

Submitter: Amanda Hudson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Dear Committee on Ways & Means,

I am writing to encourage your investment of \$1.2 million in the Youth Voice, Youth Vote Participatory Budgeting process currently occurring in Senate Districts 24 & 25, and House District 50. Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a emerging tool with a clear track record and an abundance of research that shows PB leads to increased civic participation, increased equity in the investment of public funds, and increased trust and familiarity community members have in their elected leaders. Research from the process in New York has even shown an increase in voter turnout by those who have previously participated in PB.

Over the last year, the Youth Voice, Youth Vote process has engaged hundreds of youth from East Multnomah and North Clackamas County in designing and researching projects for COVID relief and recovery. Their passion and willingness to share their lived experience has been invigorating. Considering that these are youth who face many systemic barriers, such as living in neighborhoods that haven't historically received their fair share of public investment, and that many of them represent identities that have been subject to historic and current discrimination based on their race/ethnicity, income level, or immigration status, their commitment and dedication is evidence that they are well on their way to being the leaders of tomorrow, and the voices that we badly need to hear in spaces of governance. Investing in Youth Voice, Youth Vote will ensure that these youth continue to be leaders and advocates for their community, as well as ensure that they are willing to continue to put their faith in institutions that have not historically represented them and their families.

At a time when a faith in democracy is of national concern, investing in PB is a tangible way to strengthen our institutions, while also building the next generation of leaders.

By investing \$1.2 million to continue this project, will not only result in high-quality, community-informed projects, but it will also continue to build on the strengths and assets of a community-led process that already has the momentum of community trust and support. Youth are committed and are ready for the chance to continue their hard work and dedication. We encourage you to invest in order to continue to innovate Oregon's reputation as a leader in civic engagement, and to create a meaningful and lasting impact in the community.

Sincerely,
Amanda Hudson