



Support for HF 3853

To whom it may concern:

This brief letter is in support for HF 3853, which establishes a Minnesota Youth Advisory Council. Including young people in the process of determining policies that affect young people, is the right thing to do and it is a fiscally sound decision.

As a trained psychologist, I have committed my life to ensuring all young people have the support they need for healthy development into adulthood. It has become abundantly clear that we have neglected the needs of our young people for generations.

We are now seeing the outcome of those decisions with an increase of young people reporting mental health concerns, suicidal ideation, young people experiencing homelessness, and the recent uptick in crime committed by young people in our communities.

I'm the executive director of the Youth Intervention Programs Association (YIPA). Our association has over 270 youth-serving organizations and it is common practice for our members to include young people in their programming decisions, because they know it works. Inclusion, representation, and participation by young people make policies and programs meant to support them much more effective.

As an association, we support including young peoples' voice with intentionality. This provides them leadership opportunities and promotes healthy development, and it also strengthens the decisions made by any entity that has influence over policies that affect them.

We stand in support of HF 3853 as a means to formalize young people into our state government process. This will ensure that their voices are heard and state policies will positively impact them, and taxpayer money will be spent wisely.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Meunier". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Meunier
Executive Director
MN Youth Intervention Programs Association