

Submitter: Danielle Maillard
On Behalf Of: Oregon Walks
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

From: Danielle Maillard
On Behalf Of: Oregon Walks
Committee: Joint Ways and Means Committee
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Re: Support for \$1.2 million in the Youth Voice, Youth Vote Participatory Budgeting

May 3, 2023

Dear Committee on Ways & Means,

My name is Danielle Maillard and I am the Walking Programs Manager for Oregon Walks, a non-profit focused on pedestrian safety and advocacy. I am here to encourage you to invest \$1.2 million in the Youth Voice, Youth Vote Participatory Budgeting process. Participatory Budgeting (PB) is an emerging tool with a clear track record. There is an abundance of research which shows that 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.

The majority of my work takes place in East Portland, where I support families with the barriers they face in regards to unsafe routes to school. This morning, I was at a city council meeting supporting the Parkrose and Argay communities as they urged the council to stop the construction of a polluting freight warehouse on a frequently used route to Parkrose schools. Mayor Wheeler claimed himself that it is difficult to mitigate the inherent conflict between private interests and community voices. We have to have better systems in place for this mitigation so private interests do not win 100% of their fights. We must have more democratic processes.

Over the last year, the Youth Voice, Youth Vote PB process has engaged hundreds of youths from East Multnomah and North Clackamas County in designing and researching projects that will build up their communities. The students participating in PB are the very students that live in neighborhoods that lack adequate public investment, and Youth Voice, Youth Vote has catalyzed a sense of leadership among youth that is very limited in the current decision-making systems that are set up today.

PB has been implemented in over 11,000 communities around the world, and is an incredible opportunity to bring communities together while making difficult decisions, rather than creating division and resentment. It brings humanity into the budgeting

process, and an investment in a 2nd cycle of Youth Voice, Youth Vote will not only be beneficial to youth in East Portland, but beneficial to all Oregonians.

Sincerely,
Danielle Maillard