



An Initiative of Minnesota Alliance With Youth

Dear Representative Jordan,

Thank you for attending the Minnesota Youth Council Committee (MYCC) hearing on April 3rd, 2022, pertaining to House File 550: The Climate Justice Education Bill. We wholly appreciate your commitment to the importance of youth voice throughout the drafting process of this piece of legislation. Furthermore, the youth council believes that climate justice education is foundational and an instrumental piece in solving the climate crisis and legislation surrounding this issue is only strengthened when youth voice is included, and we commend you for focusing on this throughout the legislative process. House File 550 passed strongly through the Youth Council Committee, and we welcome and encourage further partnership with our body as we continue to fight against the climate crisis.

The MYCC recognizes the need to educate youth on the disparate impacts that anthropogenic climate change has on marginalized communities. The MYCC's support for HF 550 stems from its requirement for climate justice education within public school curriculums, specifically how it addresses the disproportionate impacts of climate change on communities across Minnesota. We find the implementation of a "model program" beneficial in that it allows schools the flexibility to weave climate justice education into their already established curriculums and tie curriculum directly to local issues. We support this bill's requirement that instruction on climate change be "scientifically accurate" and that the commissioner consult with the Pollution Control Agency and other qualified organizations when building the model program. We believe that this language is especially important to ensure that students are given accurate information when being instructed on the highly-politicized subject of climate justice.

While the MYC is in support of HF 550, we believe there are improvements that could strengthen this legislation. First, the proposal of a climate justice education bill without a fiscal note attached may decrease the importance and urgency of climate justice education, as without funding school districts that may otherwise be committed to climate justice education may not have the means to invest. Furthermore, this goes against the Youth Council's philosophy on the creation of unfunded mandates. Secondly, we believe that there should be more specificity on what climate justice curriculum teaches our students through grades K-12. While we believe climate justice curriculum should be grade specific and aware of its audience, that shouldn't inhibit schools' ability to teach wide-ranging subject material no matter the grade level. Additionally, the MYC wants to ensure that this curriculum is directed not just an elective, environmentally focused courses, which are often taken by few, mostly White and wealthy students; instead, we believe that this legislation should specify that accurate climate justice education spans across all course and content areas.

Thank you again for your time and work in presenting this legislation to the Youth Council Committee. We continue to appreciate your work advocating for students and the environment, and hope to continue supporting HF 550 throughout this and future sessions.

Sincerely,
The Minnesota Youth Council Committee

