

# Student Voice, Student vote

## HB20-1149: 16-Year-Olds Voting In School District Elections

Rep. Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez | Sen. Dominick Moreno

**“The Student Voice, Student Vote Act”** strengthens CO's schools and democracy by empowering a new generation to vote in school elections that affect their every day lives.

### From the Student Voice

“The 16- and 17-year-olds who are voting now will continue to vote for the rest of their lives.”

**Celest H., DSST: Conservatory Green junior**

If students could vote, “I would hope that the [school board] candidates would have more responsibility for their actions.”

**Malachi Ramírez, DMLK junior**

“It’s a decision that is made for you, and you want to have a voice in it, but you can’t.”

**Madison Ordoñez Erives, Denver East senior**



### About the Legislation

**1. Empowers pre-registrants to vote in Title 22 elections only,**

which includes local & state school board, recalls of those boards, and school funding obligation questions like mill levy bonds.

**2. Makes 16 & 17 year olds "of full age" for the purposes of voting,**

giving them the power to sign their ballot, sign & carry petitions, and participate as election judges.

**3. Protects election transparency and security** by adding

mechanisms for election administrators to keep pre-registrant ballots secret while ensuring that election results can still be independently verified.

**4. Goes into effect in July 2021** in time for students to vote in the next round of school elections.

### How Will This Bill Help Colorado?

- + Amplify student voices, without tokenizing
- + Diversify electorate with youth perspective
- + Raise standards of candidate accountability
- + Boost elections access and transparency



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## Better voter turnout for all elections

Youth who are civically engaged are more likely to remain engaged throughout adulthood  
(Hart et al., 2007)

### “Trickle Up” Effect

Research shows that parents whose children vote are more likely to vote themselves  
(Dahlgaard, 2018)

### Increased Youth Voter Turnout

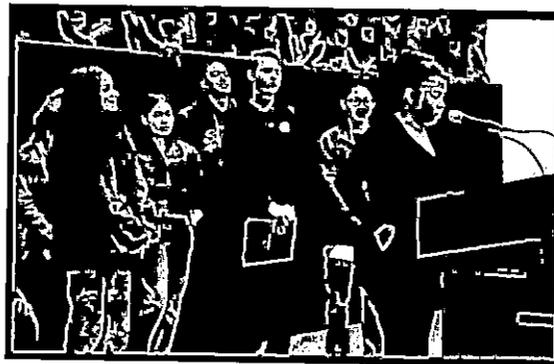
Many think young people are apathetic. But when they've been included, we have seen that 16 & 17 year olds actually vote in at higher rates than legal adults.  
(Wogan 2013)

## Students deserve a say in the education they receive

Students are the experts in their own education, and in Colorado public school experiences.

One school leader said, “Students . . . understand what’s wrong with education. But student voice is more than just information for adults; it’s a way to engage students in their education on their own terms.”  
(Fulle, 2016)

The largest group that votes in school elections (aged 65+) have not been in classrooms for decades



## Young voters are more stable and successful

Recent research suggests that young adults who vote have better health, higher education, and higher personal income four years beyond those who did not vote  
(Ballard et al., 2018)

Studies have shown that it’s easier for young people to get informed and figure out our own needs in stable environments, like school.  
(Zeglovits, 2013)

Studies also show that “16- and 17-year-olds come up with a vote choice that best represents their own political attitudes as often as older voters do.”  
(Wagner, Johann, & Kritzingner, 2012)

# Our Endorsements

Visit [www.studentvoicestudentvote.org](http://www.studentvoicestudentvote.org) for full citations and additional information + resources

