

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. Whether it was marching to the capital to demand gun control legislation or leading walk-outs to call for an end to over-policing in our schools, the students in this group had the opportunity to be true leaders.

It made me so proud to have been a part of a group that fought so hard for what we believed in and I am even more proud that I got to see the impact that we had. Gun control legislation is finally moving forward around us and some states have moved to ban the sale of automatic weapons. After more than five years of student-led protests, my local school district voted to remove police officers from our schools and terminated the School Resource Officer position in response to ongoing student pressure. None of this would have moved forward without our voices calling for a change and organizing within our communities to make ourselves heard. The Minnesota Youth Council was essential in bringing young people together to make a difference and I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to learn so much from the experience.

-Elena Medeiros, St. Paul