

SB 1220 Relating to a Youth Advisory Committee

Committee on Human Services

TO: Chair Senator Josh Green

Vice Chair Senator Stanley Chang

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony in SUPPORT of SB 1220. As a society we always say we should leave our state, land, country, and society a better place for our children. I strongly believe in this value, though, I also believe it would be great if we could include our youth in this process. I support this bill SB 1220, because it gives our youth a great way to get involved and have a voice in change. Our youth have such unique views and innovative ideas, making a space for these youth in policy creates amazing potential for Hawaii's future. Thank you again for hearing my support for this bill.

Sincerely,

Jaime DeGuzman

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Monday, February 6, 2017

Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services:

I am writing to register support for Senator Chang's SB1220 which would establish a statewide Youth Commission. I am the Director of the San Francisco Youth Commission ([www.sfgov.org/yc](http://www.sfgov.org/yc)). San Francisco's 17 person body, made up of youth ages 12-23, is living proof of the efficacy of youth empowerment and engagement. Since the Youth Commission was created as a chartered city commission in 1995, youth commissioners have been instrumental in advising the local government on how to best serve young people. Youth commissioners regularly conduct community outreach, afterschool hearings, youth town halls, and focus groups to solicit youth feedback on legislation under consideration by our Board of Supervisors, as well as to prepare an annual set of Budget & Policy Priorities.

Some of the SFYC's policy accomplishments from the last three years include:

- Focusing the city's attention on the needs of underserved transitionally aged youth (16-24), and ultimately establishing their inclusion in the City's Children & Youth Fund
- Successfully establishing a free transit pass for low and moderate income youth and decriminalizing youth fare evasion
- Passing an agreement between the police department and school district that radically reduced the number of arrests made on school campuses
- Establishing protocols for supporting children at the time of their parent's arrest and services and jail visiting policies for youth with incarcerated parents
- Expanding summer job opportunities for youth 16-24
- Establishing and streamlining access to legal services and application grants for youth applying for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
- Expanding access to voter pre-registration opportunities for 16-17 year old students

Youth Commissions also serve to develop the skills and leadership of diverse groups of young people. In the last year alone, we saw the election of five our Youth Commission alumni as Mayor of the City of Berkeley, Member of the Community College Board of Trustees, Vice President of the SF Democratic County Central Committee, Student Trustee to the University of California Board of Regents, and State Assembly Delegate. Dozens more alumni, are serving as staff in local government agencies, are working as educators, or are leading local non-profits.

I have witnessed the positive impact of youth engagement on government affairs. Young people offer a valuable perspective and new energy to policymakers. Policymakers benefit from working with advisors capable of representing and mobilizing other young people, who may not otherwise have the access or capacity necessary to voice their needs. If there are youth attempting to bridge that gap, they should be considered. This diversity of perspectives and experiences reflected in government can only serve to increase the responsiveness and relevancy of initiatives undertaken by lawmakers. Congratulations on considering this novel proposal and I strongly and humbly urge your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Adele Carpenter'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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