

Submitter:

Gabrielle James

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB749

I am writing to testify in strong support of the School Participatory Budgeting Act, SB 749, which will create a \$500,000 pilot program that would allow students to decide investments in their schools, thereby enhancing their educational environment and preparing students to be lifelong civic participants.

This relatively small financial investment stands to make a huge impact for students. Not only will it give them a way to positively influence their environment, it will introduce them to an invaluable civic process that will prepare them to be active participants in shaping the places they choose to live as adults.

Nobody wants to work in a system where they have no say, and students are no exception. This bill will center their voices, and when we center students, we deepen their investment in the learning process. Students who feel heard and whose needs are taken into account have higher graduation rates, and are more likely to attend college or trade schools.

Time and time again we see that successful community structure is tied inexorably to the needs and voices of its members. If we listen to students, center them, allow them due contribution to their schools, the payback will dwarf the initial cost of this program.

Please support the School Participatory Budgeting Act, and allow it to be passed outside of committee.

Thank you.