies and civics classes that will be available to me until I am a college student.

So why 16? Research shows that a 16-year-old has the same level of civic knowledge that a 21-year-old does. Data from countries - entire *countries* - that have lowered their voting age to 16 shows that 16-year-olds are old enough to make their own decisions when it comes to voting and politics. In addition, demographic trends hurt youth irreperably in elections. When older citizens so vastly outnumber those who are younger, as is the case in Hawaii, the needs and interests of the youth are far too often overlooked or forgotten.

As a student in Hawaii, I want the voting age lowered to 16 so that I can put my opinions into play and have an opportunity for my voice to matter. As a member of Vote16 Hawaii, I want the voting age lowered to 16 so that Hawaii's abysmal voter turnout can

improve and youth from all backgrounds across the islands can be heard and listened to. As a citizen of the US, I want the voting age lowered to 16 so Hawaii can lead the way in an issue that is quickly becoming a hot topic all over the nation.

My name is Ezra Levinson, and I am 14 years old. With your support, in 2 years' time I'll be a voter.

**HB-1280**

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 12:31:17 PM

Testimony for JUD on 2/1/2019 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Rev. T. J. FitzGerald	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

The proposed change to the voting age in Hawai'i would allow more of the very persons impacted by a wide range of decisions considered by Hawai'i voters to have a voice in the decision process. In a time when only roughly 40% of Hawai'i residents vote at all, the voices of a group who actually wants to show up and vote should be heeded, and well.

Already in place throughout Hawai'i is a way for people at the ages of 16 and 17 to pre-register to vote so that they may vote automatically at the current voting age. Therefore, there are not significant burdens or obstacles to implementation, or should not be.

At issue might be a question of competence. But I can solemnly and truthfully attest to the vastly more nuanced ways young people see many of the issues facing these islands. Indeed it is from the remarkable young persons that I learn of many of the ways decisions on these islands are impacting them and all of us. They are by and large well informed and well positioned to understand the issues facing us all. Additionally, Hawai'i already offers deference to a wide range of deeply and powerfully important life decisions to those who have reached the age of 16. So in light of the involvement of our young people, the impact of decisions upon them, and current state of the law, there seems to be no question about competence either.

Therefore, there being no tangible impediment to implementation and no persuasive argument against competence, the measure should be moved on to a vote.

Rev. T. J. FitzGerald

January 31, 2019

To: Representative Chris Lee and House Judiciary Committee

RE: HB 1280

PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE HAWAII CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE II, SECTION 1, TO EXPAND THE RIGHT TO VOTE.

**Support** for hearing on Feb. 1

Dear Representatives:

I support HB1280 to lower the voting age to 16. As the parent of a 16 year-old, I have had the pleasure of watching passionate and articulate young people advocate for social justice, the environment, and last year they “Marched for their Lives” to stop gun violence at our nation’s schools. The young people of Hawaii are truly an inspiration! They are smarter and more informed about current events than we were at their age. They deserve the civil right to vote.

Some of the objections surprise me.

*They will only vote like their parents.* This is the same excuse used 100 years ago to deny women the vote because they will only vote like their husbands. For 40 years, we have had a gender gap in voting and perhaps there might be a youth gap in our future?

*Young people don’t vote.* This is generation Z, they are not like older millennials. GenZs were born digital natives and they have a common purpose to fight and save their planet. GenZs were responsible for the historic large turnout in last November’s midterm elections. I remember in the 1960s and 1970s, when Hawaii had one of the highest voter turnouts in the country. If you give 16 year-olds the right to vote, they can lead their parents and grandparents back to the polls.

*For the election in 1960, Hawaii had a 93.1% voter turnout. – Kennedy/Nixon*

*In 1964 Hawaii had a 90% voter turnout. – Johnson/Goldwater*

*In 1976 Hawaii had a 85% voter turnout. – Carter/Ford*

*They don’t know civics.* 16 year-olds are capable of exercising their right to vote. Classes in “U.S. History and Government” and “Participation in Democracy” are requirements for a High School diploma in Hawaii.



*They're not mentally mature enough to vote.* A leading world expert on adolescence psychology, Dr. Laurence Steinberg, says there is scientific evidence that 16 year-olds have the "cold cognitive" abilities to make informed decisions. "Cold cognition" are skills used in test taking, the ability to gather and process information and reason logically, the skills you need to vote are firmly in place by age 16. Dr. Steinberg is a Psychology Professor at Temple University and the author of 17 books. Dr. Steinberg wrote an Opinion piece in the New York Times last year, following the massacre at Parkland. He called for lowering the voting age to 16. I have Dr. Steinberg's permission to include his New York Times Opinion piece in my testimony. (see attached).

