

05/04/2023

Lisbeth Marquez-Delgado, Youth Voice Youth Vote Participatory Budgeting

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the Committee,

My name is Lisbeth Marquez-Delgado and I have been a resident of Outer East Portland my entire life. I am a member of the Advocacy and Communications Cohort with Youth Voice Youth Vote, which is the first participatory budgeting process in Oregon. Today, I am asking the Joint Ways and Means Committee to invest in youth and to invest in East Multnomah and North Clackamas Counties by allocating \$1.2 million dollars for a second cycle of Youth Voice Youth Vote Participatory Budgeting.

The first cycle of Youth Voice Youth Vote, or YV², was funded by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars allocated by Senator Jama, Senator Gorsek, and Representative Ruiz. I have been involved in various roles with YV² for over a year. I started on the Youth Consultant Committee with four other amazing leaders with the drive to deepen my involvement in my community. Now, as a youth advocate, I have been able intertwine my interests in local governance and empowering youth. This process has strengthened my sense of belonging to Outer East Portland which has made me more passionate about serving my community.

Additionally, Youth Voice Youth Vote is an accessible way for the community to participate civically. Traditional legislation and budgeting processes are very complex and challenging to participate in for the majority of Oregonians. With YV², we have been able to collect ideas directly with the community and develop project proposals that can be voted on by underrepresented groups and be implemented in real time. This process also offers youth early access to spaces of democratic engagement. The more they are exposed to these opportunities, the more likely they are to pursue civic engagement roles later in their careers.

Youth are centered in the process and they want to continue to stay involved. We must keep up the momentum and energy for collective decision making. Funding a second cycle of Youth Voice Youth Vote demonstrates continued commitment to equity, shared decision making with community, and investment in youth leadership.

Thank you Joint Ways and Means Committee members for your service and dedication. Once again, I urge the Joint Ways and Means Committee to invest in youth and allocate \$1.2 million dollars for a second cycle of Youth Voice Youth Vote.

Sincerely,
Lisbeth Marquez-Delgado