



To: The Vermont House and Senate Committees on Appropriations
From: Harmony Belle Devoe, Council Chair of The Vermont State Youth Council,
harmony.devoe@vtstateyouthcouncil.org
Date: February 20, 2025
Re: FY 2026 Budget

Hello! My name is Harmony Belle Devoe, I live in Warren, and I am the Council Chair of the Vermont State Youth Council. I ask that funding for the Vermont State Youth Council please be continued.

The State Youth Council was formed in 2022, with the purpose of providing “young Vermonters an official means of providing advice on policies that impact young persons in Vermont”. This was to ensure “Vermont’s children and young people achieve their potential”, and that “Vermont has open, effective, and inclusive government”.

The Council is currently composed of 26 youth. The Council consists of the following 5 committees, each tasked with providing recommendations that apply to their topics; Youth Voice, Education, Equity and Anti-Racism, Climate Change, and Youth Mental Health. Each committee has a Chair, who are also members of the Executive Committee, which creates agendas and decides priorities for the Council.

Since the Council has been formed, we have written numerous bylaws to outline how the State Youth Council should work. We have also presented recommendations to the General Assembly, and the Governor. We have shared knowledge, and learned from, multiple legislators during our Zoom meetings. We’ve also hosted one public hearing, to better understand what topics Vermonters are wanting legislation to address. Additionally, we have sent out a survey to Vermont students, so the Council can aim to represent all Vermont students’ opinions, not just those of our members. We also plan on providing more testimony on bills we agree, and disagree with.

The State Youth Council is important for the State of Vermont. When working in a system where adults are given the most power, it is important that youth have the opportunity to have their opinions taken into account when legislative decisions are being made that affect youth’s lives.

Youth make up approximately 24% of Vermont’s population. If they were not rightfully represented in the legislature through the State Youth Council, this would mean a large number of Vermonters affected by legislators’ decisions, wouldn’t have a say in it.

I ask you to continue funding for the Vermont State Youth Council in order to allow Vermont youth to work with legislators to advance the State of Vermont.
Thank you.