Mālama pono,

Gloria C. Borland  
3037 Kahaloa Drive  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

Parent Volunteer  
VOTE 16 Hawaii

[www.Vote16Hi.com](http://www.Vote16Hi.com)

**The New York Times**

GRAY MATTER

# Why We Should Lower the Voting Age to 16

By Laurence Steinberg

March 2, 2018

The young people who have come forward to call for gun control in the wake of the mass shooting at their high school in Parkland, Fla., are challenging the tiresome stereotype of American kids as indolent narcissists whose brains have been addled by smartphones. They offer an inspiring example of thoughtful, eloquent protest.

Unfortunately, when it comes to electing lawmakers whose decisions about gun control and other issues affect their lives, these high schoolers lack any real power. This needs to change: The federal voting age in the United States should be lowered from 18 to 16.

Skeptics will no doubt raise questions about the competence of 16-year-olds to make informed choices in the voting booth. Aren't young people notoriously impulsive and hotheaded, their brains not fully developed enough to make good judgments?

Yes and no. When considering the intellectual capacity of teenagers, it is important to distinguish between what psychologists call "cold" and "hot" cognition.

Cold cognitive abilities are those we use when we are in a calm situation, when we are by ourselves and have time to deliberate and when the most important skill is the ability to reason logically with facts. Voting is a good example of this sort of situation.

Studies of cold cognition have shown that the skills necessary to make informed decisions are firmly in place by 16. By that age, adolescents can gather and process information, weigh pros and cons, reason logically with facts and take time before making a decision. Teenagers may sometimes make bad choices, but statistically speaking, they do not make them any more often than adults do.

Hot cognitive abilities are those we rely on to make good decisions when we are emotionally aroused, in groups or in a hurry. If you are making a decision when angry or exhausted, the most critical skill is self-regulation, which enables you to control your emotions, withstand pressure from others, resist temptation and check your impulses. Unlike cold cognitive abilities, self-

regulation does not mature until about age 22, research has shown. (This is a good reason to raise the minimum age for purchasing firearms from 18 to 21 or older, as some have proposed.)

This psychological evidence is backed up by neuroscientific findings. Neuroimaging studies show that brain systems necessary for cold cognition are mature by mid-adolescence, whereas those that govern self-regulation are not fully developed until a person's early 20s.

If the voting age were lowered, would that necessitate changing other laws to bring them into alignment? Of course not. We use a wide variety of chronological ages to draw lines between minors and adults when it comes to smoking, driving, viewing violent or sexually explicit movies, being eligible for the death penalty and drinking alcohol. Although the specific ages used for these purposes often lack a good rationale, there is no reason lowering the voting age would require lowering, say, the drinking age, any more than allowing people to drive at 16 should permit them to drink or smoke at that age as well.

In addition to the scientific case for lowering the voting age, there is also a civic argument. Consider the dozen or so countries like Argentina, Austria, Brazil and Nicaragua that allow people to vote at 16 in national, state or local elections. In such countries, voter turnout among 16- and 17-year-olds is significantly higher than it is among older young adults.

This is true in parts of the United States as well. In Takoma Park, Md., a city that permits 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in local elections, that age group is twice as likely to vote than are 18-year-olds.

Why is higher turnout among 16- and 17-year-olds so important? Because there is evidence that people who don't vote the first time they are eligible are less likely to vote regularly in the future. Considering that people between 18 and 24 have the lowest voter turnout of any age group in the United States (a country that has one of the lowest rates of voter turnout in the developed world), allowing people to begin voting at an age at which they are more likely to vote might increase future turnout at all ages.

The last time the United States lowered the federal voting age was in 1971, when it went from 21 to 18. In that instance, the main motivating force was outrage over the fact that 18-year-olds could be sent to fight in Vietnam but could not vote.

The proposal to lower the voting age to 16 is motivated by today's outrage that those most vulnerable to school shootings have no say in how such atrocities are best prevented. Let's give those young people more than just their voices to make a change.

Laurence Steinberg (@ldsteinberg) is a professor of psychology at Temple University and the author, most recently, of "Age of Opportunity: Lessons From the New Science of Adolescence."

