



*An Initiative of Minnesota Alliance With Youth*

Dear Representative Urdahl,

Thank you for attending the Minnesota Youth Council Committee (MYCC) hearing on April 26th, 2021, on House File 562: an act to establish the civics standard requirement. We respect your appreciation of youth engagement in the civic process. As the Minnesota Youth Council, we believe it is integral to include youth voices, and we commend you for giving young people a voice in this decision-making process. With that, the bill passed unanimously through the Minnesota Youth Council Committee, with 14 unanimous affirmative votes. We value your time spent with us on this bill, and hope to partner with you on future legislative endeavors.

As previously mentioned, the MYCC is in support of this policy. We believe that this bill gives a name to the important standard of civics education, that while not explicitly stated in our current standards, is vital to the education of young people. This particularly impacts eleventh and twelfth grade students who are months away from being treated as young adults, both in society and by the law. The importance of this bill, and general knowledge of the functions of civics, will create a more just and engaged society. Additionally, we commend your efforts to include young people like the MYCC on this bill, demonstrating the importance of young people's participation in our civic processes.

Still, the MYCC believes that a blindspot in this legislation is that there is no specific curriculum or specific standards for what schools have to teach students, potentially resulting in the loss of important information or instruction. It is also necessary to note that political and other biases may influence how civics education material is taught, further strengthening the need for a more specific and measurable set of standards in this academic area. Having distinct requirements or benchmarks, whether assessed at a state or district level, would allow students to fully succeed in their education while ensuring that certain subjects or topics do not fall through the cracks. These standards, alongside information on voter registration and simple, immediate ways to engage students' civic duties and responsibilities, are more holistic, equitable, and feasible ways to approach this legislation, only strengthening the impact it may have.

In summary, we support this bill and push for more clarity in the language. Thank you again for taking the time to present HF375 to the Minnesota Youth Council Committee. The council appreciates your continued support of youth and student experience. We look forward to continued collaboration, if you need anything let us know.

Sincerely,

The Minnesota Youth Council Committee