

B Genduso
2/7/24

In Support of SB 1552

An Act to Establish a Youth Advisory Group

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and members of the committee, my name is B Genduso and I am here today to speak in favor of SB 1552, specifically the youth advisory group policy. To start, I want to tell you all about myself. I am a 16 year old student athlete at Century High School in Hillsboro OR. I am gender fluid and queer and I use any pronouns. I am currently involved in extracurriculars like the Hillsboro Youth advisory council, and the Oregon association of student councils (as the Student Executive Council president). During my time serving these positions I have worked to change lots of policies and cultural disadvantages locally, statewide, and nationally so I want to give a perspective of some of the possibilities this bill can bring to life.

Through Oregon Association of Student Councils I have had the opportunity to connect with students with strong passions from all over Oregon, I have helped students better their community (helping advocate for diversity and opportunities) and I am currently participating in a young philanthropist program to help non profit organizations that myself and other council members are passionate about. I have also met speakers who have helped spark change in myself and others like the First Lady of Oregon, and I have also had the opportunity to testify and advocate for bills and legislative action.

With Hillsboro's Youth Advisory Council I have had the opportunity to see the plastic bag ban be put into effect, I have renovated and revamped clothing closets all through the Hillsboro school district along with other service projects, as well as creating youth and government relationships with representatives, senators, mayors, city councilors, and government employees. I have also traveled to Washington DC to represent Oregon Youth and learn about grants and opportunities at the National League of Cities , and I have been facilitated in the process of connecting with youth leaders at Oregon Youth Summits. The youth advisory council has created a space where adults truly listen and give one the space needed to push for policy and action that is important to youth.

With my experience I have grown to be a more understanding or empathic person and I have learned so much more about my passions than I could have dreamed. Through these organizations I have been able to enact change from a youth perspective which would have been extremely difficult without the support I received. I have been able to speak my mind and advocate for youth all over Oregon yet my peers and I still face a fair share of roadblocks. The things I am involved in (Oregon Association of Student Councils, Youth Advisory Council) are really smaller, more niche versions of the proposed Oregon Youth Advisory Group, so just imagine what that group could accomplish If passed. This bill would change the lives of every single person in Oregon. It would educate students and create a safer space for queer youth

like myself, Black Indigenous People Of Color youth and all students with a passion. It would also give officials consistent youth feedback from a diverse and consistent group, which as you may know is critical to make change.

As a first step to bettering the recognition we allow our youth, I urge you to vote YES on senate bill 1552. For the current students fighting for a voice, and for the future of oregon.