**HB-1280**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 12:53:49 PM

Testimony for JUD on 2/1/2019 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Victor K. Ramos	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

**HB-1280**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 5:19:17 PM

Testimony for JUD on 2/1/2019 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Devin Wolery	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

**HB-1280**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 8:57:51 PM

Testimony for JUD on 2/1/2019 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

At age 16 they are not able to make important decisions and do not fully understand How complex Voting can be. They do not have the Maturity for this process. My Granddaughter is 21 and has just relized how important it is to vote for the right people and she is in Collage. she could not havr done this at age 16.

WE are Against this HB 1280

**HB-1280**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 9:12:11 PM

Testimony for JUD on 2/1/2019 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lisa Poulos	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

January 30, 2019

Dear Representatives,

I strongly oppose HB1280 which proposes a constitutional amendment to lower the voting age to 16 in the State of Hawaii.

Very few 16 year olds are mature enough, nor have enough life experience or knowledge to make appropriate decisions on such important State issues that voting would allow. Some may argue that most 18 year olds do not have that wisdom either, and this may be true, but most have at least completed their basic education and deserve the right to vote as they are adults and must live with the consequences in their adult lives. Also, why increase the amount of ignorant voters. The small minority of 16 year olds who are capable of making great voting decisions, and are desirous of participating in elections now will be all the more excited and ready to vote in two years. Even my 21 year old daughter says this is such a faulty bill. According to her, "16 year olds just group think what their peers think or what they see on social media" and we know how wise and accurate social media is. At least she has wisdom!

If representatives believe 16 year olds are capable of making such important decisions, I would like to challenge them to allow a 16 year old to make their personal financial decisions, their child rearing decisions, their retirement decisions, law enforcement decisions, education decisions, ... I would not have given my 16 year olds that much authority. If you representatives would not do it for your personal lives, you should not do it for our State.

Going forward with this bill will also be an extreme waste of time and precious resources that could be well spent elsewhere.

Please vote "No" on HB 1280.

Mahalo

Lisa Poulos



**HB-1280**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 9:56:31 PM

Testimony for JUD on 2/1/2019 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Joseph Brown III	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-1280**

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 7:14:19 AM

Testimony for JUD on 2/1/2019 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Clarisse S. Ching Lavatai	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Kids generally not mature enough at this age.

**HB-1280**

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 1:37:37 PM

Testimony for JUD on 2/1/2019 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lucy Lee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Lucy Lee and I am 17 years old, and a senior at Kamehameha Schools, Kapā• lama Campus. I am a resident and future voter in H District 31.

I am writing in support of HB1280, which would lower the voting age to allow 16 and 17 year-olds to vote in local and state elections.

2 summers ago, I worked my first job at Punahou Schools. The following tax season, I was required to file taxes separate from my parents, and both state and federal taxes were removed from my paycheck. As a 16 year- old, I was held responsible to file my own taxes. But, I was unable to vote on any measures that would possibly affect the taxation of my paycheck.

At the age of 16, teenagers are allowed to get their licenses. When they get traffic violations or tickets, they are responsible to pay the fees and go to court. Because of this, I believe they should also have the ability to vote on the laws and measures that would affect the roads.

In addition to this, once you are registered to vote, you are more likely to do so. By allowing youth to register to vote at 16, they will be registered and may form good voting habits at 16. They will also be registered to vote before they go to college, allowing individuals to vote absentee once in college.

In conclusion, at 16, most teenagers are functioning members of society that have established opinions and voices. They are capable of making choices and should be able to vote to do so.

Mahalo nui loa for your support and consideration,

Lucy Lee

99-029 A Kauhale Street

Aiea HI 96701

**HB-1280**

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 2:22:14 PM

Testimony for JUD on 2/1/2019 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Anjali Joaquin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha kakou,

My name is Anjali Joaquin and I am 14 years old and a 9th grader at Kamehameha schools Maui I am a resident and future voter of Maui County.

I am writing in SUPPORT of SB 4/HB 1280, which would lower the voting age to allow 16 and 17 year-olds to vote in local and state elections.

I believe that they should lower the voting age to 16-17 years old because these teens in that age range are the future of our country, the people who will make our country what it is, I also believe that we as teens do have a voice, to say what we want and who we want in our legislature.

