

Chair Nelson and members of the committee, my name is Annie Chen, and I am from Rochester MN. As a high school senior, my classmates and I share a collective sense of anxiety when we plan for our post-high school futures. Registering to vote before these big life changes makes exercising this right much more accessible. The HF 3021 bill offers the necessary time and assistance that young Minnesotans need while also elevating our democratic values to increase voter participation within a demographic that contains particularly low turnout.

According to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, the participation of eligible 18-29 year old Minnesotan voters was 65% in 2020. However, the Minnesota Secretary of State depicts the state's overall eligible voter turnout rate to be about 80% in that same year, meaning young voters voted at rates 15% lower than all eligible voters. These statistics are rather telling, but I do not believe that youth voter turnout is lower than average by choice.

Myself and other 17 year olds have garnered our own political beliefs that we strongly defend. I see this as a Mayo High School student who views many unofficial lunch-time policy debates and as a Climate Justice organizer who has met hundreds of teens across the state that are dedicated to the same social and environmental causes. To me, the HF 3021 is necessary with its accessible aid that promises to secure our rights and respect our political autonomy.