



Action Needed: Support **HB 1584** to study the implementation of a **Legislative Youth Advisory Council** in Texas.

What is a Legislative Youth Advisory Council?

A legislative youth advisory council is a group of young people selected to identify, evaluate, and prioritize policy issues affecting youth and participate in the legislative policy-making process. Youth councils are representative of the diversity of their state, and it is the intention of both TNOYS and Representative Rodriguez (the bill's sponsor) that the council will include representation from youth in at-risk situations.

What can a Legislative Youth Advisory Council actually do?

- Identify issues that affect youth
- Hold public hearings
- Make recommendations to the legislature
- Request that a bill be filed
- Follow pending legislation
- Provide testimony
- Submit an annual report of activities
- Share youth perspectives
- Represent youth interests
- Influence important decisions
- Mobilize other youth to get involved
- Show that youth DO care about the public policy decisions that affect them
- **Give youth a voice at the Capitol!**

Do any other states have Legislative Youth Advisory Councils?

Yes; Maine established the first legislative youth advisory council in 2002, and many other states – including Colorado, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, and Washington – have followed suit.

What will happen if HB 1584 is passed?

HB 1584 by Representative Rodriguez calls for the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas to do a study on implementing a legislative youth advisory council in our state. The study group would look at how the councils work in other states and come up with a plan for implementing one here. At the culmination of the study, the study group would present their findings to the legislature, and a bill to officially implement the council would be filed during the 2011 legislative session.

Why should there be a study, instead of just implementing the youth council now?

A lot of decisions need to be made about the youth council before it is implemented. For instance, someone will need to oversee the council and publicize it, select members, and coordinate activities. The study group will look at all of the possibilities and determine who the best person or organization is for this job. Questions about eligibility, term limits, and the structure of the council will also need to be answered, and these questions can best be answered by people who have studied the youth councils in other states. To sum it up: A little bit of research is the best way to make sure the youth council is implemented in a way that it will have the most benefit for youth in our state!

Texas Network of Youth Services

2525 Wallingwood Drive, Suite 1503 * Austin, Texas 78746 * Ph: (512) 328-6860 * Fax: (512) 328-6863 * info@tnoys.org
www.tnoys.org