



YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Use Your Voice

March 28th 2022

The Honorable Bill Dodd
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 6620
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 908 (Pan): California Student Representation Act — SUPPORT

DEAR SENATOR DODD,

Youth Leadership Institute (yli) is pleased to support SB 908 (Pan), the California Student Representation Act, which establishes a student advisory commission under the State Student Board Member on the California State Board of Education. This bill would create the advisory commission to focus on advising the student board member on critical issues in education, composed of diverse students across the state.

All too often, adults make critical decisions on education policy and issues affecting the lives of students, without any direct input from the students themselves. Fortunately, our state has made progress in student representation through the student member on the State Board of Education. However, as California has evolved to be home to over 6 million students, one student board member is not enough to represent the diverse student population of California. Now more than ever, issues affecting students have become more pressing, such as mental health and racial justice, and the Student Board Member should have a way to be better informed of the needs of all students throughout California.

This bill would establish a 13-person commission, led by the student member on the State Board of Education. The commission would consist of youth appointed by the State Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the student member of the State Board of Education. In making the

appointments, it shall be taken into consideration the involvement of a student in their local and county boards of education. The bill mandates that every region of California is represented, and commissioners should be appointed for their passion and experience.

For these reasons, yli is proud to be a part of a growing coalition of student groups and youth advocacy organizations that support this measure. Our school systems benefit most when the educational partners most affected by policy changes—students—are consistently engaged in the decision-making process and can offer their unique and invaluable perspectives in policy decisions. Students have proven their effectiveness in engaging in education on local levels. It is time for California to form this student advisory commission so the State Student Board Member can make decisions representative of student experiences in education across the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

PATRICIA BARAHONA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Youth Leadership Institute