

# CHILDREN'S VOTING COLLOQUIUM

Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Election Laws  
In Support of [S.412](#) / [H.670](#) An Act enabling children's right to vote  
By Mike Weimann, Co-founder of [KinderRÄchTsZÄnker](#)  
June 23, 2023

Chair Keenan, Chair Ryan, and members of the Joint Committee on Election Laws, I am Mike Weimann, a citizen of Berlin, Germany, and I support S.412 / H.670 An Act enabling children's right to vote. This bill was filed by a co-founder of the Children's Voting Colloquium, an international group of which I am a member. My message to you is that voting age injustice will not go away, and it will not go away until we fix it. You can take the first step in the right direction in Massachusetts by reporting this bill favorably and in a timely manner.

I have expertise in this democracy reform. Between 1992-2006, I served as the co-founder and clerk of [KinderRÄchTsZÄnker](#), a group of children activists mainly of the age between 11 and 17 years, which sued for the right to vote without an age limit before the German Federal Constitutional Court and before the Berlin Administrative Court. In 1998, marking the 50th anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, K.R.Ä.T.Z.Ä. published "Discrimination against the child - a human rights report" and presented it to the Federal President of Germany. In 2002, I published [Suffrage for Children: A Polemic](#), containing our most important arguments.

Although I'm a German citizen rather than an American citizen, it's important to me to testify to you, because both of our countries are part of the United Nations. The UN declared in 1948 that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (Article 1), that "everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives" and elections "shall be by universal and equal suffrage" (Article 21).

I supply you with our answers to frequently asked questions:

[Don't you think that politicians support your campaign simply because they expect to gain more votes for their party?](#)

[At what age should one be allowed to vote?](#)

[Do you want to send babies to the ballot-box then? That's impossible.](#)

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[Aren't children much too immature for voting?](#)

[Is it your opinion that young people know enough about politics to know what they're voting for?](#)

[Don't you think that it's too easy to influence children?](#)

[Isn't there a danger that parents will force their children to vote for a certain party?](#)

[Aren't you afraid that children do not know what they're doing and do not understand the importance of their decisions?](#)

[Don't you think that radical parties would profit from children's right to vote?](#)

[Aren't you afraid that the vote will make too high demands of children and burden them with too much responsibility?](#)

[People under 18 also have fewer duties, so why should they have more rights?](#)

[What do you think about the right to vote at the age of 16?](#)

[Are you in favor of young people being eligible to run for public office, too?](#)

[Elections don't change a thing anyway - people often say.](#)

[In case children got the right to vote in Germany, would they be allowed to participate in the elections for the European parliament, too?](#)

[Why aren't you campaigning for foreigners' right to vote?](#)

[What is your opinion of a family right to vote, or vote by proxy?](#)

[What made you deal with the subject of the right to vote?](#)

[Do you expect much of anything to improve by way of a children's right to vote?](#)

We believe there will be a lot of good indirect consequences for the whole of society when children are no longer denied the right to vote - towards more peacefulness and contentment of all humans, not just children.

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Again, I urge the Joint Committee on Election Laws to report **S.412 / H.670 An Act enabling children's right to vote** favorably and in a timely manner. Thank you for your consideration. You may email me with questions.

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