



## TESTIMONY **IN SUPPORT OF SJ 36**

RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ALLOW INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ATTAINED THE AGE OF SIXTEEN TO APPLY FOR ADMISSION AS ELECTORS AND TO BE SO ADMITTED UPON ATTAINING THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN.

February 7, 2025

**To:** Co-Chairs Sen. Flexer and Rep. Blumenthal, and Distinguished Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee

**From:** Connor Yakaitis, Deputy Director, CT League of Conservation Voters

Thank you for the opportunity to express **strong support of SJ 36** that would allow 16-year-olds to pre-register to vote. The CT League of Conservation Voters is a nonprofit dedicated to protecting our environment, protecting democracy and ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come. We believe that empowering young people to participate in democracy early is critical to addressing the urgent environmental challenges we face.

Climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss are not distant threats—they are unfolding crises affecting communities right now. The decisions made today will determine the future that today's youth will inherit. Young people have consistently demonstrated their passion for environmental protection, from leading climate strikes to advocating for clean energy policies. However, their voices remain underrepresented in electoral politics. By allowing 16-year-olds to pre-register to vote, we can help bridge this gap and create a pathway for them to engage meaningfully in civic life.

Research shows that when people are introduced to civic engagement early, they are more likely to become lifelong voters. At 16, young people are already learning about government, history, and civic responsibility in school. Pre-registration aligns with this education and ensures that when they turn 18, they are ready and able to exercise their right to vote. This is especially important for environmental policy, where long-term solutions require consistent voter engagement across generations.

Furthermore, the environmental policies adopted today will have profound and lasting effects on young people's futures. Allowing them to pre-register ensures that when they reach voting age, they will have a say in decisions about climate action, clean air and water protections, and

investments in sustainable infrastructure. Strengthening voter participation among younger generations will help build a government that is responsive to the environmental concerns they so passionately advocate for.

For these reasons, CTLCV strongly supports pre-registering 16-year-olds to vote. We urge this committee to pass this legislation and take an important step toward strengthening democracy and environmental stewardship for future generations.

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