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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GENup Policy Slate Unveiling

Press release

Sacramento, CA, 24 April 2023 - Last Wednesday, GENup hosted our annual Policy Slate Unveiling to reveal our goals for the next legislative session! Out of the forty policies introduced last Wednesday, seven were written by GENup students, and an additional thirteen will be co-sponsored by GENup. We were honored to be joined by several guests, including California Secretary of State Dr. Shirley Weber, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, and thirteen current State Assembly and Senate members. More information on the GENup-written bills and those we support can be found on our [policy slate](#). A recording of this event can be found [here](#).

Our K-12 policy slate for this session includes public health, mental health, civic engagement, identity equity, and environmentalism. Notable GENup-written bills include: AB 1274 (Connolly) that would perform statewide assessments on young Californians' inclusion, AB 873 (Berman) that would consider incorporating media literacy content and the Model Library Standards into the next revision of curriculum frameworks, and AB 598 (Wicks) that would update sex education requirements in schools while helping connect youth to local resources.

Additionally, to encourage post-high school student engagement, we're supporting policies such as AB 800 (Ortega) to require an annual Workplace Readiness Week for secondary schools to provide information to pupils on their rights as workers, AB 984 (McCarty) to add a one-semester personal finance course to graduation requirements, and Senate Constitutional Amendment (SCA) 2 (Stern) to lower the local and state-wide election voting ages to 17. We're also co-sponsoring SB 541 (Menjivar), which would require high schools to make free condoms available to students and provide comprehensive clinical family planning services under the Family PACT Program, protecting youth from STIs, reducing the risk of unintended pregnancy, and destigmatizing sexual and reproductive health. Our work on this bill has been covered by multiple media outlets and the LA Times—the latter article can be found [here](#).

Our Collegiate policy slate includes policies focused on mental health, public health, school safety, student aid, identity equity, and civic engagement. To support student health at universities, we wrote AB 461 (Ramos) to require fentanyl test strips and information on their use at every college campus, AB 456 (Maienschein) to include mental health hotlines at every college campus, and AB

624 (Grayson) to provide state funding for colleges to cover the costs of assessments for disability accommodations. Another bill we wrote, AB 1138 (Weber), would provide transportation services for students to access Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) kits at medical exam centers, ensuring student survivors get the resources they need. We are also supporting other key policies to increase accessibility to higher education, such as removing barriers limiting students' ability to keep their financial aid with AB 789 (Berman) and making debt-free college a reality for foster youth with Senate Bill (SB) 307 (Ashby).

We first heard from Dr. Shirley Weber, who stated, "I commend GENup for their dedication towards empowering young people to become effective advocates for education policy reform. . . working together, we can ensure that every voice in California is heard." GENup aims to continue our mission of representing youth voices across California and the nation, a demographic often excluded from legislation regarding students. Several speakers emphasized the positive impacts of GENup's student-written bills.

Assemblymember Akilah Weber discussed how AB 1138 "will allow for students that have been victims of sexual assault to get the support and healthcare they need without having to worry about how they're going to get there." AB 1138 will streamline student access to SAFE centers, removing barriers to forensic care for survivors of sexual assault.

AB 873, another bill principally authored by GENup, will ensure that every K-12 student receives instruction in media literacy. "Children and young people growing up in today's digital world need to be better equipped than any generation before," Assemblymember Berman stated. "Online misinformation jeopardizes mental health, jeopardizes our progress combating climate change, and undermines democratic decision making." Media literacy education for students is necessary for students to navigate today's world.

On AB 624, Assemblymember Grayson emphasized how the bill would provide disabled students with "the necessary resources . . . to thrive and receive the care they need to attend college and be academically successful." AB 624 makes it possible for students with disabilities to have equitable access to resources needed for them to thrive and receive the accommodations they need to succeed.

Last, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond gave us an overview of the successes GENup has had throughout the years. He highlighted SB 98, which would provide schools with the resources to address chronic absenteeism "to get our students back in school and to make sure they have the support that they need." He closed off the unveiling by commending GENup's advocacy, saying, "I'm proud of... the 23 sponsor bills that you've gotten signed into law... you are making a difference in every step of the way."

Thank you to all our speakers who spoke at our policy slate unveiling, and thank you to the GENup community members for attending! We look forward to a future where all youth voices are heard and represented in every level of the democratic process and continue to pursue our goals by working

with local legislators to encourage and empower young voices. As we expand our impact, we look forward to helping meet the needs of youth in California and around the nation by establishing the foundations for dialogue and action-based solutions.

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