

HB7 Testimonies

Juneau, Alaska

Tasha Elizarde; Juneau; House District 33 and Senate District P. “My name is Tasha Elizarde from Senate District P, Juneau. About a week ago I turned 18 years old. The best gift that civically-minded 18-year-old me can get is the ability to vote, and being able to commemorate that moment with a selfie is an even better gift. The act of taking a photo with one’s ballot is borne out of excitement, and other teens in Juneau agree with me. After talking about HB7 with two government classes from Juneau-Douglas High School, the majority of students all believed that this bill deserves to be implemented. Plus, there are teenagers and other excited voters taking photos of themselves while in the ballot booth already, but because of how our current statute is phrased none of these voters know whether or not sharing their excitement with the world via text or social media is legal. The statute deserves to be clarified and updated with our changing times, and because ballot selfies are harmless and only work to promote civic engagement online, CSHB7 should be passed. Thank you.”

Janessa Goodman; Juneau; House District 33 and Senate District P. “My name is Janessa Goodman. I am in House District 33 and Sam Kito is my rep. I am in support of the HB7 bill. Selfies are becoming increasingly popular today in the modern world, and are a fun way to showcase an activity. It could inspire more people to vote as well. Not to mention the fact that literally anyone who would post a selfie most likely would talk about their political views online anyway. Sharing/taking a selfie is harmless. Plus, taking a selfie with the ballot does not mean you HAVE to showcase who you voted for, which means it is as safe as you allow it to be.”

Emme MacDonald; Juneau; House District 33 and Senate District P. “My name is Emme MacDonald. I am in House District 33. I recently turned 18 and was able to vote in the 2016 presidential election, and I think that it is important to be able to express my opinion and my vote in whatever way I choose to. In my generation, selfies are popular and harmless, even in the ballot box.”

Gillian Smith; Juneau; House District 33 and Senate District P. “My name is Gillian Smith, and I live in House District 33. In recent years we have been seeing a lack of youth voter turnout. This past election, social media was a powerful outlet for expression of political opinion. While that influence has both negative and positive effects, it is clearly a way to increase youth involvement in politics. Sharing ballot box selfies would be another way for youth to encourage their peers to use their rights and have a say in politics.”

Noah Williams; Juneau; House District 33 and Senate District P. “Allowing voters to capture and share photographs of their ballots would encourage voter turnout, a keystone of democracy, through the power of social media. Vote yes on House Bill 7.”

Raven Ward; Juneau; House District 34 and Senate District P. “I am Raven Ward, I live in house district 34 and I was recently informed about House Bill 7. As I am currently seventeen years of age I have not been able to vote yet, but I know the importance of voting and intend to participate as soon as I am able. I think it should be allowed to take pictures in a voting booth. It doesn't affect me how other people want to express their vote, and although I don't personally want to photograph myself in a voting booth, I think people should be able to decide that for themselves.”

Anchorage, Alaska

Carly Dennis; Anchorage. “As an 18 year-old senior in high school, I can appreciate the power of social media over young people. Youth represent a powerful and underrepresented demographic, and we need to do everything we can to mobilize my generation. I want to be able to document my participation in elections to help catalyze my peers into similar action. I think CSHB7 is a valuable bill that will help engage young people in our democracy.”

Craig, Alaska

Tristan Douville; Craig; House District 35 and Senate District R. “I'm writing in support of HB7 because I believe that we can increase voter turnout by allowing voters to take pictures with their ballots. I think that seeing a picture of a colleague voting would inspire others to get out and vote.”