

I would first like to thank the committee and chair for hearing this bill. I would like to tell you about the reasons why this bill should be supported, first through some background information on Minnesota Youth Council and what it does for the members and for other youth, and then why it is necessary for the organization to have the support outlined in this bill. In my time with the MYC, I have learned about many of the different reasons for joining the MYC. I joined for multiple reasons, first, because I wanted to learn more about the structure of government, and second, because I wanted to help correct some of the issues that I felt that my community was facing. The MYC was a chance to accomplish both of these ambitions, and to meet and collaborate with others who had goals and problems they felt that needed to be addressed also. In my time at MYC I have been able to talk with partners like the Environmental Quality Board, research and support bills promoting clean energy and water, and work with other students on things such as bill support, community engagement, establishing partnerships, and supporting our communities.

The MYC teaches skills that are useful in professional settings, not just politics. It teaches students how to set achievable goals, communicate with business partners and organizations, and how to collaborate and communicate effectively. However, it also teaches many politics focused skills as well, such as how to communicate with your Senators and Representatives, how to garner support for a bill through legislators or partner organizations, how to testify before a committee, and what kinds of questions we should ask to determine whether or not we support a bill. By allowing youth to voice their opinions on what needs to be done to improve our lives, the MYC gives students a direct line of communication with the government. Without the MYC, youth voices become seriously distant from the discussion, and it becomes incredibly difficult for young people to have a say in the government.

That is why it is imperative that you support HF 158/SF 194. Without the MYC, student voices are silenced in government. With government funding and support, it not only allows the MYC to continue but to also grow and expand. It allows us 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. Thank you.

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