

It is crucial to create an institutionalized council to reflect the voices of youth. How can constituents trust lawmakers to pass bills, ranging from free menstrual products in schools to increasing teachers of color, without a youth perspective? By creating an institutionalized council, lawmakers can more directly reach out to youth, who are knowledgeable, passionate, and ready to testify.

- Sidarth Gazula, senior at Wayzata High School

The Minnesota Youth Council not only gave me a platform to voice my stories but it allowed me to have a direct seat at the table of systemic change. MYC has informed me about the political process in Minnesota and has provided me with opportunities to support legislation that can truly bring the change that is needed in my community and beyond.

-Sarah Ragoonanan, Junior at Hiawatha Collegiate High School Minneapolis

The creation of the Minnesota Youth Advisory Council is imperative to allow our legislators to pass just and effective legislation. The people who are impacted by various educational legislation deserve to have significant input in what is passed. Youth voice reflects the ideas of the future generation, and is necessary in order for our state to move forward and make progress concerning social issues.

- Sahasra Molleti, Junior at Eastview High School

As a member of the Minnesota Youth Council, I have seen firsthand the positive impact that having a youth voice in government can have. The council provides a platform for young people to be heard and actively engage in shaping the policies that affect their lives. Through my experiences on the council, I have gained valuable skills and knowledge in leadership, civic engagement and policy-making.

As a person of color, I understand the importance of having diverse perspectives represented in decision-making. Growing up, I often felt like my community's needs and concerns were not being taken into account by those in power. This is why I joined the youth council- I knew that the most important decisions that directly affected us were made without any input or involvement from youth, particularly youth of color.

-Noah Yehalashet, Junior at Woodbury Math and Science Academy

The Youth Council not only allowed me to be around other like minded youth my age who want to make a difference, but also gave me and everyone else a chance to go out and actually do what we strive to do most; change.

-Mushtaq Hagi, Junior at Columbia Heights High School

I believe that the Minnesota Youth Council brings young people together to reach a common goal, it provides a consistent form of support for these young people that have big dreams and even bigger voices. Due to the time I have so far served on the council, I have been able to do things I believed to be unreachable or unimaginable.

-Maryjane A. Iteghete, Junior at Park Center High School

Since joining the Minnesota Youth Council this past August, I have seen the immense work and progress that the Minnesota Youth Council has put forth to better not only the youth of Minnesota but the state as a whole.

-Marsara Dunbar, Senior at Parnassus Preparatory School

Installing the Minnesota Youth Advisory Council as an established state-funded organization will support the work that youth on the council can accomplish for decades to come...further proving that Minnesota not only recognizes the power of youth voice, but decisively acts to ensure its place in government.

-Kiran Leonard, Junior at Stillwater Area High School

The creation of a Minnesota Youth Advisory Council would allow students to be more informed and involved in what is happening in government, and to have power in the decision making process which affects our lives. MYC helps with encouraging political involvement, improving capabilities for youth leadership, and generates youth participation directly in the government. All of these help in creating a stronger, more educated society of young people, that will not only have these improvements during their students lives, but will take these lessons into adulthood as well.

-Dominick Lund-May, Sophomore at Fairmont Junior/Senior High School

From 2016-2018, I had the incredible opportunity of representing the 4th Congressional District on The Minnesota Youth Council. I was so proud of my role and so excited to be involved on legislative issues that mattered to me. Above all, I felt so lucky to be a part of a group of young people from across the state that were committed to fighting to get our voices heard. It was a lot of work and responsibility for a high school student, but during my time on MYC I saw the students around me and on the council take the lead on nationwide issues.

-Elena Medeiros, St. Paul (MYC alum)

There is no better way to learn about democracy and the systems we use to govern our society than to be a part of that process. I served on the Minnesota Youth Council (MYC) during my junior and senior year of high school, and it was a transformative experience. I applied for the MYC because I was interested in government and community service. I came out of the Council as an empowered citizen of my state with the tools, understanding, and passion for affecting change through legislation and democracy.

--Hufsa Ahmed, St. Paul (MYC alum)