It is important that we increase the civic engagement of young people like me. I want to vote because I have a voice that should be heard teens like me have a voice that should be heard

Mahalo Nui Loa for your support and consideration,

Anjali Joaquin, 3349 Ki'i place Pukalani, Maui

Aloha Pumehana Kākou,

My name is Doulton-Lee Ho and I am an 18-year-old student at Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Campus. Though I was not eligible to vote in the previous election, I look forward to be an active member of the voting bloc in the Makakilo district.

I am writing in opposition of SB 4 / HB 1280, which would lower the voting age in order to allow 16 and 17-year-olds to vote in local and state elections. Though the position may be surprising from a student's perspective, I believe the position is for good reason.

It is nothing less than a shame that Hawai'i has the lowest voter turnout in the nation, but the solution to this problem is much more complex than simply introducing new voters. The lack of turnout in Hawai'i is a fundamental issue in the minds of Hawai'i citizens. We ought to be asking the question: "Why don't our citizens want to vote?" Simply allowing more people to vote is a cheap workaround to the greater problem that Hawai'i citizens *are not motivated* to vote. Growing habits of voting in youth and adults is not a matter of eligibility but of philosophy and mindset. These simple facts are validated when we consider that it is easier than ever to vote in Hawai'i, much easier than most other states for that matter, yet we still are ranked last in turnout. A comprehensive solution that actually addresses the core issue, perhaps concerning the date of our primary election in the presidential cycle or the lack of genuine change in our political system that is perceived by so many, is surely a more suitable, effective, and honorable path to pursue than to fool ourselves with progress.

Another question we ought to be considering is when adulthood and its responsibilities begin. There's actually not much that 16 or 17-year-olds can do: they can't drink alcohol, the vast majority don't pay taxes, they can't join the military, etc. Our country and state has repeatedly affirmed that the proper age for many of these is 18, not for arbitrary reasons but because it marks the beginning of independence for so many students: the end of high school, a shift from parents' protection, and a step into the real world. Voting is another right of passage that comes with adulthood, and most students recognize it as such. One poll found that a whopping 79% of students are in favor of keeping the voting age at 18.

I wanted nothing more than to vote in the previous election, to express my opinion on the state of affairs, but that does not mean that appeasing desires makes for good public policy. I truly admire the effort to garner the youth into politics, but this method of doing so is not only ineffective in reaching its purported goals but detrimental to the framework of adulthood and the legitimacy of voting seen in a state that needs those principles desperately. We should find ways to engage the youth because we truly are the future, but this proposal is one that I and many of my fellow students cannot support, so we respectfully oppose SB 4 / HB 1280.

Mahalo nui loa for your support and consideration,

Doulton-Lee Ho  
92-914 Welo St. Unit #77  
Kapolei, HI 96707

**HB-1280**

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 4:58:00 PM

Testimony for JUD on 2/1/2019 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Carla Allison	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The proposed change to the voting age in Hawai'i would allow more people impacted by decisions considered by Hawai'i voters to have a voice in the decision process. With only roughly 40% of Hawai'i residents voting, the voices of a group who actually want to show up and vote should be celebrated and given voting rights.

There is already in place a way for Hawaii's people to pre-register to vote so extending this right to 16 and 17 year olds should not be a significant challenge to implement.

At issue might be a question of competence. Noted PH.D. and one of the world's leading experts on adolescence, Laurence Steinberg is fully in favor of extending voting rights to 16 year olds. By age 16, "...adolescents can gather and process information, weigh pros and cons, reason logically with facts and take time before making decisions." Additionally, Hawai'i already offers deference to a wide range of deeply and powerfully important life decisions to those who have reached the age of 16. So in light of the involvement of our young people, the impact of decisions upon them, and current state of the law, there seems to be no question about competence either.

Therefore, there being no tangible impediment to implementation and no persuasive argument against competence, the measure should be moved on to a vote.

**HB 1280 Late**

**LATE**

**HB-1280**

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 8:58:34 PM

Testimony for JUD on 2/1/2019 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Connor Kalahiki	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Connor Kalahiki, and I am a 18 year-old Senior at Kamehameha Schools Kapālama campus. I am a resident and future voter in District 24.

I am writing in support of SB 4, which would lower the voting age to allow 16 and 17 year-olds to vote in local and state elections.

