



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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House Expands Voter Registration to 16-Year-Olds

SALEM – Oregon continues to lead the way in expanding voter access with the passage of [Senate Bill 802](#) today which gives 16-year-olds the ability to register to vote.

Under current Oregon law, an otherwise qualified person who is at least 17 years of age may pre-register to vote. This legislation will lower that to age 16 so that Oregon is able to include, as part of the Motor Voter law, the nearly 20,000 16-year-olds who are licensed in Oregon every year. Without this change, it could take another eight years before those individuals again interact with the Department of Motor Vehicles and are automatically registered.

Rep. Ann Lininger (D-Lake Oswego) was a chief sponsor of the bill and carried it on the floor.

“At a time of historic polarization and disenfranchisement, it is more important than ever for us to find ways to engage young people in the political process, and this bill takes an important step in making this happen,” Rep. Lininger said.

Currently, 11 states and the District of Columbia allow 16-year-olds to preregister to vote.

Oregon has long been at the forefront in expanding voter access with the first-in-the-nation vote-by-mail system in 1998 and the first-in-the-nation automatic voter registration bill, otherwise known as Motor Voter, passed in 2015.

Rep. Janeen Sollman (D-Hillsboro), a co-sponsor of SB 802, said this bill will give many more citizens the opportunity to cast their vote, when they turn 18, without undue burdens.

“This legislation is another example of Oregon leading the way to breaking down the barriers to voting,” Rep. Sollman said. “It is our duty to bring those who have been traditionally left out of the process into the conversation so that we have the best possible representation of our community in public offices in every corner of the state.”

House sponsors of the bill also included Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer (D-Portland), Rep. Sheri Malstrom (D-Beaverton), Rep. Pam Marsh (D-Ashland), Rep. Dan Rayfield (D-Corvallis), and Rep. Barbara Smith Warner (D-Portland).

Senate Bill 802 passed the House 37-12 and now heads to Gov. Kate Brown for her signature.

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