



*An Initiative of Minnesota Alliance With Youth*

Dear Representative Mariani, Ms. Hernandez Espinosa, and Ms. Cameron,

Thank you for attending the Minnesota Youth Council Committee Legislative Hearing on April 20th, 2018 and presenting HF 3594, regarding the Teachers of Color Act as well as an increase in American Indian teachers. We greatly appreciate your time put towards listening to youth and our feedback on this legislation. The MYCC voted unanimously in favor of this bill, with 16 votes in the affirmative.

There were many aspects of this bill that the MYCC felt would positively impact Minnesota. For example, we thought it was insightful to acknowledge how *all* students would benefit from diverse teachers, showing that this bill will have a widespread effect. We also liked that funding would go towards pathways to teaching and retaining teachers, as this would ensure that teachers of color not only enter the education sector, but can stay for the long term to help students. MYCC members also appreciated the inclusion of the provision that would support Grow Your Own programs and support middle and high school students. Support came from student experience of being in environments where teachers of color are essentially nonexistent (approximately three to four percent) at their own schools. Additionally, students have noticed that curriculum at schools tends to be eurocentric, with history being shown through only one perspective. Increasing teacher diversity would open the platform for dialogue from multiple angles, ensuring that the curriculum is also diversified.

The MYCC would love to see this bill or other pieces of similar legislation increase diversity to not only teachers, but curriculum as well. Some of the language in the bill was also a bit vague. How do teachers incorporate "culturally relevant" studies into their classes? Some members also expressed concern that this bill doesn't provide for the safety and comfort of teachers of color, so much as economic motivation to enter the field. People of color won't be motivated to become teachers, especially in areas where schools' student body and teaching staff are predominantly white. We would like to learn more about your efforts to recruit and retain teachers of color in Minnesota. We feel that representation is crucial, especially in a high school environment.

Thank you for taking the time to present this bill to the Minnesota Youth Council Committee. We appreciate your support with advocating for teacher diversity within schools. We look forward to hearing more on this bill and continuing to support it.

Sincerely,

The Minnesota Youth Council Committee