This past election cycle, I lead a voter drive on my campus in order to raise awareness on political issues and civic engagement. With this voter drive, no political views were shared, its purpose was purely to encourage students to become more politically aware and civically engaged. With the drive, we were able to register or pre-register to vote at least 60 students. At the conclusion of the drive, we took a group of eight 18-year old students to Honolulu Hale to vote on November 6th. While these results are indicative of a hopeful future in which more young people are interested in politics, it also reveals how limiting the current laws on voting age are. If the voting age for local elections were decreased to 16 and 17, then the process of encouraging youth civic participation would begin earlier in one's high school career, and more young people would register to vote. As a senior who was not 18 during the 2018 elections, I feel that my voice was suppressed because despite my interest in the betterment of my local community, I was unable to vote. Especially because I work and pay state and federal taxes, I feel that I deserve the right to have some say in how that money should be allocated. This sentiment is shared by many 16 and 17 year-olds as well because many kids start working at these ages.

If this amendment were to pass, it would inspire schools to push their students to become politically active. Currently, the 18-29 age group have the lowest reported voter



turnout. This problem is in large part due to the lack of civic engagement education in schools. With this amendment, schools would then be able to incorporate this type of education into the curriculum. This will then ripple out into a higher voter turnout for young voters.

It is imperative that we increase the civic engagement of young people such as me so as to raise the LĀ• hui. We are to be the future leaders of the community. The earlier we begin to participate actively in it, the better the community will be.

Mahalo nui loa for you support and consideration,

Connor Kalahiki, 45-708 Kamehameha HWY, KĀ• ne'ōhe, HI 96744

**LATE**

Aloha,

‘O wau o Kiare Cabanting. Ke hele nei wau i ke kula ki‘eki‘e o Kamehameha ma Maui a me hele wau ma ka papa ‘umikūmālua. Noho au ma ka H District 12 ma Makawao.

My name is Kiare Cabanting and I am 17 years old. I am a senior at Kamehameha Schools Maui. I am a resident and future voter in H District 12.

I am writing in support of SB 4/HB 1280 which would lower the voting age to allow 16 and 17-year olds to vote in local and state elections.

Hawai‘i has had a long history of losing their voice in the vast sea. Physiologically this has effective the identity of native Hawaiian youth. Starting to be civically engaged in local politics can assist youth to find their voice and identity.

This year I took a global studies class and had the opportunity to learn so much not only about national politics but how it compares to the rest of the world. In European countries students are taught to be politically aware and civically engaged increasing their ability to knowledgeablely vote. Allowing Hawai‘i youth to vote at the age of 16 can spark the fire early to use their democratic right of voting in turn increasing the range of young adults voting.

Lastly Hawai‘i youth should vote because the decisions made by representatives, senators, mayors, etc; will affect them and their futures. The systemic shambles that Hawai‘is government and representation is in can only be solved with new mind sets, not the same ones that created the mess. The direction that Hawai‘is is heading is opening doors for mainland families to move in and pushing local families out.

So whether it be the primary or general it is important that the age of Hawai‘i voters is lowered to help the state and its people as a whole. I want to vote to find my voice, my identity and help my people.

Mahalo ‘ia ‘oe no kou kokua a me ho‘ā‘o,

Kiare Cabanting  
759 Onipa‘a Pl  
Makawao HI 96768

**LATE**

**HB-1280**

Submitted on: 2/1/2019 2:47:09 AM

Testimony for JUD on 2/1/2019 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Mireille Ellsworth	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Hon. Rep. Lee, Rep. Buenaventura, and House Judiciary Committee,

As a high school teacher for nearly 20 years, I am in support of lowering the voting age in order to engage more citizens to participate in the voting process. Teenagers in school are studying the issues of their day and will be much more attentive to their studies knowing they can make an impact on their community when they have the opportunity to vote. Human development studies tell us (and as a teacher, I see it) that teenagers struggle with "delayed gratification." It is far less likely that they will feel empowered to participate in elections after they graduate from high school compared to getting them involved and in the habit while they are still in school. Knowing the idealism of teenagers, they will be much more likely to research the candidates and the issues while in high school than when they are working and dealing with the transition to college or adult life. Also, teenagers are unlikely to just vote the way their parents vote. Developmentally, they are at the more rebellious stage of life wanting to form their own opinions rather than blindly follow their families. (In fact, more adults I know cast ill-informed votes than teenagers would!)

Thank you,

Mireille Ellsworth,

Teacher,

Waiakea High School,

Hilo, Hawaii