



To: House and Senate Appropriations Committees
From: Ezra Tane, Education Committee member of Vermont State Youth Council,
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Date: 2/18/2026

Hello Senators and Representatives,

My name is Ezra Tane, I am 14 years old, and I am a freshman who attends Hartford high school in Hartford Vermont. I am on the education committee as part of the Vermont State Youth Council. Thank you for considering my testimony. Today, I would like to ask for \$140,000 in State funds for the Vermont State Youth Council so we can keep operating and representing the youth of Vermont.

Being a member of the Vermont state youth council means so much to me because it gives me the ability to speak freely about what I believe in and gives me the chance to help the youth of Vermont to live the best possible lives they can. Being a council member gives me a wide platform throughout Vermont and with that platform I can promote everything I stand for, such as a clean and healthy lifestyle, mental wellness and mental health, and spreading positivity and kindness throughout our state. Giving youth the voice they deserve is so important for so many reasons. It is essential for youth to be able to discuss issues using the terms of their choosing and be able to speak freely to fellow council members, their peers, and to policymakers. By giving us funding your giving youth the chance to voice their opinions in the state government.

Also, adults cannot connect with kids as well or effectively as kids can connect with themselves. Adults just don't understand, times are constantly changing and only kids can truly understand their peers. So you can't expect to solve youth issues if you have a bunch of adults talking about, and advocating for stuff that will "help the youth", you have to let youth speak for themselves and their peers. If you do that, then I promise you that you will see a positive change in the youth of Vermont. But being a council member is so much more than its title, it's a chance to give youth a voice, a chance to tell legislators, "you will hear us, we will not be silenced", it's a chance to speak up for what's right, and all we need is a chance. There are so many youth voices In Vermont, voices that don't get heard, voices that are too afraid to speak up, and voices that don't have the platform they should. But we have the platform and we have the chance to speak to our state government for the youth of Vermont. So please help us, we ask for the \$140,000 for not just the council, but for every youth voice in Vermont that may be too afraid to speak up, and for the voices of the youth that don't get heard.

Thank you.