



MOTION:

‘The voting age should be lowered to 16 in ROI/NI’

In 2021 a bill was introduced to Dail Éireann calling for a referendum on lowering the voting age in Ireland to 16. This was one of many proposals over the years from youth representatives and political parties to seek such a change to the Irish constitution. More and more young people are engaging with current affairs, looking to be involved in decision-making and taking action to make their voices heard, such as attending the recent climate-focused school strikes.

However, registering to vote and taking an interest in politics is considered a rite of passage in adulthood rather than during our teenage years. Should it be legal for those aged 16 in Ireland to cast a vote?

PROPOSITION (Agree) ✓	OPPOSITION (Disagree) X
At age 16, people should have a voice in the laws that affect their lives – shouldn’t they have a say in the future of their country?	Those under the age of 18 are considered children in the eyes of the law – surely they are entitled to enjoy the freedom of being young without the responsibility of having to vote?
Young people are expected to complete state examinations, are eligible to work, learn how to drive and make decisions about their prospective career paths – surely they should be entrusted with voting?	The 18-24 age group has the lowest voter turnout in Ireland – why would changing the voting age to 16 change this?
Lowering the voting age to 16 will strengthen civic education – won’t this be positive in the long run?	Many 16 and 17 year olds are not interested in politics and current affairs – how are they expected to make an informed vote?

Research Links:

- <https://trello.com/b/ligsgZ1J/concern-primary-debates>
- <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> - noted links to SDGs 4, 10, 16
- <https://www.youth.ie/get-involved/campaigns/vote-at-16/>
- <https://spunout.ie/voices/opinion/disagree-lowering-the-voting-age-16>
- <https://www.procon.org/headlines/lowering-the-voting-age-top-3-pros-and-cons/>
- <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/should-16-and-17-year-olds-be-allowed-to-vote-here-s-what-they-think-1.4864451>
- <https://www.rte.ie/news/politics/2022/0623/1306565-voting-age/>
- <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/politics/arid-40902614.html>
- <https://www.rte.ie/news/election-2020/2020/0209/1114255-voter-turnout/>
- <https://tsrmatters.com/blog/the-voting-age-should-stay-at-18-says-students/>