



To: The Vermont House and Senate Committees on Appropriations

From: Nisha Hickok, Equity and Anti-Racism Committee Chair, Vermont State Youth Council,
nisha.hickok@vtstateyouthcouncil.org

Date: February 20, 2025

Re: FY 2026 Budget

My name is Nisha Hickok. I am from Hinesburg, Vermont and I am a member of the Vermont State Youth Council, serving as the Equity and Anti-Racism Committee Chair. Today I am writing as a request to *please ensure there is funding to support the Vermont State Youth Council.*

As a young person, who just a year ago made the decision to *stay* in Vermont to continue my education at Middlebury College, I am often asked: why are youth leaving Vermont? The question is usually underpinned with the intent of understanding what can be done to keep youth here, because how can we grow and thrive as a state without a population invested in our future success? The answer to this question is simple. Engage youth. Give them a platform to express what they feel is missing. Provide opportunities to find middle ground between expanding our systems and communities while preserving the traditions that make us so distinctive.

This is what the Vermont State Youth Council is about. It's about involving youth in our government and creating an investment that lasts a lifetime. The Vermont State Youth Council is a diverse group of young people from every corner of the state, all with one thing in common: a deep desire and passion to make Vermont the best place it can be, for all people, on all fronts. We represent a larger population of young Vermonters who want to live in a place with a thriving economy, education system, environment, and so much more. The Vermont State youth council is constantly paying attention to the desires of our peers and crafting creative solutions and recommendations to implement these changes. We are a group of youth who love Vermont so dearly we are doing everything in our power to make it the place it deserves to be. The Vermont State Youth Council cannot continue our important work without your financial support in 2026. So, I ask you to please consider how an investment in the Vermont State Youth Council is an investment in the future of Vermont and *please ensure there is funding to support the Vermont State Youth Council.*

Nisha Hickok

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