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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Student Board Members (AB824)

Press release

Sacramento, California, 10 October 2021 — Earlier this week, Governor Gavin Newsom approved and signed into law AB824, an important bill which will increase the rights and representation of students across California. AB824 will allow students to petition for a seat on County Boards of Education and Charter School Governing Boards, with preferential voting rights to advocate on the behalf of the student body.

This is in following of AB261, which, in 2017, was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown, to allow students to serve on their school district governing bodies with preferential voting rights. This bill created a petitioning system to encourage students to advocate for a student position if their school board did not have a student board member position. Previous law, however, did not explicitly allow for county boards of education and charter school governing boards to have a student seat creating inequity for students among their adult peers. Without a student board member, many local education agencies continued to go without adequate student representation.

There are over 100 school districts in the State of California with Student Board Members. Shasta County Office of Education has had a Student Board Member on their board of education since 2005, with the San Diego County Office of Education beginning appointment applications in early 2021. Existing charter schools across the state already have Student Board Members serving on their governing board. The California State Board of Education has maintained a Student Board Member consistently since 1969. These governing boards are actively engaging students in the education system. As consumers and beneficiaries of the education system, students have a different perspective than teachers, administrators, and parents— and can provide a point of view that is often underrepresented.

School boards provide educational and financial oversight to schools to ensure that students will achieve their educational goals. They play a central role in developing the educational vision for their school districts and county offices of education. AB824 guarantees students a platform to influence their education.

GENup is proud to see this bill, which we co-wrote with the California Student Board Members Association (CSBMA), pass, and GENup looks to the future with hope for greater representation and oversight by the youth of our nation.

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