



Youth Commission Testimony in Support of the YC in the City Charter

Community Partnership Specialist Joshua Rudy Ochoa (2022-Present)

Staff Advisor to the Youth Commission

Good Afternoon Task Force Members,

My name is Joshua Rudy Ochoa, and I'm proud to have served as the Community Partnership Specialist for the Youth Commission for the past 3 and a half years. It's truly been a privilege to work with so many incredible and inspiring youth that have served on the YC.

I can confidently say that the YC has a positive impact on young people's lives because we serve as the bridge between youth and their local government. Don't just take my word for it, take it from our youth and the community around us.

We've worked to bring people together to support us through this process, and we've been happy to receive over 40 combined letters of support from community partners, written testimonials directly from Commissioners, and a sign-on letter with many organizations and individuals.

Here is what we are asking each of you today in regard to the YC:

- First, we are united in our request to remain in the Charter. It's what gives us protection from those who may want to silence youth, it guarantees our independence, and it's what voters wanted when they voted to put us in the Charter.
- Second, we ask you to reject considerations for term limits, as we already have an age cap that acts as a term limit, and we have a natural flow of commissioners.
- Third, we ask to reject any removal of youth seats. The YC continues to be one of the highest sought after commissions, with 154 youth applying just in this last year's application cycle. Removing two seats wouldn't just further limit their opportunity to serve, it would also silence voices we need to hear from the most.
- Fourth, we ask to reject any sunset date for a very simple reason: youth will always exist and will always deserve representation as they are the largest disenfranchised population. Until youth have a right to vote, the Youth Commission remains one of their only opportunities to have their voices heard.

- Lastly, we encourage you to strike language that prohibits our commissioners from receiving compensation. It remains to be an equity barrier for our low-income youth.

I hope you take these comments to heart and understand where we are coming from as staff, and as those who are supporting the work of the Youth Commission to meet its chartered duties to fight for youth across San Francisco.

Thank you.