

To whom it may concern,

HB 2824 is a unique way for youth to become involved in the government. When youth are involved in the government and lawmaking process, they gain valuable insights into how our nation is run. Establishing the Governor's Youth Council is an opportunity to provide a unique civics education to a group of young people. This will benefit them both now and in the future.

In the future, these youth, because they are informed about the government, are more likely to become informed citizens. They are more likely to vote and make educated voting choices, based on personal research. They are also more likely to be open to other points of views and they are more likely to be know how to communicate their views to their elected officials.

Youth are a crucial demographic because their experiences now will shape the nation in years to come. However, for the majority of their youth they are unable to vote, so they are often forgotten about. They are not given a seat at the table, looked to for their opinion, or engaged in the process. If this generation is not given opportunities to be involved in the government as youth, many will not become involved as adults.

Youth are not included in discussions about issues that directly impact them, like climate change, education funding, and gun control. They have marched for these issues, they have lobbied for these issues, they have gone on strike for these issues, and yet they are still not directly involved in the legislation addressing these issues.

Youth will greatly benefit from a Governor's Youth Council. They will gain first-hand experience in the legislative process. They will learn about Oregon's government and be given opportunities to meet and work with elected officials they look up to. They will also be able to improve their leadership, research, and discussion skills.

This bill will not only positively affect youth. Policy-makers, legislators, and other elected officials would gain a valuable new perspective from the Youth Council. This perspective, which is often forgotten about, will help make legislation more well-rounded. It will be more likely to benefit the entire community, not just sections.

The success, education, and involvement of a country's youth directly correlates with the success of a country itself. Youth who are given opportunities to be directly involved in the government and learn about it through first-hand experiences, are more likely to remain involved as they grow older. This continued involvement is crucial for our democracy. This is why I urge you to pass HB 2824.

Thank you,
Eddy Binford-Ross
Age 15
South Salem High School